



MEETING OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE OF THE JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Friday, January 22, 2016

SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Let me use this opportunity to wish for you, your family and colleagues a very productive and rewarding 2016. As we face the uncertainties of the New Year, let us seek to transform our challenges into opportunities and thereby achieve our goals, even against the odds.

As an Association, we value your contribution and commitment and really look forward to you playing your part in the growth and development of the Association and the education sector in general. New beginnings afford us another chance to start over again or to expand our horizon to heights we never envision. We believe that with effective leadership, strong and supportive team members we will have a successful year and the Association will become even more relevant.

Welcome to this our first meeting for 2016 and we look forward to your active participation as we deliberate on the various issues.

2.0 SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Public Sector teachers would have received outstanding retroactive payments in November 2015 as agreed. Travelling Officers received four months of outstanding Upkeep/Commuted Allowance in December 2015. The remaining two (2) months should be paid early in the next financial year.

There are a number of unsettled items that a Joint Ministry of Education and Jamaica Teachers' Association committee is working on. Some of these will be further discussed in smaller working groups. Of urgency is the Assistance for Children of teachers in tertiary institutions. We have agreed on the guidelines as well as the Application Form for this benefit. Forms are now available. They will be in the Regional Offices of both the JTA and the Ministry of Education. These forms will also be available online. We urge you to spread the information so that all interested members will be aware of this benefit.

2.1 50% Refund

The vex issue of delays in refunds by the Ministry of Education continues to irritate us. Despite promises to pay off all outstanding amounts approved up to March 2015 by December 2015, it is still not fully achieved. We acknowledge the improvement but we will not settle until and unless the Ministry honour this commitment. We will be relying on you colleagues to keep us informed as to the status of this benefit.

2.2 HEART/NTA Negotiations

Negotiations for Lecturers and Instructors in HEART/NTA were concluded in December 2015 and employees received the agreed benefits in December. Retroactive payments will be made in January 2016.

2.3 Negotiations for Preparatory School Teachers

We have not yet concluded negotiations in any of these institutions. We had a meeting in December with teachers from Quest Preparatory

School who have expressed an interest in the JTA becoming their Bargaining Unit.

2.4 Pension Reform

We have written to the Ministry of Finance with a view to continuing the deliberations on Pension Reform. We have been told that this engagement will occur soon.

3.0 FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

There is not much to report on this matter, except that we are concerned about the seemingly inactivity. Consequently, our lawyer has written to the other party's lawyer questioning the delay on their part with an advisory that if there was no movement, we would be going back to the Courts.

4.0 MEETINGS BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND THE J.T.A.

The Association continues to have monthly meetings with the Ministry of Education every second Tuesday. These meetings have served a useful purpose in treating with much of our issues. We have signed off on a Protocol for the reinstatement of teachers whose cases have been upheld.

On the issue of Voluntary Relocation of Teachers, there is much concern been expressed by the Ministry of Education on the low response by teachers to facility. We encourage teachers to use this facility once the conditions are favourable to them. We remind all of us that there is no loss of benefits and this process could assist in correcting the mismatch between overstaffed and understaffed schools. Again, if there are doubts, please encourage members to engage the JTA.

5.0 STUDY CIRCLE TRAINING

A training session for Study Circle Trainers will take place January 28-30, 2016 at Jewel Runaway Bay Beach and Golf Resort.

6.0 EDUCATION CONFERENCE

We are somewhat late with our planning for our Education Conference but this activity is definitely on and will take place March 29 – 31, 2016 at Jewel Runaway Bay Beach and Golf Resort. The theme for the conference is *Effective Teaching and Learning: Bridging the Achievement Gap*.

Registration forms are now available. They are in our Regional Offices and are also available online. We urge you to assist in the promotion of this conference and trust that you will find it possible to be a participant.

7.0 MIDDLE MANAGERS WORKSHOP

Plans to host a Middle Managers Workshop are going smoothly. This workshop will take place March 21 – 22, 2016 in Kingston. Our Diaspora group is working with us to ensure its success. You will be informed as we go along. Mrs. Charmaine Gooden Monteith and Dr. Nicely are spearheading this initiative.

8.0 NETBALL AND FOOTBALL COMPETITIONS

These competitions have been going very well. In fact, the finals will be taking place this afternoon at Manchester High School. The finalists are:

- **Netball - St. Catherine and St. Andrew**
- **Football - St. James and Clarendon**

We commend the National Sports Committee and Ms. McLean for organizing the competitions.

9.0 TEACHERS' FAMILY FUN DAY

Teachers' Family Fun Day will be held at the James Bond Beach, Oracabessa, St. Mary on Thursday, February 11, 2016. The National Sports Committee is ensuring that all plans are fully in place. We are again depending on you to promote and support this event.

Entry is free.

10.0 ANNUAL GENERAL STAFF RETREAT

Our Annual General Staff Retreat was held December 10-12, 2015 at Jewel Runaway Bay Beach and Golf Resort. This activity proved to be very useful and relevant as we seek to empower and strengthen our staff. Presentation sessions were held for staff at all levels. The occasion was also used to observe our staff Christmas Dinner. We applaud the efforts by Mrs. Judith Spencer-Jarrett and Mrs. Claudette Johnson and their team for a successful retreat.

11.0 RESTRUCTURING EXERCISE

The General Council meeting of November 28, 2015 ratified the renaming of certain positions. These are as follows:

POSITIONS	DEPARTMENTS	INCUMBENTS
Deputy Secretary General	Administration, Human Resource Development and Finance	Mrs. L. Judith Spencer-Jarrett
Deputy Secretary General	Member Services and Industrial Relations	Dr. Mark Nicely
Assistant Secretary General	Professional Services	Mrs. Charmaine Gooden

		Monteith
Assistant Secretary General	Property and Business Services	Mrs. Claudia Ferguson
Administrative Officer	Administration, Human Resource Development and Finance	Mrs. Claudette Johnson
Administrative Officer	Communication and Public Relations	Mr. Leاون Nash

It is anticipated that these changes will facilitate a better representation of the Association's structure and ultimately lead to greater effectiveness and efficiency as we seek to serve our members.

12.0 MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Most of our Membership Cards have been distributed. We are encouraging Contact Teachers to ensure that we receive, by the end of February 2016, the photographs of members with the relevant information in order that the next stage of the process can be undertaken.

13.0 REGIONAL OFFICER – SOUTH CENTRAL

A report will be presented at this meeting.

14.0 THE SECRETARIAT

We express our sympathies to our President on the loss of his Aunt, Mr. Meek on the loss of his brother and Mrs. Charmaine Gooden Monteith on the loss of her uncle.

- As you are aware, **Mr. Juno Gayle, Regional Officer, South Central**, is now on Pre-retirement Leave. He will be on leave until August 31, 2016. **Miss Yvonne White, Office Manager**, is also on Pre-retirement Leave until August 31, 2016 while **Mr. Clive Brown, Security Supervisor**, will be on Pre-retirement Leave until May 31, 2016.

- We wish to offer our **congratulations to Mrs. Pauline Wellington** who has been appointed Office Manager as of January 1, 2016.
- I am further requesting that Central Executive ratify the **position of Office Manager** as an Administrative one and that the position be aligned to that of Principal Secondary I.
- **The position of Secretary to the Professional Services Unit** is now vacant based on the fact that the incumbent, Mrs. Wellington, has been appointed Office Manager. We are in the process of filling the vacancy.
- **Mrs. Charmaine Gooden-Monteith**, Assistant Secretary General, Professional Services, has been granted Special Study Leave for the period January 1 – 31, 2016. She, however, will pay attention to some critical activities within her unit. Mrs. Gooden Monteith has requested additional study leave throughout the year in order for her to complete her Doctoral studies.

15.0 CONCLUSION

The issues dominating the educational landscape requires that the Association remains on full alert. Our President has become fully immersed in much of the discussions. We need, as an Association, to review our stance on a number of issues if we intend to remain relevant and supportive of the struggles of our members. It is of critical importance that all practitioners are aware of their professional responsibilities to all students irrespective of their sexual orientation or religious views. In the end, what is important is not *so much how much I know but how much I care*. May you never lose heart as we continue to *unite and serve*.

**Prepared by: Byron Farquharson
Secretary General**