



# **SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT**

## **FOR CENTRAL EXECUTIVE MEETING - FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2015**

**Ben Hawthorne Conference Room, 97B Church Street, Kingston**

---

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

I am pleased to extend a warm welcome to all members of Central Executive who have made that much more effort to attend this meeting. The fact that most of you were up until late last night at our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet and Ball and you are here today underscores our firm belief that we have come thus far because of the love, sacrifice and commitment of our volunteers and staff. It is anticipated that your rigorous participation in today's deliberations will ensure that we have a productive meeting.

Once again, welcome and I urge you to let your voices be heard.

### **2.0 SALARY NEGOTIATIONS**

To date, we have had one meeting with Minister Dalley, Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and Planning where an offer of 5% over 2 years was offered. We have since written to the Minister to reject that offer. We have also requested that a monetary value be attached to the Book Software and Technology Allowance. As was reported at General Council, most of the other items did not find favour with the Government and those that did, saw minimal increases. We await with urgency a new and improved offer from the Government.

In terms of HEART Trust/NTA Lecturers and Instructors, we are yet to have an offer from that body despite the fact that we have been asking them so to do.

Teachers in Preparatory Schools that we represent are in a similar position. No response to date.

It is clear that negotiations on behalf of our members is not an easy task but we are resolved to get the best possible offer for them.

### **3.0 50% REFUND**

The Ministry of Education is committing itself to clear off the payment of outstanding amounts as a matter of priority during this financial year. They have identified the sum of \$30M to be paid as soon as the funds are committed. In the meantime the process to treat with claims continues.

### **4.0 FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES**

The issue of payments that are due to Mr. Bodden remains unsettled. The parties have been trying to settle the matter through conciliation at the Ministry of Labour but to date, no real progress has been made. We have informed our lawyer to refer the matter to the Industrial Disputes Tribunal. However, efforts are being made through the Ministry of Labour to try once again to reach a settlement. A meeting was held on Thursday, April 23, 2015 at the Ministry.

In terms of trying to recover some of our assets linked with Marlon Francis, our lawyer, Mrs. Caroline Hay, will be in the courts over three days, April 23, 24, and 29, 2015 seeking a Court Order to claim these assets.

On Wednesday, April 16, 2015, the Presidents and the Secretary General met with Superintendent Anthony Daley and his team to get an update on progress thus far in treating with the criminal side of the case. We were told that within a month,

files will be handed over to the Director of Public Prosecutions for a ruling. We await the outcome.

### **Special Investigation (Forensic Audit)**

Since the initial investigation by PriceWaterHouseCoopers, there has been no follow up on this matter.

## **5.0 THE JAMAICA TEACHING COUNCIL (JTC) BILL**

The most recent Draft dated March 9, 2015 was handed over to the Association. We have perused the document along with our lawyers and have identified six (6) areas of concern. These are:

- (i) Composition of the Council
- (ii) Persons required to be Registered and Licensed
- (iii) Revocation of Licences
- (iv) Disciplinary Hearings
- (v) Tenure
- (vi) Criminal Records of Applicants

We have a meeting planned with the Executive Director and her team from the Jamaica Teaching Council for April 28, 2015.

## **6.0 REVIEW OF THE CODE OF REGULATIONS**

We have had no further update on this matter.

## **7.0 EDUCATION CONFERENCE**

Despite much uncertainties the Association executed a very successful Education Conference April 8-10, 2015. We had approximately 200 participants. The standard was very high. We had excellent presenters and presentations as well as - 200 good participants. Our theme *Reaching Every Learner – Understanding the*

*Brain: New Insights on Learning and Brain Development* was fully explored. All participants felt that they benefitted from the experience.

Thanks to Mrs. Judith Spencer-Jarrett and her team for a well-co-ordinated conference. Thanks also to Mrs. Charmaine Gooden Monteith and her Programme Committee. They did a real good job. The Association can really feel proud of a great conference.

## **8.0 PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINARS**

This activity is progressing satisfactorily. The parishes that have hosted seminars, based on reports received, have planned and executed efficiently. Thanks to all involved.

## **9.0 INVESTMENT SEMINARS**

Our annual Investment Seminars are on. Seminars were held in the South East Region on April 21, 2015 and in the South Central Region on April 22, 2015. Seminars for the North East Region and West Regions will be held on April 28 and 29 respectively. Thanks to Mrs. Ferguson and her team

## **10.0 SPECIAL EDUCATION WORKSHOP**

We commend the Special Education Committee for planning a useful workshop. This was held on April 22, 2015 at 97B Church Street.

## **11.0 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY BANQUET AND BALL**

The grand finale of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations was held last night, Thursday, April 23, 2015 at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel. It was a fitting climax to an event-filled year. We used the opportunity to recognize our paid staff for their contribution to the growth and development of the Association. We were happy

that our Past Presidents, members of General Council, members of staff and other friends of the JTA, including the Minister of Education, were able to attend.

Let us continue to celebrate the rich legacy as we play our part in constructing the next 50 years.

## **12.0 PARISH 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY ACTIVITIES**

All parishes were encouraged to have a significant activity to mark the year. To date, most parishes have had their activity. From reports received, the activities were varied and generally went well. All parishes must conclude their celebrations by the end of May 2015. Funding will not be available beyond that date.

## **13.0 PRESIDENT-ELECT ELECTION**

The candidates for the elections are:

- Miss Claudette James - Teacher, Denham Town High School
- Mr. Howard Isaacs - Principal, The Moneague College
- Mr. Ancell Palmer - Teacher, Lowe River Primary & Junior High School
- Mr. Collington Powell - Principal, Friendship Primary School

Brochures with the profile of the candidates are being prepared for circulation. The elections will be held June 22 – 26, 2015. All necessary arrangements are being put in place to ensure a smooth and fair election.

## **14.0 GOLDEN TORCH AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY**

The ceremony will be held on Thursday, July 9, 2015 at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel. There are approximately 350 nominees for the award.

## **15.0 EDUCATION WEEK 2015**

Education Week will be celebrated May 3 – 9, 2015 under the theme *Consolidating the Gains: Collaborating for Growth and Sustainability*. The main activities this year will be as listed below.

- **May 3** - **National Church Service, William Knibb Baptist Church, Falmouth, Trelawny**
- **May 4** - **Symposium highlighting the contribution of teachers in the history of the Education System – Fifty Years and Beyond, JTA Head Office, 97B Church Street, Kingston**
- **May 5** - **Read Across Jamaica Day**
- **May 6** - **Teachers' Day**
- **May 7** - **Helen Stills Professional Development Day, Iberostar, Rose Hall, St. James**
- **May 8** - **Awards functions organised by corporate companies for Educators**
  - **Diaspora workshop on Technology in STEM, 97B Church Street**

It should be noted that members of the Diaspora will be participating in our activities this year. We hope that all members of Central Executive will promote and support the various activities.

## **16.0 JTA/SAGICOR NATIONAL ATHLETIC CHAMPIONSHIPS**

This premier sporting event will be held on May 15 and 16, 2015 at the National Stadium. The Media Launch took place on April 22, 2015 in the Ben Hawthorne Conference Room, 97B Church Street. We expect a great meet and we solicit the co-operation of our members towards the promotion and support for this important activity. Thanks to Mrs. Ena Barclay and her team for their continued hard work.

## **17.0 EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL 7<sup>TH</sup> WORLD CONGRESS**

We must remind you of the upcoming Education International 7<sup>th</sup> World Congress to be held in Ottawa Canada, July 21-26, 2015. Our President, Secretary General and Senior Secretary Administration and Finance representing the women are slated to attend. The Business and Economic Services Unit is planning a tour to coincide with the congress.

## **18.0 C.U.T.'s 37<sup>TH</sup> BIENNIAL CONFERENCE**

The Caribbean Union of Teachers' 37<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference is scheduled to be held in Dominica August 1 – 9, 2015. The President is scheduled to attend.

## **19.0 CONCLUSION**

The activities of this Association are many and varied. They demand a lot of time and resources but in the end, they are for our members and their empowerment. This high intensity organization owes much to its volunteers and I must applaud you all for your commitment. The Association owes much also to our paid staff. We recognise their contribution and value their efforts in ensuring that the JTA continues to remain relevant and responsive to the various demands.

I listened with surprise and pity to the unfortunate and regressive comments of one of our high school principals last weekend when he suggested to his colleague principals not to embrace the JTA. I would advise that we heed the words of William James when he stated that, *“The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook”*.

As you are empowered, you owe it to your constituents to share your knowledge and expertise with them. I implore you to continue to support all the activities and initiatives of the Association because without you we are nothing at all.

May you be blessed as we *unite and serve*.

**Prepared by: Byron Farquharson**  
**Secretary General**