



JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
97B CHURCH STREET
KINGSTON

SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT TO CENTRAL EXECUTIVE MEETING FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2020

1.0 INTRODUCTION

I extend a warm and cordial welcome to all of you. Let me also extend warmest New Year greetings to you and trust that 2020 will be a great year both personally and professionally. We also must pray God's special blessings on the Association and Jamaica Land We Love. This country, with all its natural beauty and vast human resources, continues to slip in terms of crime management, road fatalities and the brutal way in which some domestic issues are resolved. Sadly, we note that our women continue to be the victims of men who are unable to control their anger.

The acts of corruption that have been uncovered at the Caribbean Maritime University (CMU) begs the question of *how could this be?* Where are the checks and balances and the oversight of Boards of Management? As a country, we need to take stock because we cannot and must not allow corrupt people to destroy our country.

We as educators, as well as a union, must assess our own practices to ensure that the highest order of probity and accountability are practised. As volunteers and employees, we owe it to our members to remain vigilant, committed and accountable.

I implore all of us to come to these meetings with a seriousness of purpose and a resolve that we must play our part without fear and favour to advance the effort to improve the quality of life for all our members and the impact and effectiveness of this noble organization. I wish for us a productive meeting.

2.0 TERTIARY GRANT

The processing of the Tertiary Grant is complete. The Ministry of Education has issued letters of commitment to the various tertiary institutions. Three Hundred and Eleven (311) beneficiaries were selected and each individual will receive \$64,308.68. The information is within the regions and the offices will contact all the applicants. We commend the Member Services and Industrial Relations Unit for their efforts in this area.

3.0 TABLET COMPUTER FOR TEACHERS

The process to provide these Tablets is progressing smoothly and the expected date for the first set is March 2020.

4.0 PAYMENT OF RESEARCH GRANT TO TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

The Ministry of Education has committed to pay the outstanding amount of Three Million Dollars (\$3M) by the end of March 2020.

5.0 PAYMENT FOR SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)

We have been informed by the Ministry of Education that all except twenty-two (22) schools have received their payment. Those not paid, we were informed, had to do with banking information. This is expected to be cleared up in short order.

6.0 LEAVE FOR TEACHERS

The Association brought the issue of Vacation and Study Leave for Teachers to the table for discussion and agreement. The Ministry has asked for more time to review the present position. The Association's position is that the Code of Regulation is very explicit on Leave and as such, more teachers must benefit from what is a legitimate entitlement.

7.0 TEACHER APPRAISAL INSTRUMENT

This instrument is still work in progress and as such, the status quo remains which is the current document is a trial one and cannot be used to determine the future of a teacher in terms of promotion or demotion. We are aware, however, that efforts are being made to come up with descriptors that will guide the process as well as an adjustment to the rating bands.

8.0 PRIMARY EXIT PROFILE (PEP)

The first phase of the PEP Test will commence on February 25, 2020. We have been informed that Senior Tertiary Students will serve as invigilators for the examination.

9.0 ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Education Conference 2020 will be held at the Hilton Rose Hall Hotel and Spa, April 14 – 16. The theme for the conference is *Navigating the Social and Emotional Challenges of the 21st Century Classroom: Practicing the Art of Self-Care*. The following rates and other relevant information will be communicated shortly.

The registration will be done online. You will be provided with more details by way of letters to schools and by the use of other platforms. We anticipate the participation of our members as we believe this topic is relevant to the realities of the classroom at this time.

10.0 JTA RADIO

We continue to have meaningful deliberations and planned actions that will bring the realization of this idea closer to fruition. General Council voted seed money of \$3M in November, 2019. The Official Launch of JTA Radio is set for April 3, 2020 – our Founders Day.

11.0 MEMBERS INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS RALLY

In an effort to achieve one of our President’s targets, a Members’ Industrial Relations Rally is being planned for March 2020. The date and venue have not yet been confirmed. The idea is to bring One Thousand of our members in one place. The topics to be covered include:

- Trade Union – Connecting the Dots
- Industrial Relations – Full Circle
- Mediation, a Variable Alternative
- Teacher Professionalism – All Angles

We are still in the early stage of the planning but the idea is that members will register online and the first One Thousand members who register will be accommodated. The approach will be similar to registration for the symposium.

We wish this activity every success.

12.0 THE MR. AND MISS JTA PAGEANT

We are committed to staging the grand final of the Pageant. This will be held on Saturday, May 30, 2020 at the Pegasus Hotel. Parishes are in the process of staging their pageant. We commend Kingston for having set an excellent standard by successfully staging their pageant. We are in the process of seeking sponsorship for the National Finals. We need to remind parishes that they cannot participate in the National Finals if they do not stage a Parish event.

13.0 TEACHERS’ FAMILY HEALTH AND FUN DAY

Our Annual Teachers’ Family Health and Fun Day will be held on Thursday, February 27, 2020 at James Bond Beach, St. Mary. It is expected that the contestants in the Mr. and Miss JTA Pageant will be on show at this activity.

14.0 TEACHERS’ NETBALL AND FOOTBALL COMPETITION

The competition has been going quite well. This year, all parishes field teams for both Football and Netball. We are now at the semi-final stage. The matches will be played at the Moneague College, St. Ann today, Friday, January 24, 2020. The semi-finalists are as follows:

- **Netball**
 - ✓ St. James vs Manchester
 - ✓ St. Catherine vs St. Ann

- **Football**
 - ✓ Manchester vs St. James
 - ✓ St. Thomas vs St. Mary

15.0 ERROL MILLER CRICKET COMPETITION

The competition will commence during the first week of February. It should be noted that the competition has been re-organized to enable more matches to be played at the regional level. Therefore, the semi-final will see each region having a representative.

16.0 DIASPORA 5TH EDUCATION ADVANCEMENT SUMMIT

The Association has been invited to participated in this activity. The Summit will be held in California June 14-19, 2020.

I am pleased to announce that the Association is committing to provide Seventy thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00) to the first seventy (70) members who submit their registration slip and airline ticket.

17.0 JTA 2019 ROLL OF HONOUR

I am very pleased to report that the Association staged an elegant and impressive ceremony to present the 2019 Roll of Honour at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel on Monday, November 25, 2019. The recipient is Past President and Member of Parliament, Michael Stewart.

Thank you colleagues for your support. We commend the Administrative and HRD Unit for so efficiently executing this activity.

18.0 NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT ELECT 2020 – 2021

Nomination Forms were distributed to Parish and District Associations. January 31, 2020 is the closing date.

19.0 GOLDEN TORCH AWARD

The relevant information and forms have been dispatched to the various institutions including the Ministry of Education Regional Offices. The deadline for the return of these forms is March 6, 2020.

The award will be presented on Thursday, July 2, 2020 at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel, Kingston.

20.0 STAFF MATTERS

- The Association, through its Human Resource Development Unit, staged a very meaningful Staff Empowerment Session from December 4 – 6, 2019 at the Sunscape Hotel in Montego Bay. The activity included professional development, as well as staff welfare. We also had our Christmas Party to cap off the activity. We commend Dr. Gooden Monteith and her team for doing a good job.
- In January, we welcomed on board the following team members:
 - ✓ Miss Camille Henry, Membership Clerk
 - ✓ Mr. Colin Spence, JTA/MOE Liaison Officer
 - ✓ Mrs. Georgia Waugh Richards, Regional Officer, South Central

21.0 CONCLUSION

At the beginning of a New Year, many persons and organizations set for themselves certain resolutions or targets. We here at the JTA are committed even more deeply to serve our valued members more efficiently and effectively. We are determined to bring more members in and pledge to make our members much more satisfied. We can only achieve this if all of us make improving product JTA our business. I commend the thoughts of Minnie Louise Haskins as we venture into this New Year when she penned these words:

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

*"Give me a light that I may tread safely
into the unknown."*

And he replied:

*"Go out into the darkness
and put your hand
into the Hand of God.
That shall be to you better
than light and safer
than a known way."*

May His light be your guide for 2020 as we Unite and Serve.

**Submitted by: Byron Farquharson
Secretary General**

