



**JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
97B CHURCH STREET
KINGSTON**

**VIRTUAL MEETING OF CENTRAL EXECUTIVE
FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2020**

SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

I welcome you all to this the final Central Executive Meeting for the Conference Year 2019-2020. We continue to soldier on amidst the challenges of COVID-19, trying our best to remain safe and healthy. We are adjusting to the new normal and as such, we continue to find creative ways to serve our members.

We continue to acknowledge with gratitude the important role that you our volunteers play in the life of the Association. We repeatedly concede that without you, the Association could not function effectively.

We pause to pay homage to all our members who have passed since we last met and in particular, we want to salute Wayne Mullings for his impactful contribution to the work of the Association. May he and all the faithful find rest.

As we close out the Conference Year, we continue to reflect on the achievements despite the various setbacks. We will continue to do what we can to complete some of our planned activities. We therefore look forward to your vigorous participation in this meeting.

2.0 TABLETS FOR TEACHERS

The distribution process continues albeit somewhat slow. The projection is that by the last week in August, all schools should receive their Tablets. We again reiterate that all teachers who were employed to the system in May 2018 will receive a Tablet.

3.0 LEAVE

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Information has informed that they have granted about 70% of the request for Study and Vacation Leave. They have further stated that all applications for eight months' Vacation Leave were honoured. Where leave is not granted, teachers can appeal.

4.0 WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The Women's Caucus presented a Virtual COVID-19 Gender Self Care Conference on Thursday, July 2, 2020. The conference catered to men and women. There were over three hundred (300) participants who benefitted from some useful and informative presentations. We commend chairman of the Caucus, Mrs. Georgia Waugh Richards and her team for a fulfilling engagement. Empowerment is the way to go.

5.0 MR. AND MISS JTA PAGEANT

Plans are inching along towards a successful staging of the first National Mr. and Miss JTA Pageant. It is scheduled to be held on Saturday, August 1, 2020 at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel beginning at 11:00 a.m.

The contestants have been undergoing training over the past four (4) weeks with Trainer Mrs. Althea Laing, whom we have recently engaged as the co-ordinator for the Pageant. Sponsorship is a challenge. We are grateful to TIP Friendly Society for their provision of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) to the national event and Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.00) to each participating parish. The Association has no other option at this time than

to fund the activity because the protection of Brand JTA is of paramount importance.

We commend Mrs. Georgia Dodd and her team for their hard work and trust that all will go well.

6.0 JTA PRESIDENT ELECT ELECTION

The 2020 President Elect Election is still work in progress. We are unable to be definitive even at this stage as to the actual voting date. We have collected most of the membership data. We are now in the process of verifying this data. Once we have successfully completed this process, we will hand over the data to the Mona Information Technology Services, UWI, for further verification and the conduct of the election. So, while we cannot be definitive at this time, we are working to conclude the activity as soon as it is practicable. Once an Election date is decided on, we will use the various platforms to inform membership.

We must commend our members for their support in this venture. Commendation is also due to our Parish and District Association Presidents, as well as Contact Teachers for their effort in the Data Collection process. We commend Dr. Mark Nicely and Miss Camille Henry of the Member Services and Industrial Relations Unit for the work that they have put into this activity.

Notwithstanding the mandate given by the General Council that the voting process must be an online one, I am asking Central Executive to grant permission for our Retired Teachers to vote in the traditional way at the various Regional Offices. This is mainly because they were not captured on the data collected and we anticipate that some of them might have challenges using the technology.

7.0 PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

The Association held, for the first time, two National Presidential Debates. These were held on July 9 and 16, 2020. Based on the feedback received and the co-operation of our two candidates, we believe the activity was a success.

We commend Mr. Leanon Nash and his team for doing a good.

8.0 ISSUES SURROUNDING THE HOLDING OF PARISH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

The General Council meeting held June 26, 2020 was informed of issues relating to the holding of a Parish Annual General Meeting in a physical format and the resultant disassociation of the Association from the holding of the meeting because this was contrary to the agreed position, that of Virtual meetings unless the Government lifted the ban on public gatherings.

The parish and the leadership met and **had** the matter resolved. I am pleased to report that the impasse has been settled and that all is now well. Subsequent to this particular parish issue, it was revealed that another parish had also committed similar breach and as a consequence, their election was also declared null and void. They were instructed to hold a Special Annual General Meeting to treat with the matter. This was done and all is now well.

9.0 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 56th Annual Conference is scheduled to be held at the Hilton Rose Hall Hotel and Spa, Montego Bay, St. James, August 17-19, 2020. The Pre-Conference Church Service will be held at the Knowles Road New Testament Church, Mandeville on Sunday, August 16, 2020 beginning at 10:30 a.m.

As we are all aware, we had to change location because the Ocean Coral Spring Hotel disappointed us by stating that the hotel will not re-open before October 2020. This has caused some delay in our planning but we are happy that we

were able to maintain all the rates that were advertised. We encourage all delegates and other persons who have registered to pay the balance on or before July 31, 2020.

We must remind ourselves that we are in COVID-19 times and as such, strict Ministry of Health and Wellness Protocols must be observed.

We look forward to a wonderful conference and we ask that you keep President Elect Jasford Gabriel in your prayers as he prepares to take on the weight of the Presidency.

10.0 CRITICAL ILLNESS TRUST FUND

We are getting closer to registering our Trust Deed. This we hope to complete by Conference 2020.

11.0 JTA AWARDS

The recommendations from the Awards Committee will be presented at today's meeting for ratification.

12.0 THE JAMAICA PUBLISHING HOUSE

I wish to announce that Mrs. Kerrina Leslie has been appointed to serve as Manager/Editor of The Publishing House with effect from August 1, 2020. She has served the company for ten (10) years in the capacity of Editor. The Secretary General will continue to provide oversight to the company and as such, the Manager/Editor will report to the Secretary General.

The company is trying to navigate the challenges posed by COVID-19 and the obvious decline in the sales of books.

13.0 CARIBBEAN UNION OF TEACHERS

The Executive Meeting of the Caribbean Union of Teachers was held July 22-23, 2020. President Owen Speid and Dr. Charmaine Gooden Monteith represented the Association.

14.0 EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION COMMISSION

The Jamaica Teachers' Association notes with interest the appointment of the members of the Commission by the Prime Minister. The Jamaica Teachers' Association was not asked to name anyone and we believe that this is unfortunate. As a critical stakeholder in the education sector, we must not be slighted or overlooked on critical matters.

I will await Central Executive's advice on how this matter should be treated with.

15.0 ANNUAL OFFICERS AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF RETREAT

The Annual Officers and Administrative Staff Retreat was held July 7-9, 2020 at the RIU Hotel, Ocho Rios, St. Ann. We believe the time was productively spent and the results of some of our deliberations will be seen in the short to long term.

16.0 STAFF APPOINTMENT

I am recommending that Central Executive approves the permanent appointment of Mrs. Georgia Waugh Richards as Regional Officer, South Central as of July 1, 2020. Mrs. Waugh Richards has been performing satisfactorily since January 1, 2020.

17.0 CONCLUSION

We all can feel satisfied and proud that we made it to the end of the Conference Year and that collectively, we made a difference to the activities of the Association and education in general.

We thank you all for your service. Special thanks to President Speid for his strident advocacy. President Elect Gabriel and Immediate Past President Anderson for their supportive role as a part of the Presidential Corps. We wish Dr. Anderson all the best as he slips out of the Presidential role.

We acknowledge the contribution made to the Association by members of staff and thank them for their dedication to duty. As we look back, we can feel satisfied that we made some strides during the year and not even COVID-19 can detract from our achievements.

We would want to believe that all of us have benefitted in some way or another from the exposure at this level. None of us will remain the same from this great exposure and experience. We trust that you will go back to your various locations and keep on serving because we can only become better and stronger when we continue to *Unite and Serve*.

God bless you all.

Prepared and Submitted by: Byron Farquharson
Secretary General