



**REPORT OF THE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE
TO THE 62ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OCEAN CORAL SPRING, DUNCANS, TRELAWNY
AUGUST 17-19, 2026**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Education and Research Committee is pleased to present its report to the 62nd Annual Conference of the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA). Guided by the President Malabver's Mandate for the 2025–2026 Conference Year, the Committee remained committed to advancing research, informing educational policy, promoting evidence-based advocacy, and supporting the professional development of Jamaican educators. The Committee's work during the conference year focused on examining critical issues affecting education, including teacher shortage and migration, education funding, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM), trauma-responsive education, and international collaboration. The Committee also provided support for several major national and international initiatives while maintaining regular reporting to the Association's General Council. The mandate directed the Committee to develop an action plan, organize research activities, collaborate with sector committees, contribute to the JDTAN Summit, prepare for a Finland Education Study Tour, review the Ministry of Education's philosophy, and report to General Council and Annual Conference.

2. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

Officers

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| ● Mr. Mark Malabver | - | President |
| ● Mrs. LaSonja Harrison | - | President-Elect |
| ● Dr. Mark Smith | - | Immediate Past President |
| ● Mr. Clayton Hall | - | Deputy Secretary General |

Committee Members

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------|
| ● Ms. Tamashella Smith | - | Chairman |
| ● Ms. Sherice Holten | - | Secretary |
| ● Mrs. Falana Marriott-Bassant | | |
| ● Ms. Marsha Guinness | | |
| ● Mrs. Colleen Reid-Grant | | |
| ● Dr. Kenene Senior Smith | | |
| ● Mr. Clement Harris | | |
| ● Dr. Carlene Miller-Thompson | | |
| ● Ms. Andrea Murray | | |

Co-opted members were:

- Ms. Bittanya Smith
- Ms. Latoya Locke
- Ms. Lorretta Roberts

The Committee also collaborated with several additional members and sector committees in completing its research assignments throughout the conference year.

3. MEETINGS

The Committee maintained a structured programme of work through regular meetings to monitor progress against its Mandate. During the reporting period, the Committee convened regular, special meetings and special subcommittee meetings with collaborating committees. Committee members also met in smaller working groups throughout the year to complete assigned research projects, develop position papers, coordinate conferences, and prepare reports for General Council.

4. MANDATE AND MAJOR ACTIVITIES

The Committee successfully implemented the majority of its Presidential Mandate during the 2025–2026 Conference Year.

Major activities included:

- Development of the Committee's Action Plan.
- Planning and successful execution of the 2026 Education Week Symposium.
- Commencement of the national assessment of TVET and STEAM education.
- Initiation of a comparative review of education funding models.
- Completion of extensive research on teacher shortages and migration.
- Support for the planning and implementation of the 11th JDTAN Advancement in Education Summit.
- Submission of quarterly progress reports to the General Council.

I. Education Symposium

One of the Committee's major accomplishments was the successful staging of the Education Week Symposium on May 4, 2026, at the New Testament Church of God Convention Centre, Old Harbour, St. Catherine, under the theme: "**Trauma-Resilient Education.**"

The symposium brought together educators, policymakers, researchers, and education stakeholders to examine strategies for creating safe, supportive, and responsive learning environments.

Featured presentations were:

- **Daniel Brown** – *Setting the Stage: Trauma-Responsive Education in Today's Classrooms*
- **Dr. Hope Mayne** – *Trauma-Induced Pedagogy*
- **Rosette James-Smith** – *Building Resilient Learners and Educators*
- **Davia Ellis** – *Self-Care in Action: Practical Strategies for Trauma-Responsive Schools*

The programme also included a cultural presentation by students of Old Harbour High School. The symposium was poorly attended but it contributed significantly to professional dialogue on trauma-informed educational practice.

II. Teacher Shortage and Migration Research

Teacher shortage and migration remained one of the Committee's most significant research priorities during the conference year.

Extensive surveys, literature reviews, and analysis of Ministry of Education statistics were undertaken to determine the causes, trends, and implications of teacher migration in Jamaica. Preliminary findings indicate a continued increase in teacher resignations to pursue employment opportunities in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

The research identified critical shortages in:

- Mathematics
- Science
- English Language
- Special Education
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

The findings also suggest that rural schools continue to experience the greatest recruitment and retention challenges. The Committee completed extensive data collection during the year. However, further statistical analysis and consultation with General Council are required before a final policy position can be adopted.

III. Education Funding Review

The Committee commenced a comprehensive review of education funding in Jamaica by examining existing funding models and comparing them with selected CARICOM countries and high-performing education systems, including Singapore and Finland.

The review incorporated:

- stakeholder consultations;
- comparative funding models; and
- teacher compensation frameworks.

While substantial research has been completed, the Committee determined that additional analysis is required before recommendations can be finalized. The resulting position paper will provide evidence-based recommendations regarding sustainable education financing and improved teacher compensation.

IV. TVET and STEAM Assessment

Consistent with its mandate, the Committee initiated a comprehensive assessment of Jamaica's TVET and STEAM education landscape.

Activities included:

- review of national policies;
- stakeholder consultations;
- examination of international best practices; and
- benchmarking against high-performing education systems.

The Committee has completed much of the research phase and is currently consolidating findings into a position paper intended to strengthen workforce readiness, innovation, and policy advocacy. Given the breadth of the work undertaken, additional time will be required to complete the analysis and recommendations.

V. 11th JDTAN Education Summit

The 11th JDTAN Advancement in Education Summit was held at York University, Toronto, Canada, from July 6–10, 2026, under the theme "Resilience: The Imperative". The Summit focused on effective educational leadership and building resilient education systems capable of responding to contemporary educational challenges.

Members of the Education and Research Committee played an active role in the planning and execution of the Summit. Committee members served on the programme planning committee and supported registration, hospitality services, and the monitoring of break-out rooms throughout the conference. Their contribution helped ensure the smooth delivery of the Summit and strengthened collaboration between the JTA and the Jamaican Diaspora education community. Representatives from the committee also assisted with logistical planning prior to the Summit.

VI. Finland Education Study Tour

Preparations continue for the Finland Education Study Tour, scheduled for August 21–31, 2026.

The study tour is intended to serve as a fact-finding mission examining best practices in:

- educational leadership;
- teacher professional development;
- student support services;
- educational innovation; and
- system improvement.

As the tour will occur after the close of the 2025–2026 Conference Year, no outcomes are available for reporting at this time.

VII. Education International Engagement

The Committee's mandate included responding to requests from Education International (EI) regarding educational research and data.

During the 2025–2026 Conference Year, no requests for research data or related correspondence were received from Education International. Consequently, no reporting activities were undertaken in this area during the reporting period.

5. RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the incoming President continue several major research initiatives initiated during the 2025–2026 Conference Year.

- Teacher Shortage and Migration
- Education Funding

- TVET and STEAM Education
 - Ministry of Education Philosophy Review
- Extensive research has already been completed in each of these areas. However, further data analysis, stakeholder consultation, and discussion by General Council are required before final policy positions can be adopted by the Association. Completing this work will ensure that future advocacy is based on rigorous research and reflects the collective views of the membership.

6. CONCLUSION

The Education and Research Committee successfully advanced its mandate through a balanced programme of research, professional learning, and educational advocacy. Throughout the conference year, the Committee remained committed to providing evidence-based recommendations that support the transformation of Jamaica's education system while strengthening the Association's capacity to advocate on behalf of educators and students.

Although several initiatives have reached completion, others have progressed to advanced stages requiring further analysis and policy deliberation. The Committee is confident that the foundation established during the 2025–2026 Conference Year will enable the Association to continue developing informed positions on critical national educational issues.

I extend my sincere appreciation to President Mark Malabver, our servicing officer, Deputy Secretary General Mr. Clayton Hall, all collaborators, and especially the dedicated members of the Education and Research Committee for their unwavering commitment and invaluable contributions throughout the conference year. Their collective expertise, teamwork, and spirit of volunteerism were instrumental in advancing the Committee's mandate.

Prepared by: Tamashella Smith
Chairman