



JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

REPORT OF THE PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT AND TEACHER WELFARE COMMITTEE TO THE 62ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE AUGUST 17-19, 2026 OCEAN CORAL SPRING RESORT DUNCANS, TRELAWNY

1. REPORTING PERIOD

September 2025 to June 2026

2. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

Mrs. Andrea Bryan Hughes - Chairman

Elected from Council

Mrs. Tamara Heron-Hay

Mrs. Aniona Jones

Mr. Horace McKellop

Mrs. Raia Richards-Pearl

Rev. Mario Samms

Mr. Raymond Simmonds

Mr. Omar Tomlinson

Ms. Stephanie Wright-Grant

Co-opted Members

Miss Rhamona Bromfield

Ms. Kerry-Ann Coombs

Mr. Cecil Donald

Miss Deidrian Donaldson

Mrs. Falana Marriott-Bassant

Officers

Mr. Mark Malabver - President

Mrs. La Sonja Harrison - President- Elect

Dr. Mark Smith - Immediate Past President

Administrative Staff

Dr. Margaret Chin - Assistant Secretary General, Professional Services

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

26.0 (1) *The Professional Advancement and Teacher Welfare Committee shall consist of nine (9) persons with the power to co-opt not more than five (5) persons and shall deal with all matters pertaining to the welfare of teachers and the advancement of professional practice and shall sponsor activities such as courses, workshops and seminars.*

(2) The quorum for meetings shall be four (4).

5. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

To date, the Committee has conducted seven (7) scheduled meetings, inclusive of the National Training exercise, as prescribed.

6. PRESIDENT'S MANDATE

The following targets are representative of the President's Mandate for the Conference Year 2025-2026.

1. Develop a plan of action to guide the work of the committee.
2. Deliver targeted capacity-building training for members of the Credentials, Study Circle, and Policy Committees.
3. Spearhead planning and implementation with sector committees to deliver a high-impact Annual Education Conference.
4. Conduct an online psychosocial support seminar examining suicide trends and tendencies amongst teachers and students, and how best to cope.
5. Plan and execute the Annual Helen Stills Professional Development Day with a focus on mental health and staff well-being.
6. Organize the "Men in Education" Conference and Awards in collaboration with the Awards Committee to honor four (4) outstanding male educators across four regions.
7. Strengthen international partnerships through collaboration with the International Relations and Education & Research Committees, an collaborate with the Jamaica Diaspora Taskforce Action Network (JDTAN) planning committee for the upcoming Advancement in Education Summit, York University, Toronto, Canada, while creating additional professional development opportunities for teachers.
8. Spearheaded by the JTA Secretariat, the Professional Advancement and Teacher Welfare Committee is mandated to collaborate with the

Education & Research, International Relations Committees to organize and execute the Loma Linda EXSEED International Conference.

9. Collaborate with the JTA Secretariat to organize and execute Central Executive Training.
10. Collaborate with the JTA Secretariat and the Membership Committee to host a residential workshop on grievance procedures for principals.
11. Collaborate with the Study Circle Committee to organize a two-day residential workshop for up to 100 new contact teachers across the four regions.
12. Collaborate with the Public Relations Committee to raise awareness and empower teachers about the JTA's professional and psychosocial programmes.
13. Spearhead and collaborate with the Public Relations and Sector Committees to organize a National Public Forum on the funding of Education in Jamaica.
14. Spearheaded by the JTA Secretariat, the Professional Advancement and Teacher Welfare Committee is mandated to collaborate with the Education & Research, Membership and International Relations Committees to plan and execute an educational tour to Finland.
15. Submit and present written reports to General Council in November 2025, March 2026, and June 2026.
16. Present a written report to the JTA's 62nd Annual Conference on or before July 1, 2026.

The beginning of the 2025–2026 conference year unfolded amidst significant national challenges. The devastating effects of Hurricane Melissa brought widespread disruption, heartbreak, and uncertainty to many of our colleagues and their families. These circumstances understandably delayed the execution of several planned activities. Nonetheless, we re-organized and prioritized our prescribed activities in order to ensure meaningful progress and to uphold our mandate to the membership. Rikki Rogers' assertion reminds us that, *"Strength does not come from what you can do; it comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn't."*

With this spirit, the Committee has remained steadfast in its work.

7. ACCOMPLISHED TARGETS/COMPLETED ACTIVITIES

I. Committee Meeting to Co-opt Members

A virtual committee meeting was convened on Tuesday September 29, 2025 to co-opt additional members whose skills and perspectives will strengthen our output and enhance our representation of the diverse needs of the Association.

II. PAC National Training Session

The Professional Advancement Committee (PAC) National Training was conducted for PAC Members, PAC Parish Representatives, Parish Presidents and Chairmen of Standing Committees of the Association. The session was held on Saturday October 4, 2025 with several presenters focusing on elevating leadership capacity, deepening professional competencies, and empowering members to better serve their colleagues and institutions.

During the Conference Year 2025-2026, the following Mandates were implemented for accomplishment.

Mandate #1- Creation of Committee's Action Plan

A plan of action was developed to guide the committee in the execution of its prescribed activities.

Mandates #2 & 11- Capacity Building Training; Residential Workshop

Though the Study Circle Committee hosted its training workshop, the PAC was not integral in this owing to the purpose of the mandate issued to them. We have no doubt that the participants have gained valuable information about the Association's history and legacy.

Mandate #3- Annual Education Conference

The annual Education Conference was held at the Princess Grand Hotel from April 7-9, 2026 under the theme, ***Future-Proofing Education in Times of Crisis: Advancing STEAM and TVET to Sustain Innovation, Resilience and Recovery.***

Members of the committee were in attendance to play supportive roles as ushers, moderators and to extend expression of gratitude to the presenters. Overall, the conference was a success as it sought to prove that when STEAM meets TVET, opportunities are actualized. Educators left the conference armed with new tools that will allow them to move talk into action within their respective institutions.

Mandate #4- Psycho-Social Support through the AFT

Recognizing the emotional and psychological toll endured by many within our membership, the committee embarked on hosting two (2) psycho-social webinars in collaboration with Dr. Levin 'Chuck' Wilson of American Federation of Teachers (AFT). These webinars aimed to support interventions for members requiring structured emotional and mental health assistance as they navigate recovery in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa.

Mandate #5- Helen Stills Professional Development Day

As one of our flagship activities for the Conference Year, this PD session was held on Thursday May 7, 2026 at the Grand Palladium Hotel and focused on ***Putting on My Mask First: Protecting My Physical and Mental Health***. Along with the keynote address from renown broadcaster Fae Ellington, the other presentations were content-rich and relevant for our existing circumstances as educators.

Mandate #6- Men in Education Conference

Regrettably, this activity will not be hosted because of unforeseen reasons such as, unavailability of a suitable venue and other conflicting JTA events. It is our hope that this targeted men's session will bear fruit in the next Conference Year.

Mandate #7- JDTAN Collaboration

The Jamaica Diaspora Taskforce Action Network (JDTAN) in partnership with the JTA is far advanced in the planning of the next Advancement in Education Summit which will be held at the York University, Toronto, Canada from July 5-10. Headed by the secretariat, a large delegation of teachers will converge on the university campus to be imbued with current trends that they will return to Jamaica with the aim to activate in their various schools/colleges. As the Chairman of the PAC, being instrumental in the summit's planning, we eagerly anticipate that the experience will be a rewarding one.

Mandate #8- Loma Linda EXSEED Programme

Five (5) participants for this year's staging of the EXSEED programme have been selected and they are in preparation mode for travel to Loma Linda University, Southern California. We wish the educators from St. George's College, Montego Bay Community College, Shortwood Teachers' College, Buff Bay High School and Belair High School journeying mercies, an enjoyable and enriching encounter as they gain new knowledge.

Mandate #9- Central Executive Training

This was hosted at the Catalonia Hotel, Montego Bay, St. James from October 23-24, 2025. The two-day training activity sought to build the capacity of Central Executive Members with a focus on *Governance of the JTA, Strategic Leadership, Industrial Relations, Parliamentary Procedures, and Financing*. The knowledge gained, aims to put members in good stead to navigate the dynamic industrial relations environment.

Mandate #10- Grievance Procedure Workshop

Principals from all regions across the island attended the Grievance Procedure Workshop on Thursday January 29, 2026 at the Jamaica Conference Centre. The presentations were insightful, comprehensive and edifying.

Mandate #12- Member Awareness and Empowerment

Through the continuous posting of informational flyers, teachers are reminded of the JTA's professional and psychosocial programmes which they may utilize as they deem necessary.

Mandate #13- Funding Education in Jamaica

On Monday June 8, 2026, education stakeholders gathered in the WBC Conference Room to engage in robust dialogue through the ***Go Public! Fund Education Forum***. This event was organized by PAC member, Mrs. Anniona Jones who was the driving force behind this said engagement during the previous Conference Year.

Mandate #14- Finland Educational Tour

Plans are afoot for approximately thirty-five (35) members to journey to Finland on an education tour from August 20-30, 2026. Up to the production of this report, participants were finalizing their airline ticket purchase and hotel accommodation.

We extend our best wishes for safe travels to all educators participating in the Finland Study Tour. As you immerse yourselves in the philosophies and practices of Finland's renowned education system, may you return inspired and empowered to make an even greater impact in education. It is Henry Ford who declared, *"Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young."* May this journey be another meaningful chapter in your lifelong pursuit of learning.

Additional Activity- Participation on the National Disaster Response Committee (NDROC)

In light of the widespread impact of Hurricane Melissa, the Chairman has been actively participating in scheduled meetings and relief efforts to various parishes initiated by this special committee. This engagement ensured that the welfare and immediate needs of our most severely affected members were strongly represented, and that support strategies were effectively aligned with the realities on the ground.

On Wednesday June 17, 2026, the Chairman joined a contingent of JTA administrators and members along with a delegation of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) to visit Hurricane Melissa ravaged schools in St. Elizabeth. This solidarity expedition saw the group playing courtesy calls to Black River High School, Black River Primary School, Brompton Primary School, Pondside Primary School and Munro College. For the most part, these schools have not seen much change to their infrastructures since October 2025 when Melissa ripped across the island and brought them into ruins. However, rebuilding efforts were in train for them, and the resilience and patience of the staff and students were on full display as they witnessed their schools in construction mode.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the 2025–2026 Conference Year was marked by the unprecedented devastation of Hurricane Melissa, an event that significantly impacted the education sector and the communities we serve. Although the hurricane occurred near the beginning of the Conference Year, the Association remained steadfast in its commitment to supporting members by navigating the recovery process through a series of resilience-based, teacher-centred activities designed to foster professional growth, promote members' welfare, and empower educators.

Through workshops, seminars, advocacy initiatives, and collaborative engagements, the Committee remained committed to strengthening the teaching profession and enhancing the quality of education. These initiatives reflected our collective resolve to respond to challenges with innovation, compassion, and professionalism. As we reflect on our accomplishments and the lessons learned throughout the year, we are reminded that our greatest achievements have been made possible through collaboration, commitment, and a shared vision of educational excellence.

As educator and author Haim G. Ginott aptly reminds us, *"Teachers are expected to reach unattainable goals with inadequate tools. The miracle is that at times they accomplish this impossible task."* May we continue to work together in advancing the interests of teachers, enriching the

teaching profession, and contributing meaningfully to the continued development of the education sector.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my profound gratitude to the President Mark Malabver for the confidence reposed in me by entrusting me with the chairmanship of the Professional Advancement and Teacher Welfare Committee (PAC). Serving in this capacity has been both an inspiring and empowering experience, providing me with invaluable opportunities for growth, leadership, and service to the Association.

My sincere appreciation is extended to the members of the Secretariat—the President-Elect, Mrs. La Sonja Harrison, Immediate Past President, Dr. Mark Smith, Administrative Officer, Dr. Margaret Chin and Administrative Assistants, Mrs. Annette Gordon and Miss Simone Rowe—for their customary unwavering support, guidance, and commitment in ensuring the efficient planning, coordination, and successful execution of the committee's programmes and activities throughout the Conference Year. Your professionalism, responsiveness, and collaborative spirit have been instrumental to our accomplishments.

We are thankful also to the other members of staff (all categories) who have contributed in one way or another to make our Conference Year the success it was.

To the members of the PAC, I offer my heartfelt thanks for your drive, commitment, sacrifices, stick-to-itiveness, dedication, and unwavering support throughout the Conference Year. Your willingness to give of your time, expertise, and energy, often beyond what was required, enabled the committee to fulfil its mandate despite the many challenges encountered. The successes we celebrate are a direct reflection of your collective efforts and steadfast commitment to excellence.

"Gratitude is the memory of the heart." May each of you know that your contributions have been deeply appreciated and will continue to have a lasting impact on the Association and the members we serve.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The **Men in Education Conference** should be designated a priority initiative and scheduled within the first term of the Conference Year. This will ensure that the men of the Association feel valued, appreciated, and intentionally supported through meaningful professional engagement and recognition.
2. Members appointed to the incoming PAC should receive a comprehensive orientation to ensure they have a clear understanding

of their roles, responsibilities, and expectations as committee members.

3. Incoming committee members should be fully cognizant that the PAC convenes monthly and serves as the driving force behind the planning, implementation, and coordination of the Association's professional activities. Active participation and consistent engagement are therefore essential.
4. Consideration should be given to nominating and electing members who are passionate about service, committed to teamwork, dependable, and willing to contribute meaningfully to the work of the committee. Such qualities will strengthen the committee's effectiveness and ensure the continued success of its programmes and initiatives, without undue pressure to other members.

Let us continue to *Unite and Serve*.
Long Live the JTA!

**Prepared and submitted by: Andrea Bryan Hughes (Mrs.)
Chairman, 2025-2026**

July 2026