



**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
TO THE
JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL
CONFERENCE
AUGUST 17-19, 2026
AT THE
OCEAN CORAL SPRINGS, TRELAWNY, JAMAICA**





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OCEAN SPRINGS /EDEN BAY HOTEL, TRELAWNY, JAMAICA**

1. REPORTING PERIOD

APRIL TO JUNE 2026

2. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE

OFFICERS

Mr. Mark Malabver	President
Mrs. La Sonja Harrison,	President-Elect
Dr. Mark Smith	Immediate Past President

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Dr. Margaret Chin	Assistant Secretary General Professional Services
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MEMBERS

Dr. Prim Lewis	Chairman
Miss Roymane Robinson	Council Member
Miss Davia Ellis	Council Member
Miss Alicia Pitterson	Council Member (DECEASED)
Dr. Shernette Powell	Council Member

CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Dr. Carlene Thompson	Co-opted
Dr. Latoya Reeves	Co-opted
Miss Jennifer Richards -Wilson	Co-opted
Miss Simone White	Co-opted

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

As outlined in the Jamaica Teachers' Association Memorandum and Articles of Association (2017), the Special Education Committee "shall consider all matters affecting special education".

Additionally, the committee is tasked with fulfilling the President's Mandate for the Conference Year 2025–2026 as it relates to the special education sector.

4. PRESIDENT'S MANDATE FOR THE CONFERENCE YEAR 2025-2026

In addition to the mandates stipulated in the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the committee is asked to pursue the following targets:

1. Develop a plan of action to guide the work of the committee.
2. Spearhead, in collaboration with the Professional Advancement and Teacher Welfare Committee, on one aspect of special needs training based on assessment.
3. Collaborate with the Property & Business Development Committee to establish a Special Needs Diagnostic Assessment Centre to assess children of members of the JTA and make recommendations with respect to its operations.
4. Collaborate with the Secondary and Primary Committees to organize a Skills TVET/STEAM Exposition.
5. Spearhead and collaborate with the Primary Committee to identify four (4) Primary schools across the regions have special needs spaces that require renovation and resources, and to take all necessary steps to undertake these projects ahead of Labour Day.
6. Conduct a needs assessment of special needs institutions and make recommendations as to how they can be upgraded to world-class standards.
7. Conduct an online Forum examining special needs education and the need for a Special Education Act.
8. Submit and present written reports to the General Council in November 2025, March 2026, and June 2026.
9. Present a written report to the JTA's 62nd Annual Conference on or before July 1, 2026.

5. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Meeting schedule presented to the committee is outlined below:

Dates
September---Co-Option
October 28, 2025
November 15, 2025
January 17, 2026
March 14, 2026
April 18, 2026
May 16, 2026
June 13, 2026

Actual Meetings held to date

The Committee has met ten (10) times since the start of the Conference year. The were additional informal meetings. The meetings are outlined below:

Dates Meetings of Actual Meetings

September 25, 2025 Co-option meeting
October 15, 2025 Zoom
October 22, 2025 Virtual-Zoom
November 26, 2025 Virtual Meeting-Zoom
December 8, 2026 Virtual-Zoom
January 17, 2026 JTA Head Office

March 14, 2026 Virtual -Zoom
ZOOM

April 18, 2026 JTA Head Office
May 2026 WhatsApp Call

June 9, 2026 Zoom
June 30, 2026 Zoom

6. COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Co-option Meeting:

The Spec. Ed. Committee met on September 25, 2025 for the first time. During this meeting, the committee completed the co-option exercise. The meeting was rescheduled from Sept. 24, to accommodate the memorial service for past president and trustee, Mr. Patrick Smith. Four members were co-opted to the committee.

Mandate Review and Planning Meeting:

The first full committee meeting was held on October 15, 2025 at 7pm. During this meeting the committee met with the president, Mr. Mark Malabver, and, administrative, Dr. Margaret Chin. Mr. Malabver thank the members for their willingness to serve and shared his expectations. Dr. Chin gave pertinent advice, shared the president's mandate and guided the committee in developing an action plan. The committee chair, Dr. Prim Lewis, advised on the communication method and proposal for meetings.

Hurricane Impact:

Hurricane Melissa impacted the island on October 28, 2025; however, the entire island was in preparation mode for at least a week prior. The committee members checked in where possible; however, no meeting was possible due to the unavailability of internet and road access. It was established that all members were safe, despite individual challenges.

Following the passage of Melissa the team collaborated via whatsapp to brainstorm ideas for support and relief. The team agreed to focus on relief to persons with special needs and started a collection drive. The committee continued to meet virtually and make plans for the visit to the Lucea Centre of Special Education. This school was among those identified as badly damaged.

Relief and Assessment:

The committee met on February 6th, 2026 for preplanning regarding the Hanover visit. The team travelled to the Lucea Centre of Special Education on February 12, 2026 to deliver relief items and conduct assessment for proposed Labour Day Project. Five members of the committee made the trip.



It was a very productive trip; however, it left the committee members broken. The members gave the coordinator Mrs. **Nichola Easte** a pledge to return with assistance.

Early Childhood and Special Education Conference

On March 13, 2026, the Special Education Committee collaborated with the Early Childhood Committee to host a conference at the JTA Head Office with educators from all across Jamaica. This conference was a resounding success.



The Observation of World Down syndrome

World Down syndrome day was recognized on March 21, 2026. The Special Education Committee acknowledged the day by bringing awareness and the wearing of coloured socks.



Autism Awareness Month Observation

The month of April saw the committee being extremely busy executing activities to mark **Autism Awareness Month**.

The Committee Planned and executed activities for Autism Awareness Month by way of daily graphical, and informational posters created by team members and two major seminars. The first seminar was held on April 6, 2026, a public holiday, and achieved attendance of over 400 persons.

Ms. Simone White guided the team throughout the month on planning and executing the activities. The activities were in high demand. The panel included local and international presenters, who were well received.

A promotional poster for the Autism Awareness Forum 2026. The poster has a dark blue background with a yellow banner at the top and bottom. The top banner contains the text "JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE" and "AUTISM AWARENESS FORUM 2026 MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2026 @ 6 PM". The bottom banner contains the text "THEME: HARMONY IN DIVERSITY 'UNDERSTANDING AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER: BREAKING DOWN MYTHS AND FACTS'". In the center, there are seven circular portraits of the speakers and host, each with their name and title below it. The speakers are Mark Malabver (President, JTA), Dr. Prim Lewis (JTA Chairman, Special Education Committee), Dr. Ryan Fraser (Professor, Counselor, Author), Dr. Latoya Reeves (Principal, Special Education Advocate), and Terry - Ann & Lowenfield Alleyne (Founders, Autistic Edge). The host is Davia "Diversia" Ellis.

**JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**AUTISM AWARENESS FORUM 2026
MONDAY, APRIL 6, 2026 @ 6 PM**

Mark Malabver
PRESIDENT,
JTA

Dr. Prim Lewis
JTA CHAIRMAN,
SPECIAL EDUCATION
COMMITTEE

Dr. Ryan Fraser
PROFESSOR
COUNSELOR
AUTHOR

Dr. Latoya Reeves
PRINCIPAL
SPECIAL EDUCATION
ADVOCATE

Terry - Ann & Lowenfield Alleyne
FOUNDERS,
AUTISTIC
EDGE

Davia "Diversia" Ellis
HOST

**THEME: HARMONY IN DIVERSITY
"UNDERSTANDING AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER:
BREAKING DOWN MYTHS AND FACTS"**

JTA Education Conference

Dr. Prim Lewis represented the committee at the JTA Education Conference held on April 7th-9th. She presented on the theme: "Inclusion of STEAM/TEVET in Special Education."



Autism Awareness Month Seminar- #2

The Committee hosted its 2nd Autism Awareness seminar on April 22, 2026. Approximately 200 persons attended.



JAMAICA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

AUTISM AWARENESS FORUM 2026

Wednesday, April 22, 2026 @ 6 PM.



Mr. Mark Malabver
President,
JTA



Dr. Prim Lewis
JTA Chairman,
Special Education
Committee



Ms. Tenille King
Special Education
Practitioner
(USA)



Dr. Howard
Harvey
HEART NSTA
LEAP CENTER



Mrs. Toween Campbell
Wilson
Special Needs
Coordinator Ministry
of Education Skills
Youth and
Information
Region 5

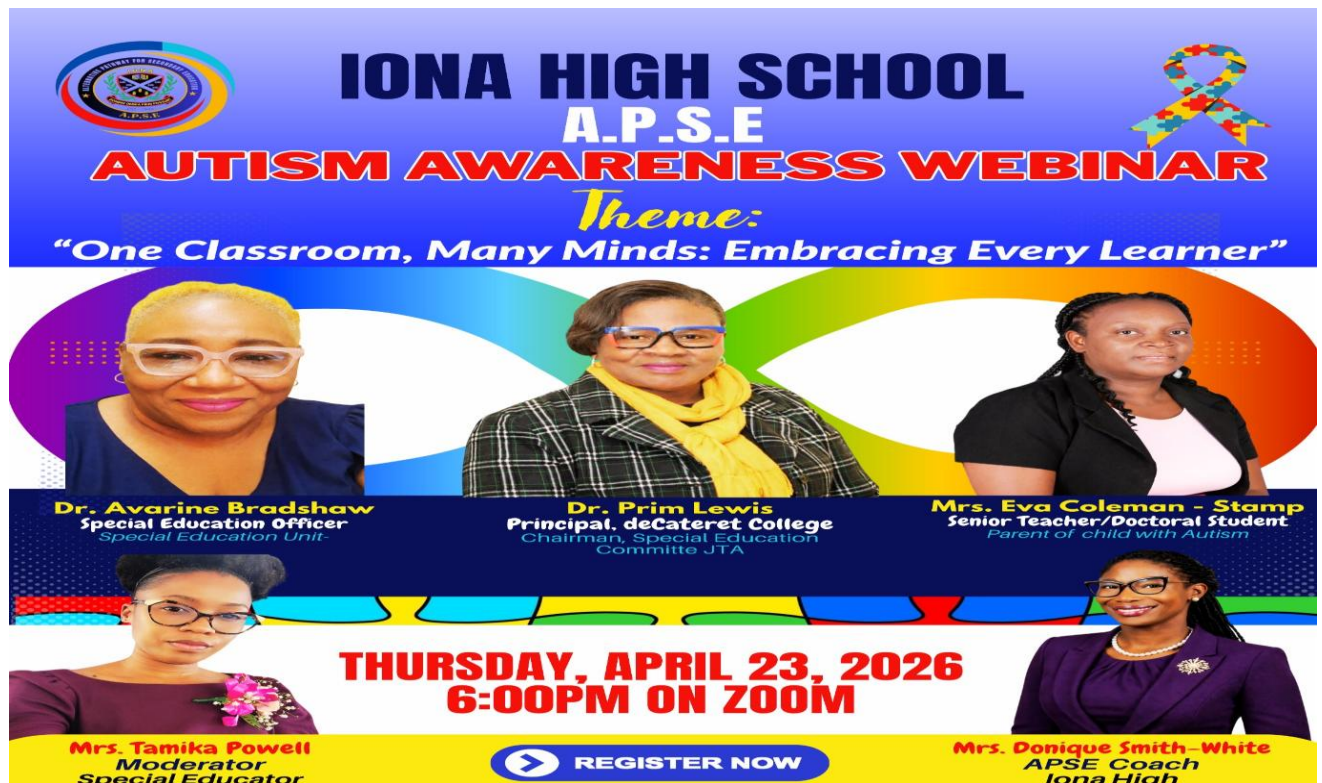


Dr. Shernette Powell
HOST

**THEME: TRANSITIONAL PATHWAYS AND SUPPORT
STRATEGIES FOR FAMILIES WITH AUTISM**

Committee Service

The Committee Chairman, Dr. Prim Lewis, represented the committee at an online forum at Iona High School.



IONA HIGH SCHOOL
A.P.S.E
AUTISM AWARENESS WEBINAR

Theme:
"One Classroom, Many Minds: Embracing Every Learner"

Dr. Avarine Bradshaw
Special Education Officer
Special Education Unit

Dr. Prim Lewis
Principal, deCateret College
Chairman, Special Education
Committee JTA

Mrs. Eva Coleman - Stamp
Senior Teacher/Doctoral Student
Parent of child with Autism

Mrs. Tamika Powell
Moderator
Special Educator

THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2026
6:00PM ON ZOOM

REGISTER NOW

Mrs. Donique Smith-White
APSE Coach
Iona High

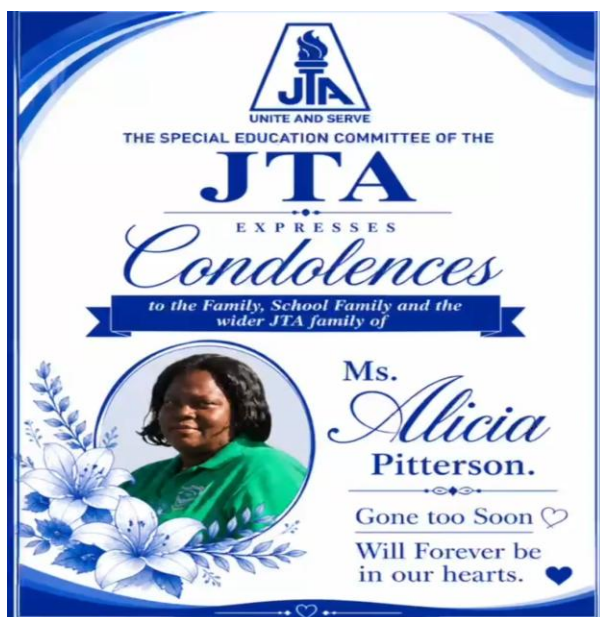
JAID 70th Anniversary Celebration

On April 30, 2026, the Sec. Ed. Chairman represented the Committee at the JAID 70th anniversary celebration which was held at the Woodlawn School of Special Education.



Bereavement in the Committee

The special education committee experienced the greatest challenge on **May 4, 2026**, when the members learned of the death of a member, Mrs. Alicia Pitterson. This news shook the committee members to their core. In response, an impromptu WhatsApp video meeting was held where members consoled each other. The committee created a flyer and video in her honour of the member. Ms. Pitterson was a dedicated member of the committee.



Gone too soon,

Alicia United and Served.

The chairman visited the school to offer condolences and support to the principal and staff. She also delivered an orchid on behalf of the committee.

Labour Day Plans and Execution

The committee met in May to review plans for Labour Day across the various regions as these projects were being done in Special Education spaces.

The chairman presented a proposal to the General Secretary, Dr. Nicely, and the Assistant Secretary General Professional Services, Dr. Chin, regarding mandate #7. Four Special Education spaces were selected from across the four regions to benefit from Labour Day projects, to the tune of Two Million Dollars (\$2,000, 000.00). The spaces are the Lucea Spec. Ed. Centre in Hanover, the St. Christopher School for the Deaf in St. Ann, the Belmont Park Primary School in St. Catherine and the Woodlawn School of Education in Manchester. The president requested that the focus be placed on the West and Special education due to the devastation experienced by these parishes. (see Appendix A)

Labour Day projects began in the month of May and culminated on May 25th. The Regional Officers and JTA members in all four regions participated in the projects, with the president visiting and working at various sites.

All special education spaces identified were retrofitted and refurbished. Additionally, JTA partnered with E-Learning to support all schools with technology.

The Chairman, Dr. Prim Lewis, participated in the Llandilo- Lucea Special Ed. Learning Centre project in honour of Miss Alicia Pitterson, who had journeyed with the team in February to give support to the Lucea Special Education Centre.



The JTA National Skills Expo

The Committee effectively carried out its mandate of partnering with the Secondary Committee to plan and execute the JTA National Skills Expo. The Expo was successfully held on June 4, 2026, at deCarteret College.





way forward.

the mandates and planned the



erson

and her funeral was on June 11, 2026.
 memorial service and the funeral service, both



The JTA/Sagicor Primary School Championship

The Special Ed committee was pleased to have been able to provide support for the competitions inaugural inclusion of students with special needs. Three schools participated. All the events were successfully executed.



This was a great day for the JTA.

Mandate Completion

The final meeting of the committee was held on June 30, 2026.

The Spec. Ed committee is satisfied with the execution of its mandates to date despite challenges encountered.

The psychosocial activity will be held jointly with the Early Childhood Committee on July 26, 2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. With consideration of Mandate #3 - the Committee recommends that a space be provided at the JTA Head Office in Kingston for this assessment and that provisions be made for specialists to complete assessments twice per week.

2. Strengthen Early Identification and Individualized Support through training of educators to
Develop a systematic process to identify students with learning and developmental needs as early as possible through regular screening, teacher referrals, and collaboration with parents. Ensure that each identified student has an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) with clear goals, accommodations, intervention strategies, and regular progress reviews to monitor growth.

3. Provide Ongoing Professional Development for Teachers

Organize regular training sessions to equip teachers with effective inclusive education strategies, differentiated instruction techniques, positive behavior management, and the use of assistive technologies. This will enhance teachers' confidence and capacity to meet the diverse learning needs of students in both mainstream and special education settings.

7. EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

I wish to express my gratitude to President Mark Malabver for his confidence in me to lead this committee. Special thanks to the President Elect, Mrs. La Sonja Harrison and IPP, Dr. Mark Smith for their invaluable contribution to the success of the committee. Thanks also to Dr. Margaret Chin for her guidance in steering the team. We would also like to express gratitude to her secretary, Mrs. Annette Gordon, for assisting with the resources needed for meetings. Special thanks to the members of the Committee for accepting the charge to serve. Their contributions to the work of the committee thus far have been tremendous.

A very special thanks to the committee's secretary Mrs. Jennifer Richards for the meticulous work done in preparing minutes and reports for the committee including the final report to conference.

Prepared by: Dr. Prim Lewis, JP.
Chairman
Special Education Committee
July 2026.

Appendix A

JTA – Labour Day Projects- 2026

Mandate 5

Special Education Committee

Chairman: Dr. Prim Lewis

Members involved: Special Ed. Committee Members

Primary Committee Members

Rationale:

The JTA Special Education Committee has been mandated to create a special education space to serve students of JTA Members regarding Assessment and recommendations for related treatment.

However, the occurrence of Hurricane Melissa has necessitated that the Committee and JTA at large pivot to respond to the needs of educational institutions in the wake of the hurricane.

Many of the resources of the JTA had to be diverted to serving affected members.

To satisfy mandate (5), which is to Spearhead and collaborate with the Primary Committee to identify four (4) Primary schools across the regions that have special need spaces that require renovation and resources, and to take all necessary steps to undertake these projects ahead of Labour Day.”

The Committee has travelled to Lucea in Hanover to examine the Lucea Centre for students with special needs, and has received recommendations for three other special education units/spaces for refurbishing under the JTA’s Labour Day Project Facility.

Project 1.

Location: Lucea/Hanover:

Contact Person: Nichola Easte

Phone: 876 891 4637

The Special Education Committee proposes the following projects for Labour Day, in alignment with mandate 6.

Goal: Provide a more aesthetically appealing environment for students and staff, while providing protection from the elements.

Scope of Work:

Repair and Refurbishing of the Lucea Learning Centre (A branch of the Llandilo Special Education Facility), formerly School of Hope.

- Repair of the school roof (Six Sheets of zinc needed)
- Repainting of the front of the school and one classroom
- Installation of Shelves in one classroom or placement of a cupboard
- Supplying of two laptops for one classroom

Proposal for execution:

- The roof could be repaired before Labour Day
- Cupboard sourced and put in place before Labour Day
- Painting commences before Labour Day.
- Painting and interior design commences before Labour Day
- External painting completed on Labour Day.

Materials

- Paint, Zinc, Nails, Stop leak, Rug, Board for shelves

Project 2:

Location: Woodlawn School of Special Education

Mandeville Manchester:

Contact Person: Mrs. Euphemia Kerr

Phone number: 876 310 3651

Goal: Provide Resources for the Woodlawn School of Special Education to enhance the Learning Space in a classroom

The Chairman visited this facility and spoke with stakeholders as well as examined the classrooms

Scope of Work:

- Provision of four laptops (for use by students in the secondary department)
- Provision of a smart television for use by students in the Primary department.
- Provision of learning mats for students in the Primary Department (Learning mats may be for seating as well as

This space would be enhanced with rugs, mats, and instructional materials

Project 3:**Location: Belmont Park Primary****Portmore/St. Catherine****Contact Person: Principal: Mr. Roy John-Keith****Phone: 876 385 4020**

Goal: The establishment of a Sensory Room for students with special needs.

Purpose:

Sensory rooms are known for supporting people's bodies, minds, and emotions. They're particularly popular with individuals with autism, ADHD and anxiety. You'll find sensory rooms in schools, social centres and hospitals, but their benefits are almost universal.

Scope of work:

The funding received from JTA will not complete the space; however, Mr. John Keith has expressed that the funds will take them a long way.

- Refurbishing of the Special Education Space to facilitate a sensory room
- Addition of special lighting
- Addition of soft mats
- Addition of special equipment (balls, special toys, sofa or rocking chair, object suited for the students to calm down
- Musical equipment/labptop and speakers would assist as music can easily be selected from Youtube.

Examples of a sensory room (equipment/products/objects in the room may vary)



Project 4:

Location: Institution: St. Christopher School for the Deaf (Ages 3-12)

Brown's Town – St. Ann

Principal: Mrs. Lavern Stewart-Barnett

Phone: (8768098281)

Goal:

Refurbish Special Education Space in St. Christopher School for the Deaf (Ages 3 to 12)

In discussions with Principal Stewart Barnett classes are being held under a tent.

NET is currently – Project is to be completed before May ends.

All computers and other equipment were destroyed in Hurricane Melissa.

Scope of Work:

Focus on the 5-year-old students

Replacing some of the items lost in the hurricane through the provision of the following:

- Manipulatives
- Charts
- Cushions
- Television for circle time
- Learning Mats
- Containers for personal items
- 4 laptops for instruction

Proposed work schedule and execution:

The Committee proposes the following:

- The Chair of the Primary Committee oversees the Belmont Park Primary project with support from the Special Education Committee. (This discussion took place with the Prim Committee chair.)
- The Committee will participate in the Lucea project
- Each project in executed throughout May, possibly to include Saturdays.
- Teams will be drawn from Special Education Committee Members across parishes
- Photos will be taken by Leaders of the various institutions
- The president will be asked to join the Lucea project or the Portmore project.

Name of Institution	Contact Persons	Numbers	Town/ Parish	Region
The Lucea Centre of Special Education (A branch of the Llandilo School of Special Needs)	Nichola Easte	876 891 4637	Lucea/Hanover:	Western Region
Belmont Park Primary	Mr. Roy John-Keith	876 385 4020	Portmore/St. Catherine	South-east Region
Woodlawn School of Special Education	Mrs. Euphemia Kerr	876 310 3651	Mandeville Manchester:	South-central Region
St. Christopher School for the Deaf.	Mrs. Lavern Stewart-Barnett	(8768098281)	Brown's Town – St. Ann	North-Eastern

Schools that participated in JTA/Sagicor Primary Meet - Hope Valley Experimental

- Canberra Court Special School
- Ena Barclay Centre of Excellence



