



Central Executive Onboarding Handbook



► President's Message

Colleagues and Leaders of the Central Executive,



It is with a profound sense of purpose and pride that I welcome you all to this critical three-day campaign strategy and Central Executive training. Today, we stand at a pivotal moment in the history of the Jamaica Teachers' Association, armed with a shared vision to disrupt the status quo and boldly champion the future of public education in our nation. When one considers the theme guiding the conference year ***"Reformation Now: Rebuilding a Resilient Education System Buoyed by the Eternal Father & Unrelenting Unionism"***.

This year's training has taken on quite a significance as solidarity with international partners remains a continued effort of this august body. It is through this medium that the Union continues to provide empowerment and opportunities for expansion for its almost 20,000-strong membership. On this occasion, the Association is pleased to welcome and again partner with the National Education Association (NEA) which boasts an enviable membership of over three million educators.

Our mission demands that we remain the chief architects of educational policy and strategy in Jamaica. To achieve this, our voices must not only be loud; they must be strategic, unified, and irresistible to change-makers. That is why our partnership with the (NEA) is so deeply vital. By aligning our collective strengths with our international colleagues, we are bridging local dedication with global strategic excellence. This collaboration brings us premier training in campaign strategy—equipping this executive body with the modern advocacy tools, communications frameworks, and mobilization tactics required to navigate the current legislative and economic landscapes.

Board members, over the next two days as we immerse in the training, may same result in a reignited passion, fire, sense of purpose of us as Unionists to rally the call to action inspired by the national theme: ***"Reformation Now: Schools Jamaican Children Deserve!"*** Colleagues, may we with one voice, stand when called upon in our numbers to bring to national attention areas in which we demand urgent change: ***Early Childhood & Special Education, Change in Education Legislation, Infrastructural Resilience of Learning Spaces and General Funding of Education***. It is my hope that this training will empower us to transform our grassroots concerns into highly effective national campaigns that mandate public and private sector investment and sharpen our strategic positioning to protect the livelihoods, compensation, and institutional value of our educators.

Together, we can achieve much. We will devise strategies that are guided entirely by the expertise of Jamaica's teachers. May we pledge not to let this training take rest on the pages of our notebooks

at the end of the two days or die a natural death as you depart the gates of this premises. Even with the struggles of life, may the fire kindle fuel us to light a spark in our Regions, PA's DA's, our schools and ultimately every member across the length and breadth of this island nation.

As members of the Central Executive, you are the vanguard of this movement. The skills we hone during this seminar will define the trajectory of our advocacy and the resilience of our union. Let us approach these sessions with open minds, collaborative spirits, and an unwavering commitment to the sacred mission of defending our educators and our children.

Welcome, colleagues. Let us build the future together as we continue to ***Unite and Serve.***

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► Purpose of This Handbook

Welcome to the Central Executive!

To support the mission of the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA), the Professional Service Unit has developed this onboarding handbook for new and returning members of the Central Executive. The intent is to educate and continually guide our members to a high level of strategic success and achievement in accordance with best practices.

This handbook contains information regarding relevant policies and regulations and it is used in conjunction with the JTA's Articles and Memorandum of Association. It serves as a resource for the General Council, Central Executive, Secretariat and all members of the JTA in determining the manner in which matters of business are to be conducted.

It is critical to good governance that the members of JTA Central Executive appreciate and take steps to address conflicts of interest and apply the highest levels of integrity and ethics to ensure that matters are looked at from the correct perspective. New Board Directors and members of the General Council should also be clear on how their roles differ from those of the Secretariat. As a key reference source, this handbook should be revisited over time until you feel confident and comfortable enough to participate in meetings on an equal footing with those who have been involved for a longer period.

This handbook is not exhaustive, and you are encouraged to consult the resource list to improve your understanding of areas of particular importance or relevance. It is a living document that is updated as policies and procedures change.

This handbook is used in conjunction with the annual capacity building training for incoming members of the Central Executive.

► How to use this Handbook

- 1** **First**, read the definitions and abbreviations in the next section. These are critical for making sense of the terms commonly used in governance and organizational management.

- 2** **Second**, take notes on the points that will help get you “up to speed” in your role as a Board member, referring regularly to the handbook as you familiarize yourself with your new role.

- 3** **Third**, review the checklists, ensuring that the information that has been provided, is complete and you understand it.

- 4** **Finally**, if you are unsure, ask questions of your fellow members. Remember, this is a team effort, and your fellow members are relying on you to get up to speed quickly to contribute your skills, knowledge and experience to the organization.

This handbook is a tool to facilitate improved understanding of good governance, legal obligations and better practices.

It also presents tips, information and resources to assist with the implementation of effective governance within the Association. The contents of this handbook are based on the Memorandum and Articles of Association and relevant better practice at the time of the preparation.

► Definitions and Abbreviations

Advocacy	Any action that speaks in favour of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports, defends or pleads on behalf of others.
Committee	a group of people appointed for a specific function by a larger group and typically consisting of members of that group.
Board	The people collectively responsible for governing and controlling an organization through strategic policy direction and financial oversight. This could be in conjunction with an executive committee or as the executive committee. The JTA has a Board of Directors (Central Executive) with a President who serves as the Chairman/person.
Board Director	A member of the Association's governing Central Executive
By-laws	A policy document that sets up the internal structure and rules of the organization. They provide the framework for internal governance and the day-to-day operations.
Capacity-building	The process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt and thrive.
Chair	A person appointed to manage the business of the Association and with executive authority provided under an Association's constitution and by-laws. The President normally Chairs the Central Executive meetings. The President also selects a Chair for the Standing and Ad Hoc Committees
Conflict of interest	When a person's personal or commercial interests conflict with their duties.
Committee	A primary way in which members contribute to the work and mandates of the Association. There are twenty-one (21) Standing Committees and one (1) Ad Hoc Committee. An Ad Hoc Committee is commonly formed to deal with specific policy issues that arise or become a concern.
Constitution	A document that sets out the Association's rules and purposes. It is broken down into numbered clauses with subclauses and provides guidance for good governance by setting out operational rules that apply to members.
Fiduciary responsibility	The legal duty that people who hold a position of trust owe to people who trust them. Common law says that board members owe

their organization a fiduciary responsibility.

Governance	The framework of rules, relationships, systems and processes within and by which authority is exercised and controlled in corporations and organizations.
Management	An organization's senior staff.
Minutes	Documents that record the activities and decisions of a meeting.
Mission statement	A statement that expresses what an organization does to achieve its purpose.
President	A person appointed to manage the business of the Association and with executive authority provided under an organization's constitution and by-laws, often used interchangeably with the term "Chair".
Protocol	A system of rules that explains the correct conduct and procedures to be followed in formal situations.
Quorum	The number of directors who must be present for a meeting to be valid.
Secretariat	The Administrative arm of the Association and made up of permanent staff.
Secretary General	The Secretary General is responsible for managing the overall day to day operations and resources of the Association and acting as the Head of the Secretariat.
Strategic plan	How an organization defines its purpose and goals, beyond the immediate future, and the actions to achieve those goals.
Transparency	Organizations are transparent when they enable others to see and how they operate in an honest way. To achieve transparency, an organization must provide information that is accurate and complete, and in a timely manner, about its activities and governance to stakeholders.
Vision statement	A statement that expresses the current and future objectives of an organization and is intended as a guide to help the organization make decisions that align with its philosophy and declared set of goals.

► Section 1

Understanding Good Governance in a Membership Organization



What is governance?

Governance is the framework of rules, systems, processes and relationships within an organization and how authority is exercised and controlled in that organization. It includes the mechanisms by which the organization and those managing it are held accountable.

What is Good Governance?

Good governance exists where an organization has systems and processes in place that are appropriate to its circumstances and that enable the organization to be viable, pursue its purpose effectively and meet its obligations under the law.

Governance within the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA) focuses on achieving the organization's vision and mission while ensuring the Association is viable.

Both of these relate to the fiduciary responsibility that the Board and Management have when exercising authority over the actions the organization takes.

Public trust and accountability are essential aspects of an organization's viability. They are necessary to achieve the social mission in a way that is respected by those whom the organization serves and by the society in which it is located.

Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948

Employers' organizations are institutions set up to organize and advance the collective interests of employers. They are crucial for shaping an environment that is conducive to competitive and sustainable enterprises that can contribute to economic and social development because they provide services that improve and guide the individual performance of enterprises.

The tripartite constituents of the International Labour Organization (ILO) have set out two requirements for both workers' and employers' representative organizations within the Convention on Freedom of Association, 1948 (No. 87). It stipulates that membership of such organizations must be voluntary AND that such organizations must be able to act

Key Principles of Good Governance

Fiduciary responsibility arises from a relationship of trust and confidence and carries an obligation to avoid conflict, the duty to not make a profit and the duty to not gain personal benefit or a benefit for a third party.

Legal duties While the JTA does not typically experience legal problems, failure to follow legal requirements could lead to penalties and reputational damage. A legally incorporated organization must comply with the following four legal duties.

The four main legal duties:



To act in good faith in the best interests of the organization and for a proper purpose.

To act with reasonable care, skill and diligence.

To not improperly use information or position.

To disclose and manage conflicts of interest.

Compliance with every aspect of the JTA's internal processes and procedures is essential. Amending a policy to ensure a more effective outcome sends a clear message that the EBMO takes governance seriously and is not prepared to sidestep issues that might negatively affect its credibility or reputation.

Transparency is the principle of allowing those affected by administrative decisions to know the facts and figures that informed any process that resulted in those decisions.

Conflicts of interest are a major cause of corporate governance shortcoming in the private sector. If conflict-of-interest situations are not properly identified and managed, they can seriously endanger the integrity of an organization. A conflict of interest is a situation in which member (or one of their relatives) has a private or personal interest, directly or indirectly, that (potentially) influences or appears to influence the objective exercise of their duties as a member, to the detriment or benefit of the organization.

Conflicts of interest can occur on all levels of governance and areas of human relationships and may be distinguished as:

an actual conflict

a member faces a real and existing conflict of interest;

a potential conflict

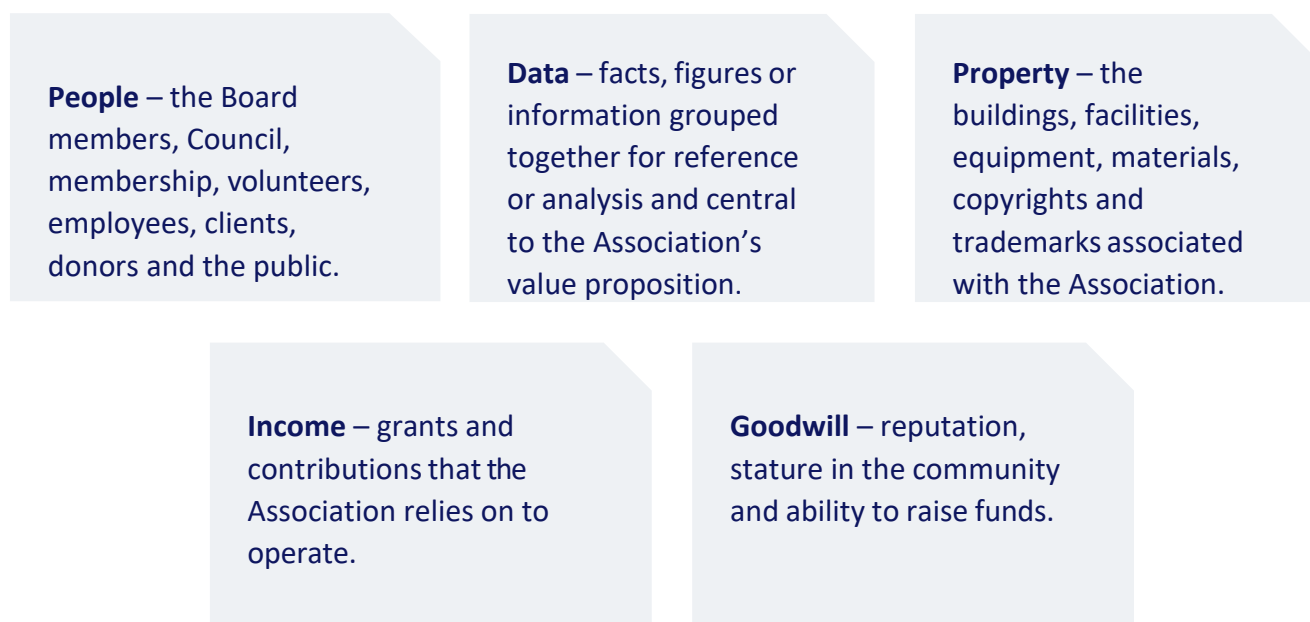
a conflict of interest does not exist yet but may occur; or

a perceived conflict

a member appears to have a conflict of interest, even if this is not the case.

Understanding and identifying risks are imperatives. **Risk** is any uncertainty about a future event that threatens an organization's ability to accomplish its mission. Viable threats endanger an organization's core assets and may limit its ability to provide its services.

The following are considered to be the core assets of the JTA:



The Association evaluates its risks by the level of threat to its core assets. The likelihood and potential consequences of a risk occurring will determine if it is a high priority risk requiring immediate attention.

Risks Most Common to the JTA

Data security – Individual negligence, intentional misconduct or security breaches resulting from poor data security of the membership database could damage trust or confidence the general membership and staff directly and indirectly. Given that membership data are a strategic asset, integral to the core value proposition of the JTA, its protection is also vital to innovation and competitive advantage.

Damage to property – Damage or destruction to property (including rented property) could impair the organization's ability to continue operations.

Employment practices – Administration and members of the Central Executive must carefully establish and follow employment policies and procedures to reduce the risk of negative employment practice-related claims and to ensure compliance with the laws regulating the employer–employee relationship. These laws apply to all aspects of the employment relationship, and non-compliance can result in an employment claim, leading to significant fees, fines or settlements.

Fraud – Theft or misappropriation of funds can have severe consequences. Public reporting of a loss could be devastating because media reports affect sponsorship and public goodwill.

Legal requirements – The JTA is subject to specific laws and regulations, and violations can lead to fines or possible dissolution. To manage the risks associated with legal compliance, the Association ensures that it keeps up to date on rules, regulations and statutes that apply to its operations. Non-compliance can both initiate governmental action and create the basis for liability action against the Association.

The Association seeks to improve its future with modifications to its risk management approach by considering the following:

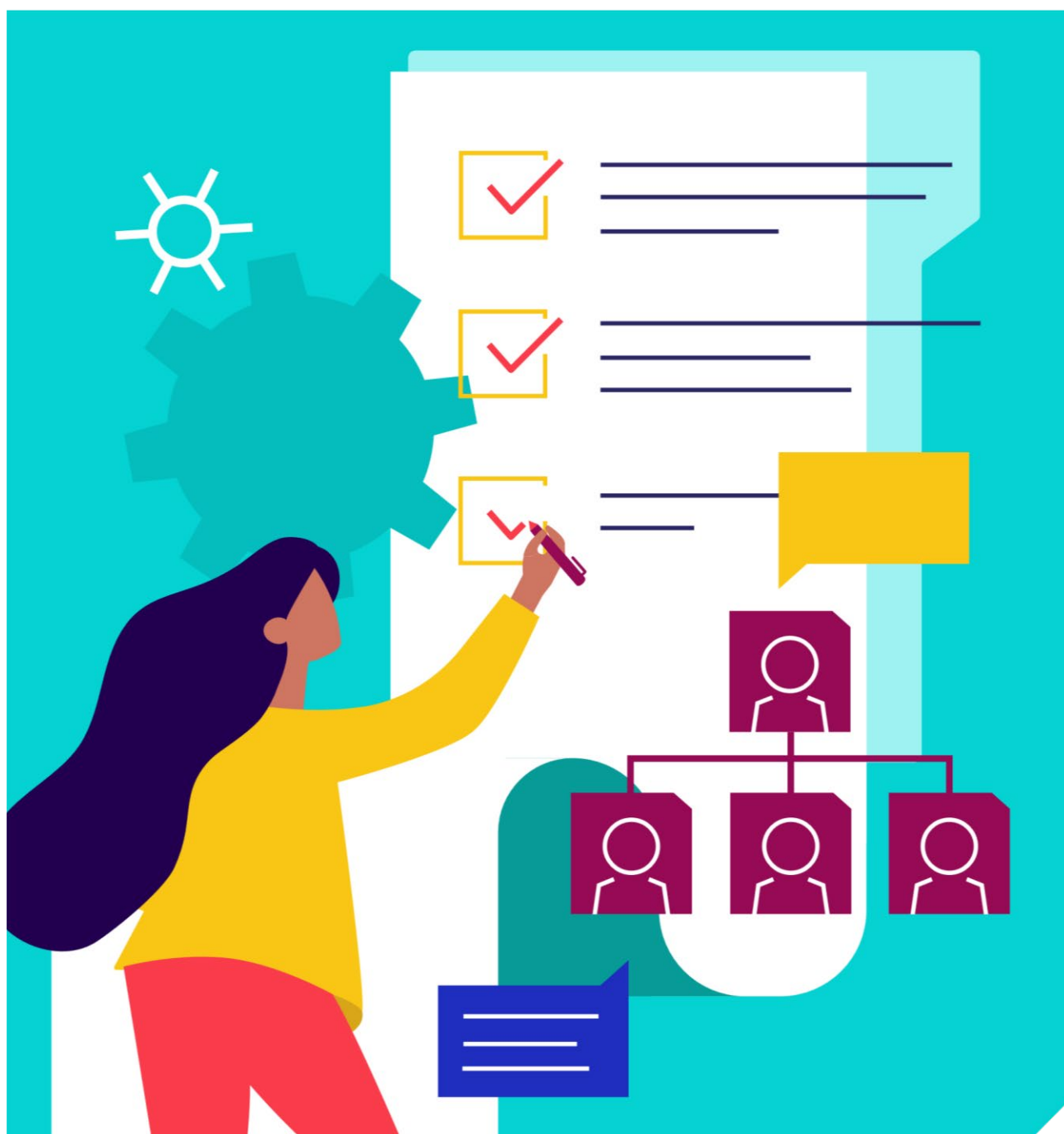
- **Protect more than members' value** - the aim is for long-term value creation.
- **Adopt a listening and learning approach.** This enables the Association to stay abreast of the volatile risk environment. It is imperative to understand how current external developments are changing the risks that the Association faces and the potential impact of longer-term trends.
- **Make risk a part of every strategy discussion.**
- **Build clarity around the shifting nature of risk.** With risks changing and emerging at speed, it is also imperative to spend enough time on understanding exactly how the risk landscape is changing. This can only be done if the Board Directors devote enough time to risk.

Key Take-Aways:

[illegible]

► Section 2

Structure and Governance of the Jamaica Teachers' Association



The General Council is the largest decision-making body of the Jamaica Teachers' Association and consists of a group of individuals who, together, are ultimately responsible for overseeing its operations and making sure it is working towards achieving its purpose.

The General membership forms the top level of our organizational chart. The membership elects the President who acts as the **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**. Generally, as a political appointment, the President directs the affair of the Association and presides at all meetings of the Annual Conference (Annual General Meeting), the General Council and the Central Executive as well as act in the best interest of the membership by way of delegated authority from the Board or as expressed in the organization's constitution.

Members also elect Delegates to the Annual Conference, held in August of each year. The General Council consists of Parish Associations, Districts Associations, Contact Teachers, Affiliates, Interest Groups, and Student Groups which are formed from members in recognized educational institutions, namely Early Childhood, Primary, All-Age, Secondary and Tertiary institutions. The Central Executive of the General Council is the chief instrument of the Association's policy as laid down by the its Annual General Meeting and have the authority to make decisions and take action on all matters within the policy. The Central Executive reports to the General Council.

The **President** has a primary responsibility to foster and maintain a constructive and effective culture in the best interest of the organization. The President, as Chairman of the Board has the primary responsibility of ensuring that the Central Executive operates in a manner that is conducive to the achievement of the strategic outcomes and purposes of the Association.

The General Council

The General Council comprises of the following persons:

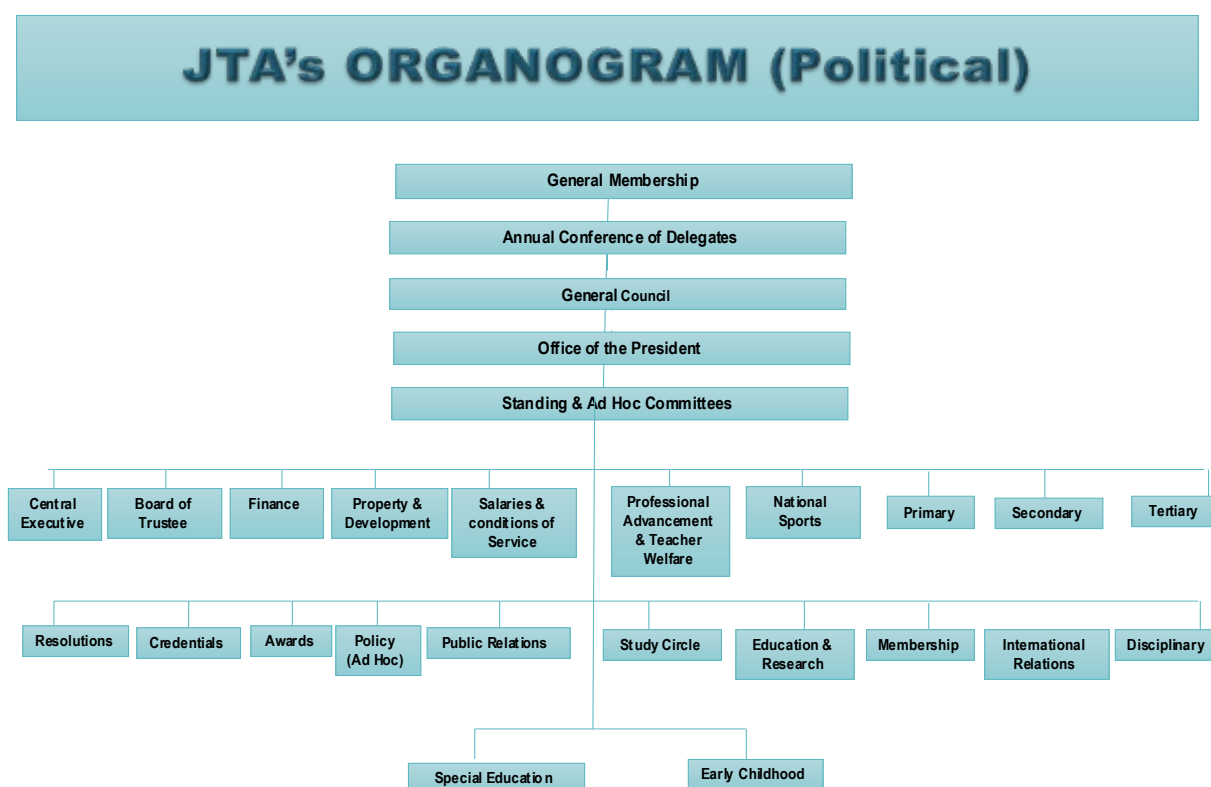
- (a) Officers, Administrative Personnel and Trustees of the Association.
- (b) Two representatives from each Parish Association
- (c) One representative from each District Association
- (d) One representative from each Interest Group and each Affiliate Group
- (e) One representative from the Early Childhood Sector
- (f) Two representatives each from members of the Primary and All Age Sector
- (g) Three representatives from the Secondary Sector
- (h) Three representatives from the Tertiary Sector
- (i) Twenty (20) co-options.

However, the President shall be limited to not more than fifteen (15). The Council meets quarterly on the Saturday following the fourth Friday of the months of March, June, September and November or at such other times as the Council may decide.

Powers and Duties: The Council has the power between Conference to initiate and implement by a simple majority of members present and voting measures affecting the welfare of the Association, reporting the results of its action to the full Conference. The Council also has the authority to interpret the regulations of the Association. Without prejudice to other powers and duties, it is the duty of the General Council to:

- (a) Appoint Committees and settle their terms of reference
- (b) To receive and consider reports from Officers, Administrative Personnel and Committees.
- (c) To examine the budgetary position and the Accounts of the Association
- (d) Arrange for the filling of vacancies which may arise within its own body
- (e) Deal with the discipline of members
- (f) Deal with such other matters as may arise from time to time.

Below is a diagram of the political structure of the Association:



Updated: September 17, 2018

Committees

The JTA relies on Committees to achieve the President's mandates or strategic programmes of the Association. Work can be delegated to Committees to more effectively deal with major activities or specialized issues and it is critically important to recognize that Committees only make recommendations for action to the General Council, which retains collective responsibility for decision-making. Committees can also present resolutions for actions to the General Council.

Committees also provide opportunities to develop knowledge within the Association. The Committees help develop leadership talent and support a leadership pipeline. Additionally, the existence of Committees indicates to the general membership and stakeholders that the Board of Directors are taking particular issues seriously. For instance, the Policy Committee as the name implies, reviews and monitors all policies which govern the operations of the Association and ensures that they serve the best interest of the members and staff of the

Association. They also recommend the development and approval of appropriate policies that will ensure the effective and efficient governance and operations of the Association.

Currently, the JTA has established 21 Committees and 1 Ad Hoc Committee. The Policy Committee is an Ad Hoc Committee, meaning it meets when necessary or as needed.

Responsibilities and expectations of Committees

The JTA has twenty-one (21) standing committees and one ad hoc committee that address and carry out the various strategies of the **approved Mandates or work plan** of the President. These Committee are generally formed at Annual Conference, with co-options from the Presidents. The President also names the Chairmen of the various Committees at the Annual Conference. The President must carefully select and be clear about who chairs a committee and establish clear and precise mandates for each Committee. Committee membership should be representative of the organization's members, and activities should be monitored through regular reporting. For standing committees, it is important to ensure that there is a system in place to rotate both the chair and membership.

The JTA's Memorandum and Articles of Association provides a list of all the Committees, its mandate, function, constitution of members as well as its quorum. Every member must become familiar with this publication. Some **primary functions of the Committee include:**

- usually works closely with the President, acting in an advisory capacity;
- volunteer to lead advocacy work and participate in the Association's services provided to other members;
- considers all matters affecting schools in the various sectors;
- keep under scrutiny Jamaican labour laws and conditions of service;
- oversees the implementation of board policies to ensure that the board is establishing and maintaining good governance practices; and
- writes and submits reports to the General Council.

Minutes and Reports

All Committees are expected to write **Minutes** of all meetings held whether in-person or virtually. The Minutes of each Committee meeting capture the key deliberations, show options for action and make recommendations for the General Council members to endorse or decide upon. Written reports of the meeting should be submitted to the General Council meetings whenever they are held. The information contained should reflect the activities of the Committee, highlight the issues, and provide options and recommendations for approval.

Reporting

Reporting obligations for the JTA are set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association under which they are established, and the Association's performance is explained in both internal and external financial reports. As a member of the General Council or Central Executive, there is a duty of care to ensure you have a level of financial literacy commensurate with the size and nature of the JTA's activities. The JTA has reporting obligations to General Council, Central Executive and the Finance Committee, achieved by

presenting a **monthly** and **annual reports** or financial reports.

No matter what reporting requirements the JTA is subject to, the members of the General Council and Central Executive help ensure the integrity of the financial reports and should accept responsibility for overseeing the integrity and assurance of the Association's financial position, performance and reporting.

Key Take-Aways

► Section 3

Roles and Functions of the Central Executive versus Administration



The relations between the Board Directors of the Central Executive and the Secretariat are critical to the Association's long-term success. Problems can arise when the different roles of the Board and administration are not clearly defined. The President is critical in managing the relationship to meet the reasonable needs and expectations of both Board and management. This is so as the Board is ultimately accountable for management and for the use of any delegated authority by the General Council.

The Role of the Central Executive

The Central Executive is the chief instrument of the Association's policy as laid down by its Annual General Meeting and has authority to make decisions and take action on all matter within such policy. As such, all Officers, Administrative Personnel and Committees are subject to the authority of the Central Executive acting on behalf of the Annual Conference, Special Conference, and General Council. Decisions and actions taken by the Central Executive shall be reported to the General Council, provided that if such are likely to be controversial, they should only be taken on the advice of the Council or Conference.

Composition: The composition of the Central Executive shall be as follows:

- (a) The Officers and Administrative Personnel
- (b) At least three (3) Trustees
- (c) One (1) representative from each Parish Association
- (d) Twenty (20) nominees of General Council. However, the President shall be limited to not more than fifteen (15).

Meetings are held monthly, normally on the fourth Friday of each month or at other times as it may decide.

Tenure of Office: A member of the Central Executive holds office from the rise of Annual Conference of one year to the close of the Conference of the year immediately succeeding. The names of all the members of the Central Executive (Directors), are recorded at the Company's Office of Jamaica.

The role of the Central Executive as the Board of Directors of the JTA in a strategy-focused approach can be separated into these different sectors:

Strategy	Establish policy and strategies to guide, monitor and control the Association's activities.
Resources	Make resources available to achieve the strategy and oversee their use.
Performance	Monitor the Association's performance.
Compliance	Oversee processes to comply with legal and regulatory requirements.
Risk	Oversee a risk management framework that supports informed decision-making by the organization.
Accountability	Report progress and align the collective interests of members, stakeholders, administration and employees.

Board Directors must decide for themselves how best to contribute to the Association to make positive impact and to meet their duties under the law. To assist in defining the role of the board and understanding its legal obligations, a **board charter** document needs to be developed setting out the respective roles, responsibilities and authorities of the board.

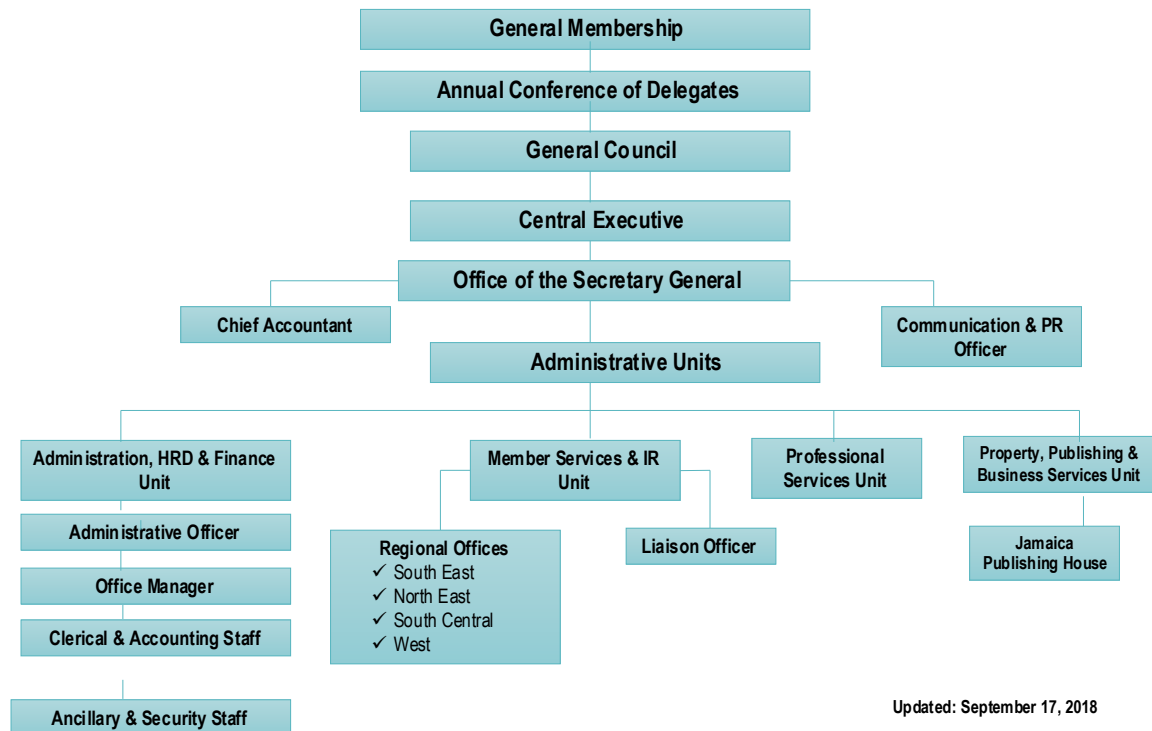
The Role of Administration

It is not practical for the Central Executive to direct the day-to-day operations of the Association or to perform the tasks necessary for it achieve its goals. For this to happen, **the General Council and Central Executive must delegate some of its authority to management.**

The Board oversees the strategy while the Secretariat (management) develops and implements the plans to achieve it. **Boards are expected to operate on a more strategic basis.**

By comparison, the Secretariat is **concerned with the more immediate operational needs** of the Association. For example, the Central Executive will generally delegate authority for the Secretary General to use the organization's financial resources within the limits set by the budget and in alignment with the Association's strategy. Below is an organogram of the JTA Administration and reporting protocols:

JTA's ORGANOGRAM (Administrative)



The Relationship between the President and the Secretary General

The relationship between the President and the Secretary General is critical. Primarily, it should be an engaged business relationship in which professional and personal trust and respect are paramount.

- This is a vital relationship because it is the primary source of communication between the Board Directors and the Secretariat.
- It is important that the President and the Secretary General have frequent substantial conversations in between Central Executive meetings and that each is able to raise any matters of concern on a confidential basis.
- The President and Secretary General report to the General Council.
- The Secretary General can and should guide the President on matters of concern.
- The Secretary General may be required to reinforce the President's position with the General Council or Central Executive in certain circumstances, particularly where the Secretary General has more knowledge than the board director about the President's actions.

The Relationship between Board Directors and Administration

The General Council, Central Executive and Administration must be working towards the same vision and objectives, so a team approach based on trust and respect is critical.

Individual board directors have no inherent authority or executive power. Inquiries by Directors to the Secretariat or vice versa should primarily be via the Secretary General and the President.

Where there is any direct material contact between individual board members and the Secretariat, the Secretary General and President should be kept informed as a courtesy.

Responsibilities and Expectations of Board Directors

The Board of Directors expects the administration to ask advice and make use of board members' experience, as and when appropriate. The responsibilities and expectations of the Board Directors include:

- making quality, informed decisions based on relevant information available to the General Council and Central Executive, particularly from Committees and Administration;
- overseeing and managing the Committees and management and holding both accountable;
- satisfying itself of the competence, capability and capacity of the Committees and Administration;
- being accountable to the Association's members, stakeholders and regulators of the Association's performance; and
- courteously and respectfully listening to the Administration with an open but constructively challenging mind, allowing the administrative staff to make its contribution with confidence and without undue interference, constraint or apprehension.

Responsibilities and Expectations of Secretariat/Administration

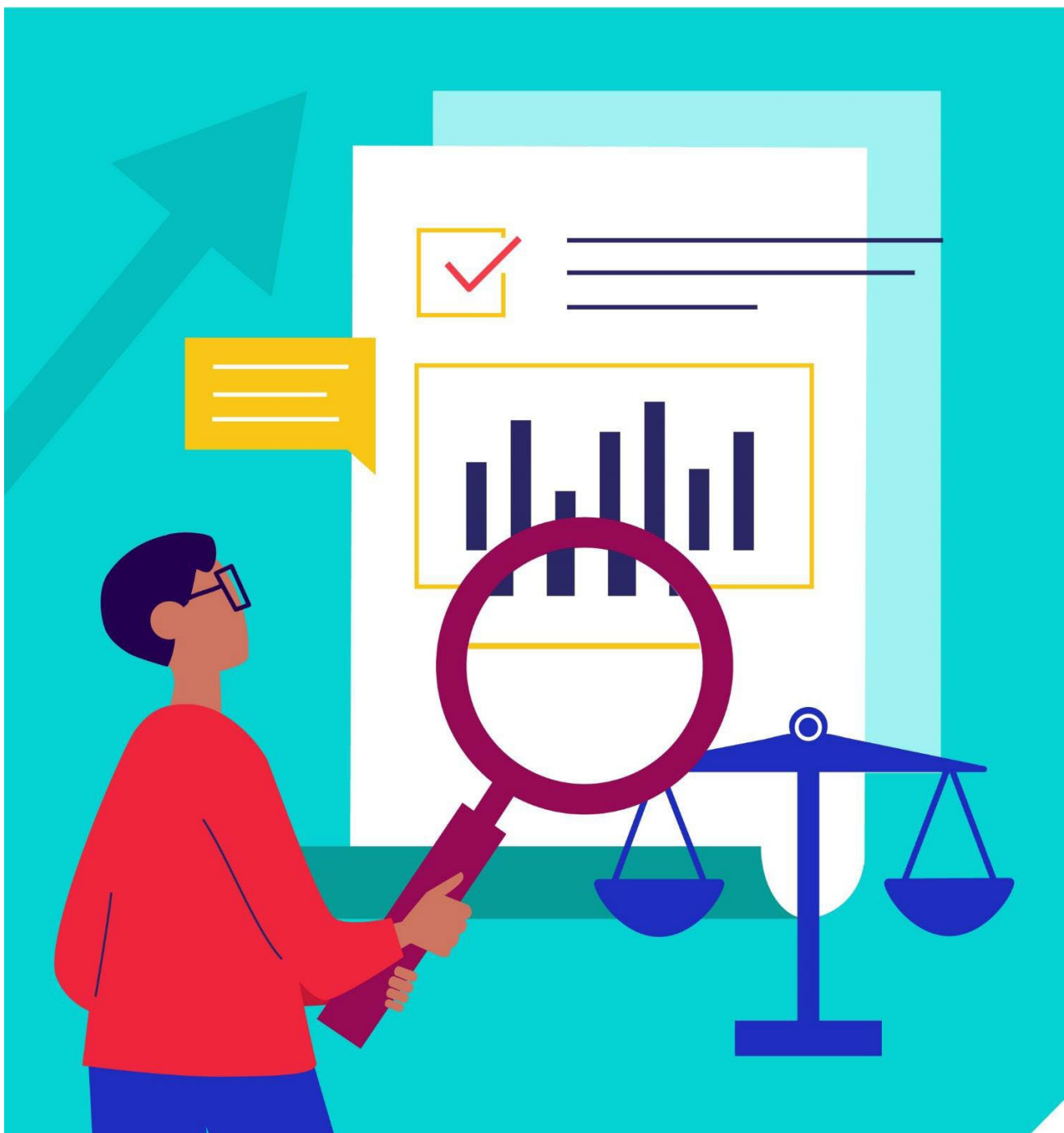
The Administration and Officers of the JTA are involved in the detail and daily operations of the Association. The General Council and the Central Executive therefore rely on administration to share all material information needed for decision-making and thus allow them to effectively fulfil their obligations as board directors.

The Secretariat accepts that the Board's role is to monitor, question, probe issues, seek clarification, offer insight and share its knowledge and experience. The responsibilities and expectations of the Administration in relation to members of General Council and Central Executive include:

- reporting relevant material information at meetings and through appropriate media;
- assisting the members in analysing and considering issues during meetings;
- responding to issues raised by the members;
- expecting the members will trust them to implement strategy(ies) and deliver outcomes without undue interference;
- expecting the members not to unduly meddle in operational matters while being respectful of the need for the members to delve deeply from time to time;
- expecting the members to respect the defined boundaries of authority;
- providing the members with regular and honest performance feedback; and
- relying on members as a sounding board.

► Section 4

Responsibilities and Requirements of Members of the Central Executive



For the Jamaica Teachers' Association to achieve good governance, the roles of the people involved in the organization and their relationship with one another must be clear and understood. Members of the General Council and Central Executive are at the top of the organizational hierarchy, and they must understand and meet the responsibilities of their roles.

Acting in the best interest of the Association and its members

It must be made clear that the role of members of the Central Executive is to **act in the best interest of the Association and its members**, not in the particular interest of any nominator nor in the interest of any outside person or group.

The Association will exist on an ongoing basis, and as such, the interests of future members must also be considered.

Considering other Stakeholders

In exercising their responsibilities, it is a good idea for members of the Central Executive to consider how their decisions might impact other stakeholders who are not members, such as clients and community members. This may be beneficial to the organization's strategy and assist with improved decision-making.

It is important, however, to recognize that even though a board member may be appointed because of their relationship to a stakeholder group, they must exercise their duties in the interest of the organization and apply an independent mind to their responsibilities.

Discharging your Duty as a Board Member of the Central Executive

Paying attention to any requirements that may exist in law, generally all board members are expected to exercise their powers and discharge their duties:



with the degree
of care and
diligence of a
reasonable
person

in good faith in
the best interest
of the
Association and
for a proper
purpose

not improperly
using their position

not improperly using
any information

There is some misunderstanding that board members who are not paid for their work (sometimes called "volunteer directors") are subject to lower standards of legal responsibility. This is not the case, and individuals should think carefully before accepting the responsibilities of board membership.

Principal Responsibilities

You will find in the following checklist documents the principal responsibilities expected of you by the Jamaica Teachers' Association as one of its members of the Central Executive. As a general guide, it is expected that:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ☐ | A member must act honestly and use the powers of their role in good faith and in the best interest of the organization as a whole; |
| ☐ | a member has a duty to use due care and diligence in fulfilling the functions of their office and exercising powers attached to that office; |
| ☐ | a member must recognize that their primary responsibility is to the organization as a whole but should, where appropriate, have regard to the interests of all stakeholders in the organization; |
| ☐ | a member must not make improper use of information that is acquired as a board member; |
| ☐ | a member must not take advantage of their position; |
| ☐ | a member must not allow personal interests to conflict with the interest of the organization; |
| ☐ | a member has an obligation to be independent in judgement and actions and to take all reasonable steps to be satisfied as to the soundness of all decisions taken by the board; |
| ☐ | confidential information received as a member in the course of exercising those duties remains the property of the Association from which it was obtained and it is improper to disclose it or allow it to be disclosed, unless that disclosure has been authorized by that organization or the person from whom the information derived or is required by law; |
| ☐ | a member should not engage in conduct likely to bring discredit to the Association; and |
| ☐ | a member has an obligation, at all times, to comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the law. |

Sometimes reading about legal issues can be overwhelming! The aim of the handbook is to explain the legal duties so you can perform tasks as an informed member. It is important, however, not to let worries about legal issues prevent you from being an active, involved member or from enjoying your role.

► Section 5

Understanding Parliamentary Procedures



To maintain the high traditions of our profession, protect the democratic rights of our members, and ensure the productive use of limited time, all Central Executive meetings are governed by established parliamentary procedures (adapted from Robert's Rules of Order). A successful union meeting relies on a balance between structure and open communication, driven by democratic cornerstones.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE CHAMBER

The Chairperson (President / Presiding Officer)

- **Impartiality:** The Chair must remain strictly neutral during debates and cannot vote unless there is a tie, or if the vote is by ballot.
- **Facilitation:** Responsible for opening meetings, enforcing the agenda, recognizing speakers, and ensuring discussions remain focused on the agenda items.
- **Order:** Directs all questions through the Chair. Members must never debate each other directly; all remarks must be addressed to the Presiding Officer.

The Secretary General / Secretariat

- **Record Keeping:** Maintains the official roll and records a neat, careful account of all business (the Minutes).
- **Motion Tracking:** Records the exact wording of every motion, the name of the mover, and whether the motion was adopted or lost.
- **Governance Reference:** Keeps copies of the JTA Constitution, bylaws, standing rules, and a list of unfinished business on hand for immediate reference.

Central Executive Members

- **Active Engagement:** Responsible for moving motions, participating in debates, proposing amendments, and voting on matters of policy.
- **Decorum:** Expected to uphold professional ethics, obtain the floor before speaking, and respect the ruling of the Chair.

THE 8-STEP LIFECYCLE OF A MOTION

To introduce an item of business or take formal action, the Central Executive utilizes an 8-step parliamentary process. Business cannot be legally transacted unless a **quorum** (the minimum number of members required by JTA bylaws) is present.

1. **Obtain the Floor:** The member rises or signals their intent to speak and waits to be formally recognized by the Chair.
2. **Make the Motion:** The member states the proposal clearly: *"Mr./Madam Chair, I move that [state the exact action proposed]."*
3. **Second the Motion:** Another member states, *"I second the motion."* This indicates that more than one person wishes to discuss the matter. If a motion is not seconded, it immediately fails and is not recorded.
4. **State the Question:** The Chair restates the motion to the body: *"It is moved and seconded that..."*. At this exact moment, the motion officially belongs to the Central Executive assembly and can no longer be modified by the mover without permission.
5. **Debate the Motion:** Members are recognized in turn to speak for or against the motion. The mover has the right to speak first.
6. **Put the Question (Close Debate):** When debate concludes or a motion to "call the previous question" passes, the Chair puts the matter to a vote: *"Those in favor say 'Aye', those opposed say 'No'."*
7. **Voice or Recorded Count:** Votes are normally voice votes. However, members may request a show of hands, a roll-call vote, or that their vote be officially recorded in the minutes if there is no objection.
8. **Announce the Result:** The Chair declares the outcome: *"The 'Ayes' have it, the motion is carried, and we will [state action],"* or *"The 'Noes' have it, and the motion is lost."*

A QUICK-REFERENCE TABLE OF PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS

Formal procedures prevent chaos, but leadership strategy is what drives member engagement. When implemented properly, parliamentary rules protect the rights of the minority, uphold the will of the majority, and keep the Jamaica Teachers' Association moving forward

It is therefore important to maintain equity by ensuring all members get to speak once before allowing any individual to speak a second time on the same issue. When dealing with the various parliamentary motions, use this structured overview to determine the correct motion for your objective during a meeting.

Objective / Action	What to Say	Requires Second?	Is it Debatable?	Can it be Amended?	Vote Required
Introduce a new idea	"I move that..."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Modify a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Defer the matter	"I move to postpone this matter until..."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Send to a committee	"I move to refer this matter to the [X] Committee."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Kill or end debate	"I move the previous question."	Yes	No	No	2/3 Majority
Enforce the rules	"Point of order!"	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Ask a procedural question	"Parliamentary inquiry."	No	No	No	No Vote
Request information	"Point of information."	No	No	No	No Vote
Overturn a Chair's ruling	"I appeal the decision of the Chair."	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

AMENDMENTS AND POLICIES

- **Germaneness:** Any proposed amendment to a motion must be directly related (germane) to the subject of the original motion. It cannot introduce an entirely new topic.
- **The Two-Amendment Limit:** To prevent confusion, not more than two amendments (a primary amendment and a secondary amendment) are permitted on the floor at any single time.
- **Reconsideration:** A motion to reconsider a vote that has already passed or failed can *only* be introduced by a member who voted with the prevailing (majority) side on the original vote.

PROTOCOLS AND PROFESSIONAL DECORUM

- **Controversial Matters:** JTA policy dictates that if a decision or action is likely to be highly controversial, the Central Executive should take action on the advice of the General Council or Annual Conference.
- **Directing Questions:** All questions, requests for clarification, and points of information must be funneled directly through the Chair. ***Members must never cross-talk or address each other directly.***
- **Punctuality:** Central Executive members must arrive ahead of the scheduled call to order to establish quorum swiftly and maximize the use of designated session times.

Key Take-Aways

► Section 6

Tips and Information for Members of the Central Executive



As a Board Director, take this role seriously – do your homework, understand your obligations and think through the issues. Most importantly, do not just become a member just because a friend or colleague asks you to do so.

Tips for New Members

- | | |
|---|--|
| ▶ Know what the purpose of our Association is, and make sure everyone is working towards it. | ▶ Always act in the best interest of our Association – you have a responsibility to put the interest of our organization above your personal interests. |
| ▶ Understand our Association's financial position, and be familiar with its financial statements. | ▶ Always do what you think is best for our organization, even if it means taking a different view to other Board members. |
| ▶ Understand our Association's obligations to regulatory agencies, and make sure they are being met. | ▶ Be clear about your role, and ensure that the roles and responsibilities of everyone in our organization are well understood. |
| ▶ Always keep your responsibilities and legal duties as a member in mind when making decisions. | ▶ Listen to the other members, and work with them as a team. |
| ▶ Be confident to declare and manage conflicts of interest responsibly. | ▶ Keep a copy of our organization's policies and procedures – read them and understand them. |
| ▶ Understand the offboarding process and utilize feedback from past members. | ▶ Understand the strategic plan and its specific key performance indicators. |

Upon reaching the end of this handbook, you should now be able to answer these questions:

- Do I understand the role, aims and direction of the Jamaica Teachers' Association's governing Board?
- Do I share these aims?
- Can I devote sufficient time and energy to attend meetings and carry out the role diligently?
- Do I have the qualifications and skills that are required for this role?
- Can I hold this position with integrity and without conflict of interest?

Deportment and Professional Conduct

Members of the **Central Executive** and officers of the Jamaica Teachers' Association occupy the highest tier of leadership within the nation's teaching fraternity. Executive deportment is not merely about personal presentation; it represents the collective dignity, **probity, and integrity** of over 20,000 educators across Jamaica.

As public-facing advocates interacting with the Ministry of Education, local and international bodies, Central Executive Board members must maintain an exemplary standard of professional decorum that mirrors the core values of the JTA Code of Ethics.

Sartorial Elegance & Professional Dress

Executive members must project a professional image that underscores authority and respect.

- **Formal JTA Functions:** Full business professional attire (tailored corporate suits and coordinated corporate wear).
- **Parish & District Meetings:** Smart-casual or corporate-casual attire, strictly featuring official JTA branding, lapel pins, or specified ceremonial colours when required.
- **Grooming:** Maintain an immaculate, well-groomed appearance that respects both regional traditions and modern professional standards.

Digital Deportment & Social Media Presence

As a visible representative, an executive member's online footprint is subject to public scrutiny.

- **Separation of Profiles:** Clearly distinguish between personal opinions and official JTA positions on social media networks.
- **Public Decorum:** Refrain from engaging in online arguments, sharing unverified educational leaks, or publishing content that compromises the moral authority or neutrality of the Board.
- **Confidentiality:** Never post inner-circle deliberations, draft policy frameworks, or ongoing sensitive negotiations regarding teacher welfare.

Ethical Conduct and Interpersonal Relations

Deportment extends to how board members treat colleagues, subordinates, and stakeholders.

- **In-Meeting Decorum:** Practice active listening during monthly Central Executive meetings. Address disagreements through structured parliamentary procedures rather than emotional outbursts.
- **Modeling the Code:** Actively model the foundational tenets of the JTA Code of Ethics, specifically showing fairness and dignity without discrimination based on status, creed, or political affiliation.
- **Punctuality:** Lead by example by arriving early to all scheduled General Councils, committee meetings, and international delegations.

Compliance and Accountability

Adherence to these deportment protocols ensures that the JTA preserves its historic legacy of **"Unite and Serve"**.

► Appendix - Member Acknowledgement

This Central Executive Onboarding Handbook for Board Members shall be considered to be the definitive document relating to ethical conduct by the Jamaica Teachers' Association.

I confirm that I have received a complete copy of the Jamaica Teachers, Association's Central Executive Onboarding Handbook and that I have read and understood its provisions.

Member name: _____

Member signature: _____

Date: _____