



## BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2024-02

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 15, 2024

SUBJECT: ADVOCACY & ENGAGEMENT ANNUAL UPDATE

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### RECOMMENDATION

For information only.

### REPORT SUMMARY

To provide the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with an annual update on advocacy and engagement activities completed by the Board and/or Administration.

### BACKGROUND

The Board approved an Advocacy & Engagement Policy & Procedure in September 2021, by Resolution 21/58.

The purpose of the Advocacy and Engagement Policy and Procedure is to establish a clear and consistent framework to guide The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB or the Board) with the planning, implementation, and tracking of advocacy and engagement activities.

### COMMENTS

The table below summarizes initiatives undertaken in 2023. Highlights from 2023 include:

1. **Housing & Homelessness Program Funding Increase.** In April 2023, the province announced a significant increase to Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) funding, increasing the total allocation to \$16 million. During the media announcement, MPP Kevin Holland acknowledged the advocacy done by the TBDSSAB Board of Directors as a contributing factor for the funding increase.
2. **Mental Health & Addictions Supports & Partnerships.** The need for supports from health-funded agencies for mental health and addictions has been an ongoing topic for TBDSSAB advocacy, including policy advocacy to increase

access to substance use health supports at ROMA 2023. Further to policy advocacy, TBDSSAB also participated in the *Stigma Ends With Me* campaign via the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, sponsored the *Rockin' Recovery* event via Thunder Bay Drug Strategy, and were included as part of the *A Sobering Story* documentary in 2023.

3. **Reconciliation & Inclusion.** In 2023, TBDSSAB presented the Board with a proposed Implementation Plan based on the recommendations in the 2022 Situation Analysis via Blue Sky. This led to the formation of an ad hoc Board Committee and the passing of most of the items in the implementation plan in the fall. TBDSSAB also hosted a drumming event in honour of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and raised flags at HQ in recognition of Pride Month and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

| Advocacy Topics   | Activities  |
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| <p><b>1) Advocacy related to Board Governance</b></p>   | <p>Policy advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROMA 2023: <a href="#">DSSAB Legislation</a> (PDF)</li> </ul> <p>Internal Change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Situation Analysis Proposed Implementation Plan</a> (pdf)</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>2) Child Care &amp; Early Years Programs:</b></p> | <p>Public engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement re: ECE &amp; CCW Appreciation Day</li> <li>• Implementation of 2023 Ontario-wide ECE Campaign in partnership with other service managers</li> </ul> <p>Community Collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCEY Advisory Table</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>3) Social Assistance Programs</b></p>             | <p>Policy Advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">2023 AMO Increase Social Assistance Rates</a> (PDF)</li> <li>• AMO 2022: <a href="#">Increases to SA Rates</a> (PDF)</li> </ul> <p>Formal Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter of Support: Confederation College, More than Words: Employment Services</li> <li>• Letter of Support: Thunder Bay Counselling: Financial Empowerment</li> </ul> |

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| <p><b>4) Housing</b></p>                                       | <p>Public Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement re: National Housing Day</li> </ul> <p>Local Service System:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding partnerships for Transitional/Supportive housing units</li> </ul> <p>Formal Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter of Support: Thunder Bay Police Services Project House Cleaning</li> <li>• Letter of Support: City of Thunder Bay Housing Accelerator Fund</li> <li>• Letter of Support: Elizabeth Fry, Supporting our Sisters Project</li> </ul> <p>Community Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HPP Advisory Table</li> </ul> <p>Policy Advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">2023 ROMA – LTB Wait Times</a> (PDF)</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>5) Homelessness Outreach Programs &amp; Supports</b></p> | <p>Public Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement re: National Housing Day</li> </ul> <p>Community Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in homelessness outreach events with community partners (summer 2023)</li> </ul> <p>Local Service System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness Outreach Funding Partnerships</li> <li>• New positions added to support homelessness programs, including Manager of Housing and Homelessness Programs, Homelessness Programs Data Analyst, and a District Tenant Outreach Support Worker position</li> </ul> <p>Policy Advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">2023 AMO: HPP Funding Investment Plan</a> (PDF)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Letter of Endorsement/Advocacy regarding Homelessness</a> (AMO)</li> <li>• Joint paper with Cochrane and Kenora in May 2023 for Federal Multi-Ministry meetings</li> </ul> |

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| <p><b>6) Inclusive Organizational Culture</b></p>                           | <p>Internal Change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEI Table consulted on changes to Dress Code policy through inclusion lens</li> <li>• <a href="#">Situation Analysis Proposed Implementation Plan</a> (pdf)</li> </ul> <p>Reflective Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconciliation education offered to all staff and added to new staff orientation (ongoing)</li> <li>• Recognition of awareness days/months internally</li> </ul> <p>Community participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flags raised in recognition of Pride month and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation</li> </ul> <p>Public Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drumming session hosted at TBDSSAB HQ for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, open to public</li> <li>• Traditional ceremony incorporated as standard practice for events, including staff recognition events</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>7) Mental Health &amp; Addictions Supports &amp; Partnerships</b></p> | <p>Reflective Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Stigma Ends With Me” education sessions for staff</li> </ul> <p>Public Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal &amp; External statements with information about mental health supports related to triggering events</li> </ul> <p>Community Participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsored Rockin’ Recovery event</li> <li>• Participation in documentary “A Sobering Story”</li> </ul> <p>Community Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in community tables / working groups</li> </ul> <p>Policy Advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROMA 2023: <a href="#">MOH Alcohol Addictions Support</a> (PDF)</li> </ul>  |

**STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT**



Related to: Strategic Direction – Advocacy: Advocate for our local, flexible solutions.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications related to this report.

**CONCLUSION**

It is concluded that the annual Advocacy and Engagement update be received as presented.

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