



BOARD REPORT

REPORT No.: 2026-07

MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 19, 2026

SUBJECT: ADVOCACY & ENGAGEMENT ANNUAL UPDATE

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 No. 21/58.

The purpose of the Advocacy and Engagement Policy and Procedure is to establish a clear and consistent framework to guide TBDSSAB with the planning, implementation, and tracking of advocacy and engagement activities.

COMMENTS

The table below summarizes initiatives undertaken in 2025.

Table 1: Summary of Advocacy and Engagement Activities

Topics (grouped by similar theme/priority)	Activities (organized by headings in <i>Advocacy and Engagement Procedure</i> framework)
1) Housing & Homelessness Service System	Public Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media Release and Impact Highlights shared for National Housing Day• Media Releases / Coverage related to Housing and Homelessness in 2025 = 10 TBDSSAB releases, 118 related media stories

<p><i>Activities related to supporting (and strengthening) the housing and homelessness prevention system.</i></p>	<p>Community Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HPP Advisory Table • Collaborated with service providers to develop and launch the new Homelessness Service System Data Tool (HSSDT) <p>Formal Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Safety Unit with Thunder Bay Police Services. Training began fall 2025. • Seniors Accessibility Initiative via Thunder Bay Art Gallery. Workshops began in fall 2025. <p>Local Service System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracted OrgCode to do community research for next 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan • Expression of interest for transitional/long-term supportive housing • Increased funding for Emergency Shelter spaces. # Spaces Added in 2025 = 45 <p>Broader Service System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared data toward homelessness service system follow-up research with NOSDA, AMO, OMSSA, CMHA Ontario and HelpSeeker Technologies. <p>Policy Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position papers and delegation meetings requested related to Housing and Homelessness = 7
<p>2) Child Care & Early Years System</p> <p><i>Activities related to supporting (and strengthening) the child care and early years' service system.</i></p>	<p>Public engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Release and Impact Highlights shared for CCW & ECE Appreciation Day • Resources developed and shared for families to recognize CCW & ECE Appreciation Day • Art contest held for CCW & ECE Appreciation Day. Open to children in child care and early years programs, the winning artwork was used in CCW & ECE Appreciation Day promotions. • Media releases/Coverage related to Child Care & Early Years in 2025 = 6 TBDSSAB releases, 17 related media stories • Free webinar offered to parents and caregivers

	<p>Community Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCEY Advisory Table <p>Local Service System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Learning Day hosted for educators from across the District of Thunder Bay • Ongoing funding agreements with Confederation College to support recruitment and retention of educators • Expression of Interest for expansion of licensed child care spaces • Service agreements in place to increase licensed CWELCC spaces by 196 <p>Formal Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter of support for parent program via TBDHU <p>Policy Advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position papers and delegation meetings requested related to child care and early years = 2
<p>3) Social Assistance Programs</p> <p><i>Activities related to addressing local social assistance service needs.</i></p>	<p>Reflective Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-Annual Ontario Works client satisfaction survey administered in 2025. <p>Public engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public recognition of Social Work and Social Service Workers Week • Media releases/coverage related to Social Assistance Programs in 2025 = 4 TBDSSAB releases <p>Local Service System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged with community employment partners to prepare for provincial employment system transformation in March 2025 • Engaged community partners in resource mapping to increase awareness of local services and eligibility for referrals <p>Policy Advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position papers and delegation meetings requested related to social assistance= 1

<p>4) Humanizing Human Services</p> <p><i>Activities related to engaging with service recipients and the public using a compassionate and person-centered approach.</i></p>	<p>Public Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review communications materials using plain and welcoming language framework (ongoing) Engage people with lived and living experience (PWLLE) through trauma-informed storytelling approaches (ongoing) <p>Community Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bronze Sponsor for Rockin' Recovery event via Thunder Bay Drug Strategy <p>Formal Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Partner on Magnus Theatre "Collective Creation Project" for 2024-25 on the topic of poverty. Performance was in March 2025.
<p>5) Reconciliation & Inclusion</p> <p><i>Activities related to creating a culture of inclusion at TBDSSAB.</i></p>	<p>Internal Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff DEI Table increased opportunities for staff to educate and share cultural activities observed by staff and colleagues. <p>Reflective Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEI survey administered to all staff in 2025. <p>Community Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final engagement session held with Indigenous-led community partner organizations to finalize the Terms of Reference for an Indigenous Advisory Table to the Board. Terms of reference approved by the Board in July 2025. Public Call for Nominations to Indigenous Advisory Table opened November 2025. <p>Community Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flag raised for Pride month Flag raised for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

This report is related to the objectives included in TBDSSAB's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan under: "Advocate for our local, flexible solutions", as well as objectives included in the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan under: "Encouraging Advocacy and Awareness".

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications related to this report.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the annual Advocacy and Engagement update provides the Board with a summary of activities undertaken in 2025 and be received as presented.

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