



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

MEDIA RELEASE

DSSABs Unite to Advocate for Northwestern Ontario

March 1, 2012 – For the first time, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB), the Kenora District Services Board (KDSB), and the Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board (RRDSSAB) joined together in advocating for Northwestern Ontario at the joint Rural Ontario Municipal Association/Ontario Good Roads Association conference held this week in Toronto. The Northwestern Ontario delegation met with John Milloy, Minister of Community and Social Services, Eric Hoskins, Minister of Children and Youth Services, and Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to advocate on issues regarding social services in Northwestern Ontario.

“A united voice amplifies the urgency of the issues facing our communities across the Northwest in the provision of social services” said Bob Katajamaki, Chair of TBDSSAB. Board members from the Kenora, Rainy River, and Thunder Bay DSSAB’s met with the Ministers in a series of face-to-face meetings Monday and Tuesday.

The deputation presented to Minister Milloy advocated for an increase to the amount provided to Ontario Works (OW) participants for shelter costs to better reflect the actual costs of housing in Northwestern Ontario. The delegation also urged the Ontario government to establish a provincially-funded \$100 transportation and telephone benefit to all OW participants to assist with employment-related activities and to meet basic health and social inclusion needs.

Minister Hoskins was urged to move toward achieving the vision of the Pascal Report by consolidating all early years funding entirely under the Ministry of Education without added costs to municipalities. The delegates advocated for the provision of space for child care programs in schools at no additional cost, and accounting for rural and northern cost drivers in the child care funding envelope.

Minister Wynne heard about the need for flexible housing funding in Northwestern Ontario for both capital and operating costs for affordable housing. “For funding related to housing to be effective, it must be flexible enough to move between priority areas and support locally-identified needs”, explained Katajamaki. Board Members also advocated for the Ontario government to increase the share of new capital funding based on an allocation model that accounts for the higher costs of building, renovating and operating housing in Northern Ontario. These costs stem from contractors experiencing higher mobilization costs, the additional costs related to the shipment of materials, and higher costs of construction as a result of lower economies of scale in building smaller facilities.

“TBDSSAB is very pleased that we could work together with our colleagues in Kenora and Rainy River Districts to bring these common issues to the attention of the Province”, said Katajamaki. “This type of continued collaboration will help to strengthen our voice and emphasize our shared experience with service delivery in the North.”

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