

Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency

Annual Report to the Tłıchǫ Government

2019-20



Message from the Chairperson



We are pleased to present you with the Tłchq Community Services Agency's Annual Report for 2019-2020. This was a particularly noteworthy year for our Agency as we were successfully *Accredited with Commendation* under Accreditation Canada's Qmentum program.

You will read more about our success in strengthening our programs by leveraging our integrated services model to support health and wellness throughout the lifespan. Of particular interest is the work being done in supporting mental health and wellness for children and youth in the Tłchq region.

The TCSA's Board members are appointed by their respective community governments so that each community within the Tłchq region is represented on the TCSA Board. By adhering to good governance practices, the Board ensures the Agency has the capacity and capability to meet both its short and long term goals. This 2019-2020 annual report illustrates our work of putting community members first and highlights our commitment to innovating integrated services and new partnerships that support individuals and families.

Masi,

Ted Blondin
Chairperson,
Tłchq Community Services Agency Board



Message from the Chief Executive Officer



The hard work and dedication of staff across our organization resulted in the Tłchq Community Services Agency (TCSA) being *Accredited with Commendation* under the Accreditation Canada Qmentum program this year. Accreditation is an intensive and ongoing process that assesses health and social services organizations against national and international standards of excellence to identify what is being done well, and where we can improve.

The TCSA remains committed to providing a continuum of care that enables all people to achieve personal well-being within healthy, educated families. We are committed to being innovators in strengthening Tłchq identity by building upon the positive strengths of our communities and integrating Tłchq language, culture and way of life in all areas. We are committed to enriching an integrated continuum of education, health, and social programs and services.

The TCSA recognizes the importance of working in unity, of ensuring our efforts are part of larger partnerships with other organizations, governments, and communities. By working together, we bolster one another's strengths and fill individual gaps, all for the benefit of the people we serve.

The commitment and hard work of our TCSA employees is one of the primary reasons we have seen such progress this year. We remain committed to developing our current workforce just as we remain committed to improving the experiences of our patients, students, and families.

Sincerely,

Shannon Barnett-Aikman
Chief Executive Officer,
Tłchq Community Services Agency



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) was established under the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement effective August 4, 2005 and it is a unique organization in the Northwest Territories in two significant ways. Firstly, it is a Government of the Northwest Territories Agency while incorporating the values and principles of the Tłı̨chǫ people. Secondly, the Agency is the only one in the Northwest Territories to deliver both Health and Social Services as well as Education programs under one entity as defined under the *Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency Act*. (A copy of this legislation is available in the GNWT website at <http://www.justice.gov.nt.ca/>.)

The TCSA's 2019-22 Strategic Plan is currently under development. It is grounded in current research and best practice for health and social programs serving indigenous communities, it is built upon the strengths and successes of our programs and services to date, and it reflects the new and continuing priorities of the Tłı̨chǫ Government and of the Government of the Northwest Territories. We look forward to continuing the intergovernmental and territory-wide partnerships that serve to strengthen the TCSA's program delivery in the service of those who live in the Tłı̨chǫ region. Our strategic priorities guiding our work include:

- Developing strong, capable, healthy Tłı̨chǫ individuals, families, and communities,
- Supporting the best health and wellness of people in the Tłı̨chǫ region,
- Improving the quality of services provided to vulnerable children, families, and communities, and
- Enhancing organizational sustainability by developing our people and enhancing our organizational processes.

Our staff members are at the heart of our programs and services: we remain committed to supporting their continued development and learning. Creating a workplace culture that is safe, inspiring, and collaborative weaves through every priority area and goal of this operating plan. Only by investing in our workforce can we provide truly excellent services for our communities.

The strategic priorities, operational objectives, and key actions of our 2019-20 Operating Plan lay the foundation needed to pursue even greater excellence in service and care of clients, families, and communities. It is an ambitious plan that will no doubt present us with challenges, but we embrace those realities as opportunities to grow and improve as we move forward.

The Tłı̨chǫ language, culture, and way of life are integral to all that we do in the Tłı̨chǫ region: we remain committed to grounding evidence-based best practices in indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, and thereby supporting Chief Jimmy Bruneau's vision of being "Strong like Two People".



STRATEGIC CONTEXT



The TCSA at a Glance

As a result of the TCSA delivering both the Health and Social Services as well as the JK-12 Education program, it is accountable to the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The deliveries for both health and education programs operate under two different year ends: March 31 and June 30, respectively. The Agency prepares annual audited financial statements for the combined health and education programs as at March 31 for the Government of the Northwest Territories fiscal year end, as well as audited statements solely for the education program year ending June 30.

The TCSA, unlike other Education and Health & Social Services authorities in the NWT, has three dimensions, as outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Three Dimensions of the TCSA





The Structure of the TCSA



The Agency is governed by a Board made up of four members and a chairperson. The Tłıchǫ Community Governments (Behchokǫ, Gamètì, Wekweètì and Whatì) each appoint one member to represent their community on the Agency Board. The GNWT Minister of Indigenous Affairs appoints the chairperson after consultation with the Agency appointees and the Tłıchǫ Government. The term for Agency Board members is determined by the entity appointing them and may not exceed four years. Members may be reappointed for consecutive terms. The TCSA Board meets quarterly throughout the year: additional meetings are scheduled as/when the need arises.

The current TCSA Board members include:

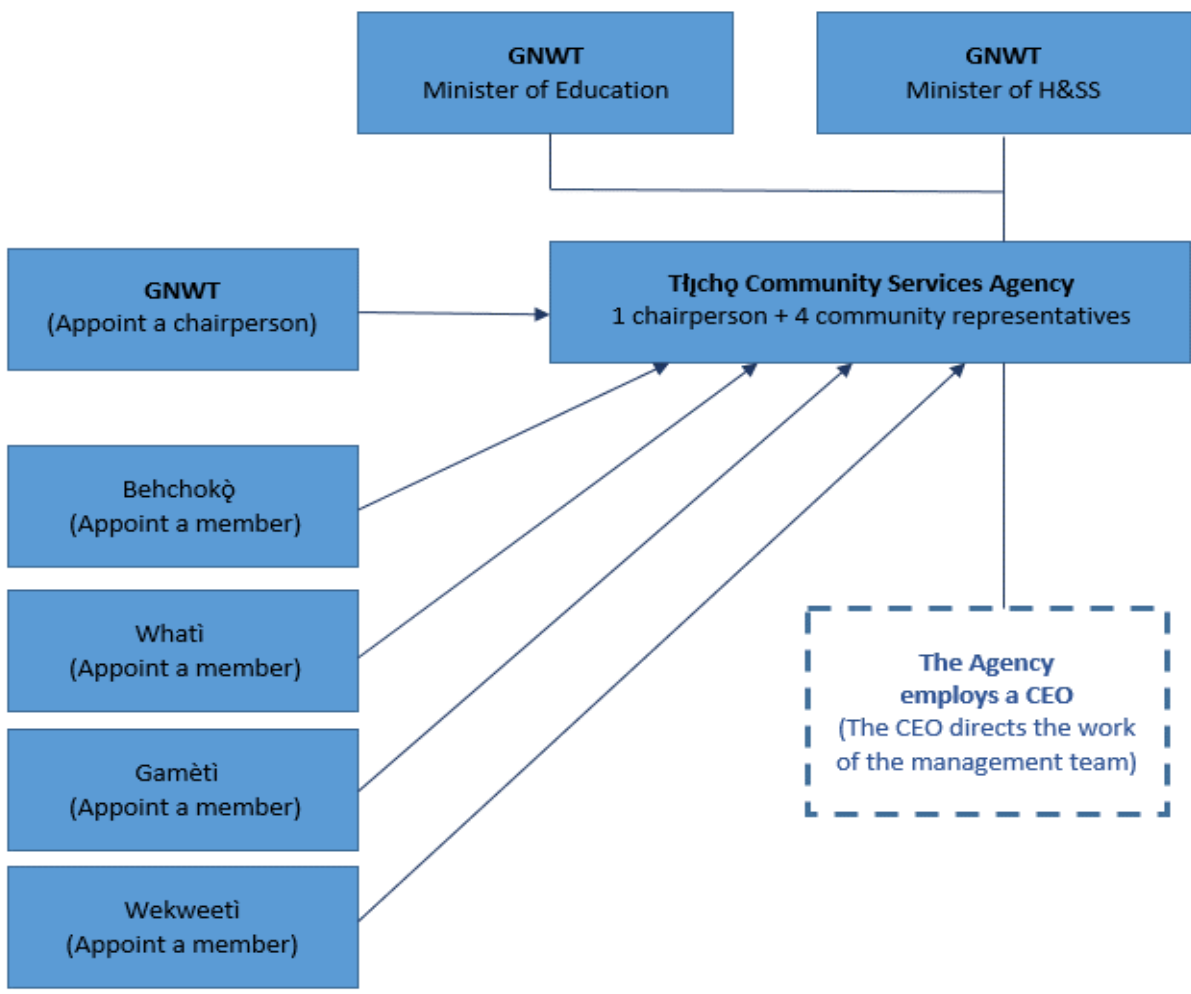
- Chairperson – Ted Blondin
- Behchokǫ Representative – Janita Etsemba
- Whatì Representative – Alex Nitsiza
- Gamètì Representative – Henry Gon
- Wekweètì Representative – Noella Kodzin



From L to R: Alex Nitsiza, Janita Etsemba, Noella Kodzin, and Ted Blondin. Missing: Henry Gon



Figure 2: Governance Structure of the Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency

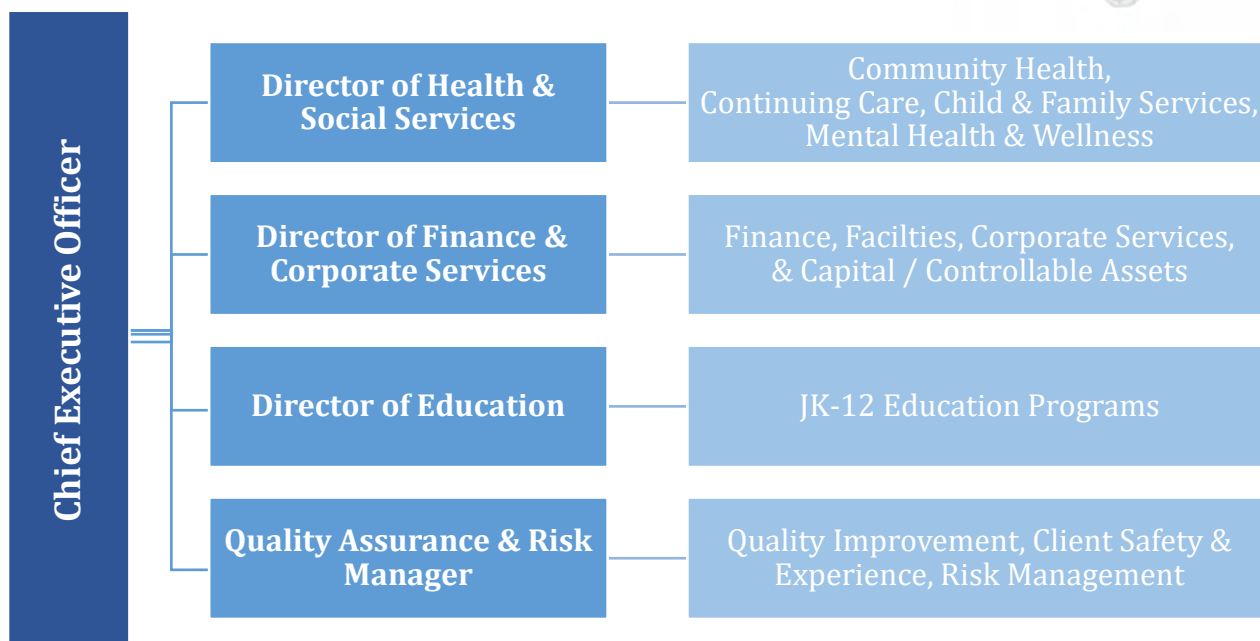


The TCSA is an intergovernmental services agency delivering programs in the areas of Education, and Health and Social Services. Thus, the administrative structure is different than that of other education authorities. The Agency employs a Chief Executive Officer who is responsible to direct the work of a management team consisting of a Director of Education, a Director of Health and Social Services, and a Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

The CEO fulfills legislated roles under GNWT legislation including that of “Deputy Head” for the public service and “Superintendent” under the Education Act. The Early Childhood and First Nations Social Programs, initially transferred to the TCSA by the Tłıchǫ Government, were returned to the Tłıchǫ Government in 2012 as a step towards self-government.



Figure 3: Management and Program Function Structure of the TCSA



The core programs and services delivered by the Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency include the following:

- **GNWT Child and Family Services:** Child Protective Services, Elder Support, and Family Violence Support. Family support and child protection includes child welfare, early intervention, foster homes, adoption, investigations, apprehensions and court work. In 2009, mental health and wellness programs were integrated with child and family services.
- **GNWT K-12 Education:** Schools from Junior Kindergarten to grade 10 in all Tłı̨chǫ communities and high school programming in Behchokò, Gamètì and Whatì. Inclusive schooling services for school age children include assessment, intervention and counseling support. There are also home boarding accommodation services for high school students from Wekweètì when they attend school in Behchokò or Whatì.
- **GNWT Primary Healthcare:** Primary Health Care services in all communities, including Public Health and Wellness programs, Dental, Ambulance and Emergency Services in Behchokò.
- **GNWT Continuing Care and Independent Living:** This has included the management of the Jimmy Erasmus Seniors Home in Behchokò, as well as homecare services.



Foundational to all program and service areas is the commitment to high quality, relationship-based, client and family centered care.



The Purpose of the TCSA

The purpose of the Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) is to improve the health, wellness and education of the people in Tłı̨chǫ communities by providing a range of easily accessible, integrated programs and services. The Agency manages the delivery of education, health, wellness and social programs and services for the NWT communities of Behchokò (Rae-Edzo), Gamètì (Rae Lakes), Wekweètì (Snare Lake) and Whatì (Lac La Martre).

Our Agency is both new and old: established on August 4, 2005, the Agency is a creation of the *Tłı̨chǫ Agreement*. Section 7.10 of the Tłı̨chǫ Agreement called for an *Intergovernmental Services Agreement (ISA)* between the Government of Canada, the Government of the NWT and the Tłı̨chǫ Government. The ISA creates the Agency and ensures that it continues to perform the educational, health and social programs and services of the organizations from which it emerged, including the former Dogrib Community Services Board (1997-2005), the Dogrib Divisional Board of Education (1989-1997) and the Rae-Edzo School Society (1967-1989).



Back Row, from L to R: Shannon Barnett-Aikman, Rose Jiang, Johan Glaudemans, Linsey Hope, Noella Kodzin, Janita Etsemba; Front Row, from L to R: Ted Blondin, Alex Nitsiza



TCSA Nàowo Wèghàà Eghàlageeda: “Do Nake Lani Nats’etso”

**Yatì Negihzò
Wet’a Nàowo
Hòèlì**

Ìneè edlàt’ò lemì xo gots’ò, Tḥichò dḡne sù, ts’eehwhì laani edeoèt’ì xè, kḡta eyits’ò ndè k’e nezi nàgìdè. Goet’ù gḡnà t’à, nàowo k’egeezò, edaani asì wèghàlats’eda eyits’ò nàowo wet’a?à hani hazhò chekoa hoghàgogehtò eyits’ò gonàowo wet’à?aa t’à, goèt’ù edegeehdà-ha di-le ajà. Dì ìteakw’enò gots’ò, yahtì eyits’ò ndèts’ò K’àowo gut’ò ts’endq ajà t’à, gots’ò hoeli-le ìlè, edaani goèt’ù, kḡta, goyatì eyits’ò gonàowo hazò wexè ho?ò wèghò hoèjù lajà. Dḡne ts’ìlì t’à ts’endà-ha di lagòjà. Eyit’ àlì...

**Nàowo
Wèghàà
Eghàlageeda**

Gahxì Tḥichò Nèk’e Elets’ats’edi Gha K’adèe ts’ìlì sù, enìhtl’èkò, nàedi k’èezòò ts’òhk’e eyits’ò dḡ gha enìhtl’è hohlè nàowo kḡta yàzhièla dḡne gits’ò k’adè-ha ts’ìwò t’à, edaani dḡ ts’àhoèhdì ìlè nezi wèghàlaeda-ha sù gots’ò hoèhlì t’à nezi wèghàlats’eda-ha ts’edi. Eteot’ù gḡlì t’à etèxè nàgetso-ha gits’ats’edi-ha, didzèè edaani chekoa genda gha asì k’egeezò-ha eyits’ò edanni asì wèghàlats’eda nàowo gḡniedì-ha hoghàgits’etò-ha eyì nàowo wet’a?à wèghàà lani ts’èwhì edeot’ù xè nàgedè-ha, kḡta nezi etèxè nàgedè-ha eyits’ò gonèk’e nezi nàgedè-ha.

“Do Nake Lani Nats’etso...Strong like Two People”

**Ìdaà Nàowo
Edàni
Wèghat’ì ha**

1971, ekò Kw’ah tideè eneèkoa Bḡnò wet’aa Edzo enìhtl’èkò wegòò wizi wek’e wezòò adle ha sù wets’òdaaxàatò. Ekò k’e nàowo nàke eyits’ò yatì nàke etèt’eè chekoa hoghàgeetò gha wet’aaazà ghò xàyaḡhtì ìlè. Ìdaà 1991 ts’ò nahòowo ekò enìhtl’èkò gha k’adèe wegòò etegeehdì t’à dàani edilàà ghàlagedaa ghò etèxègogedoò ekò Behchokò gots’ò zòhdah naweet’ù Elizabeth Mackenzie, Kw’ah tideè Bḡnò ìda gha xàyaḡhtì ghò hadì, ìdaà nèhoḡwo nḡdè wets’ò dḡ “Dḡ Nàke Làani Nàgetso, ha.”



The Mission of the TCSA: “Do Nake Lani Nats’etso ... Strong like Two People”

<i>Preamble</i>	<i>For thousands of years, Tłı̨chǫ people have lived in harmony with their families, their communities and with the land. Our people took pride in passing on our knowledge, skills and values to each generation and in the excellence of this tradition, our survival as a people was assured. In this century we became dependent on the church and the government and in this loss of control, we find that our families, the community, language and culture are threatened. Our very survival as a people is at stake. Thus...</i>
<i>Mission of the Agency</i>	<i>We, the members of the Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency are committed to the development of a continuum of care that will return control of education, health and social programs and services to the people of our communities, support them in the task of strengthening their families, promote the knowledge and skills they need to survive today and model the values they need to live in harmony with their families, our communities and our land.</i>
<i>Vision of the Agency</i>	<i>“Do Nake Lani Nats’etso...Strong like Two People”</i> <i>In 1971 a frail Chief Jimmy Bruneau officially opened the new Edzo school that was to bear his name. On this occasion, he spoke of the importance of a model of bicultural and bilingual education where equal emphasis must be given to educating children in two cultures. Some years later in 1991 at a meeting to discuss the work of a new Board of Education, a respected Behchokǝ elder, Elizabeth Mackenzie, commented on her understanding of the words of Chief Jimmy Bruneau. She described his vision as asking for his people to be “Strong Like Two People”.</i>



Planning Framework

A Developmental Approach

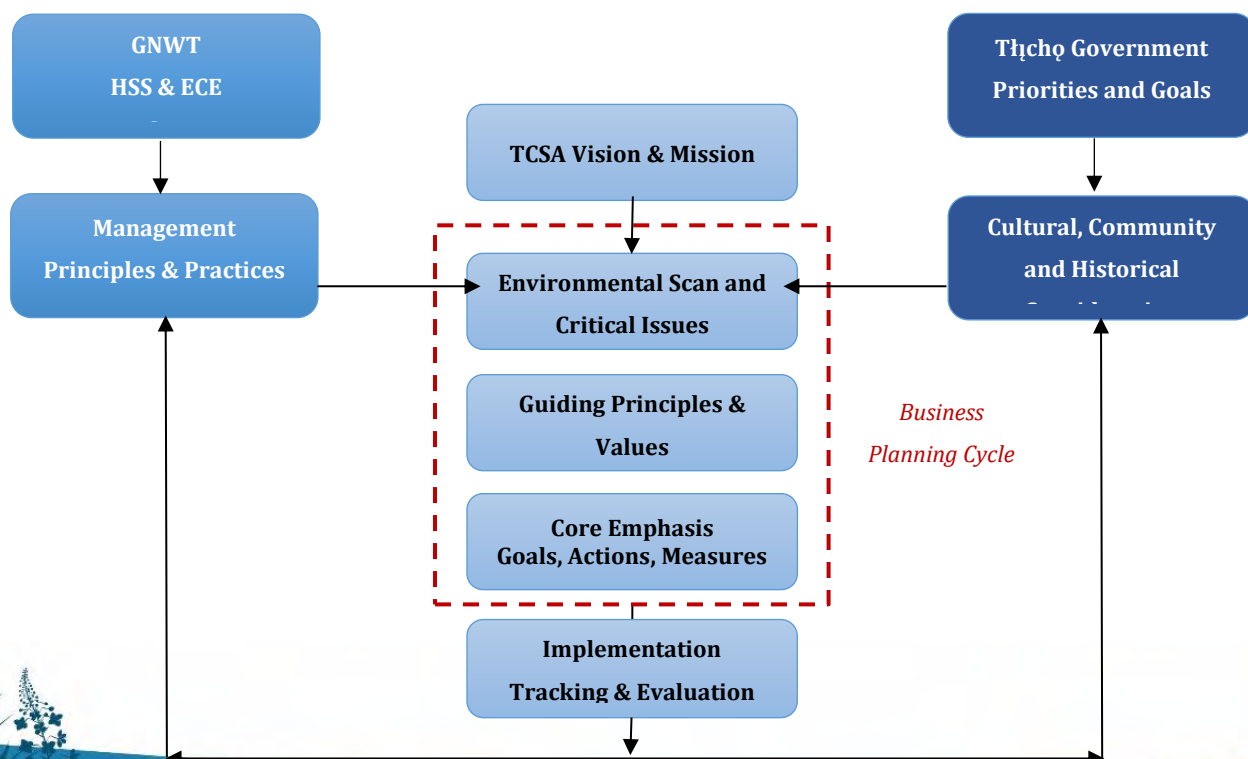


The Tłıchǫ Community Services Agency is an organization in the midst of ongoing development at every level—the governance level, the organizational and administrative levels, and the programming and service delivery level. This evolution is best understood as areas of transition that supports the Agency’s evolution as a unique identity:

- From a needs-based approach to a community development approach.
- From an individual service approach to an integrated services approach.
- From a model of professional dependence to a wellness model of health.
- From dependence upon transient staff to developing capacity locally and long-term staff.
- From a western medical model toward a respectful, culturally appropriate model of services.

In most respects the Agency is currently a GNWT agency, established under GNWT legislation and reporting primarily to the GNWT. Eventually, the Agency is to evolve into a “Tłıchǫ Agency” with its own unique identity while remaining part of an integrated system of territorial programs and services. As part of that transformation, the Agency will continue to be immersed in developing territorial systems, policies, procedures and structures while also developing lateral connections to Tłıchǫ Government systems.

Figure 4: TCSA Planning Framework





KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Health and Social Services



Quality Improvement & Client Safety

Accreditation Achievement

In September 2019, The Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency successfully completed the Accreditation Canada Survey and achieved Accreditation with Commendation.

Accreditation is a four-year cycle of assessment and improvement, where organizations work to meet standards and raise the quality of their services. The program identifies and rewards competence and innovation, helping organizations to be more efficient. All health care facilities participated in a supplementary survey from Accreditation Canada in September 2017 with the full accreditation survey in 2019.

In providing high quality care for clients, the TCSA continues to work in collaboration with the Department of Health and Social Services, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, and the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority to develop policy and best practice which continues to support our ongoing accreditation status in the following Standard areas:

1. Leadership
2. Governance
3. Service Excellence
4. Child and Family Services
5. Community Based Mental Health Services
6. Rural and Remote Health Services
7. Infection, Prevention, and Control Standards
8. Point of Care Testing
9. Medication Management
10. Long Term Care
11. Home Care Services



Therese Bekale screening staff and patients at Gamètì Health Center

Given the integrated and intergovernmental services nature of our landscape, the Agency works to ensure processes and practices that are grounded in both the highest quality standards recognized by western healthcare and the essential teachings and foundations of Tłı̨chǫ language, culture, and way of life.



In preparation for the 2019 Accreditation survey, employees received extensive training opportunities in various areas to better assist with the improvement of quality services and program delivery in the Tłı̨chǫ̀ region. Employees were trained on the following:

- Infection, Prevention and Control
- Hand Hygiene
- Suicide Risk Assessments
- Falls Prevention
- Medication Reconciliation
- Goals of Care
- Abuse, Mistreatment & Neglect
- Wound Care Management



Monthly fire drills at the Jimmy Erasmus Senior's Home help ensure resident safety.



Electronic Information Reporting System



In July 2019, the TCSA partnered with the Northwest Territories Health & Social Services Authority NTHSSA to implement a new web-based Information Reporting and Management Information System called RL6. This electronic system replaced the paper processes being used in all facilities of the TCSA (and across the HSS system).

Incident Reporting and Management is a key element of continuous quality improvement and safety. Reporting and responding to incidents that impact patients, clients, and staff is an important part of our ongoing improvement efforts. It provides a mechanism to identify risks to that we can implement interventions to reduce those risks and provides valuable information to identify hazards and learning opportunities.

Using one territory-wide incident reporting system will help to improve tracking and monitoring of incidents, and identify system-wide improvement opportunities for the benefit of patient care.

Quality Improvement Framework

In working with our Health and Social Services system partners, the TCSA developed and implemented a Quality Management Framework and related Quality Improvement and Client Safety Plan. The GNWT Department of Health and Social Services' (DHSS) strategic priorities are embedded into the Quality Improvement and Client Safety plan, including the identification of strategic indicators to demonstrate improvements made in each area. For 2017-2020 the DHSS strategic priorities include:

- Early Childhood Development
- Child & Family Services
- Mental Health & Addictions
- Chronic Diseases
- Seniors & Elders
- Effective & Efficient Health system

The Quality Improvement and Client Safety plan is organized around the six key principles of care identified within the Quality Framework, including:

- Client-centered care
- Safe Care
- Appropriate Care
- Effective and Efficient Care
- Accessible Care
- Integrated Care

These elements are tied to the TCSA's goals and priorities in health and social services of providing safe and quality care across the Tłı̄chq region which align with the Government of the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services:



- **Best Health** – support the health and wellness of the population
- **Best Care** – care and services that are responsive to children, individuals, families and communities
- **Better Future** – build a sustainable health and social services system
- **Culturally Responsive Programs and Services** – developing strong, capable, healthy Tłı̨chǫ̀ communities

The development of the TCSA Quality Improvement and Client Safety plan followed the nine key principles outlined by the Collaborative for Excellence in Healthcare Quality in their Guide to Developing and Assessing a Quality Plan (February 2012). These nine principles include: clear alignment to the strategic plan; linked to the quality framework; have a natural progression from previous years' Plan; be clear, easy to understand and interpret; have measurable goals and include targets; be based on resources available; evaluated on an annual basis; and be helpful in influencing permanent cultural change (p. 3).



A Mezi Community School teacher volunteering at the Whatı Community Health Center.

Ethics Framework

In working with our Health and Social Services system partners, the TCSA co-developed and adopted a territorial ethics framework this year. This framework guides and supports ethical decision making across both governance and management level and spans all program and services areas. Establishing the ethical decision-making framework ensures a systemic and thorough process is used to make the best possible decisions throughout the TCSA and across our healthcare system.



Continuing Care

Paid Caregiver Pilot Project

The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) made a commitment in the *Continuing Care Services Action Plan* to pilot a Paid Family/Community Caregiver (PFCG) option in the Northwest Territories (NWT). Behchokǫ was included in the 2019 pilot initiation phase with three community members having applied to be caregivers.

The goal of the service option is to provide seniors and persons with disabilities with options to meet their assessed unmet care needs that may exceed the capacity of Home and Community Care services with the overall objective of enhancing Home and Community Care Services and caregiver supports to enable seniors and elders to live in their own homes as long as possible and to increase the autonomy and independence of persons with disabilities and their families.

Traditional Food Program

The TCSA in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services implemented Guidelines to Developing Operational Policies and Procedures for Serving Traditional Foods in NWT Health and Social Services' Facilities to assist our health authority to develop operational policies and procedures for the safe service of traditional foods to Indigenous patients.

The TCSA recognizes the importance of providing traditional foods to Indigenous patients, residents and clients of the Tłı̄chǫ̀ Region. Research supports the benefits of traditional foods being served in our facilities. It assists with recovery of illness, supports healing, improves health outcomes and reduces hospital stays.

In addition to this guideline, the TCSA has hired a relief Dietician to best guide and assist the implementation of these procedures in relation to best practices.



Elders enjoy making dried fish at the Jimmy Erasmus Senior's Home.

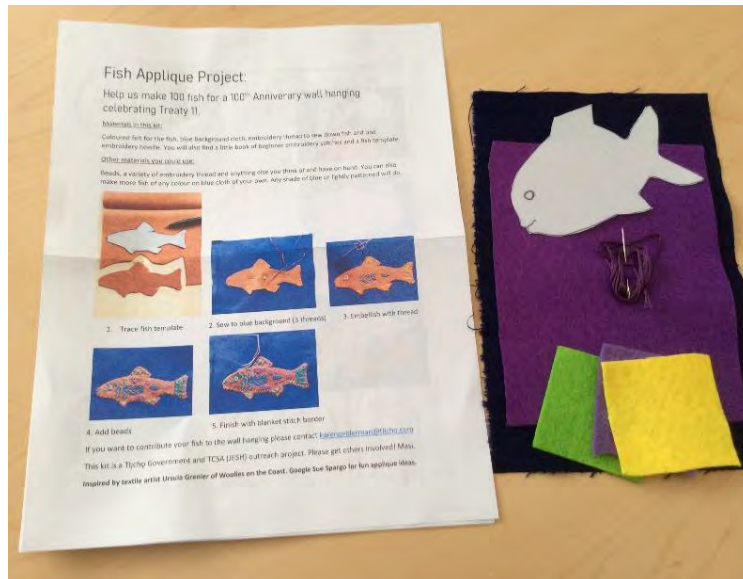


Elder Wellness Program



The TCSA has established an Elder Wellness Program for the residents of the Jimmy Erasmus Seniors Home and Community Elders. This program is a collaborative approach between the TCSA Health and Continuing Care Program. It provides ongoing education to the residents to improve overall health and wellness.

Each month different topics are reviewed with the residents from different health care providers. The presentations and demonstrations are performed in Tłchq. Topics include oral health, mental health, falls prevention and immunizations.



Locally developed elder wellness activities created in partnership with the Tłchq Government.



KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: JK-12 Education



The Tłıchǫ Nation and the NWT need capable people who are both strong in their culture and prepared for a changing economic landscape. Like in the rest of Canada, a new economy is emerging that demands workers with “21st century skills.” This means high school graduates who have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to think critically, to problem-solve and to communicate effectively. At the foundation of each of these skills is the ability to read and write effectively, as reading is the most crucial skill for success in school and throughout life. In order to accomplish this we are founded in the belief that every child can learn, and our goal for every student is to become a capable person.

Operating Targets

Culturally Responsive Programs and Services

Indigenized education programs reflect the culture, language, and histories of the Tłıchǫ citizens our schools serve. Supporting the development of capable Tłıchǫ students through culturally responsive spaces, pedagogies, programs, and continue to be the foundation of the education system in the Tłıchǫ region.

Specific targets:

1. Oral Language Proficiency assessment – create baseline data using the territorial language proficiency assessment – met – this tool was not developed to share as a population measure but a tool to help understand how well student speak and understand their language. In the Tłıchǫ region, most students were in the ‘beginner’ level on the assessment.
2. Development of Tłıchǫ Language Resources – create Tłıchǫ books and songs appropriate for JK-2 to support the new Our Languages Curriculum – met – 5 Tłıchǫ books were created and some are available on the GNWT site, along with some audio recordings.
<https://www.ourlanguagesnwt.com/books>



Students presenting at the Annual Heritage Fair.



In addition to the stated targets, the TCSA has completed several other notable projects and initiatives related to language and culture:

- Camp Guidebook – Developed in consultation with several Elders and encompassing the growing regulations around on the land learning, the Camp Guidebook shares a blend of traditional knowledge, age appropriate learning activities and expectations, planning guides, and supports the Dene Kede. Each school offers multiple camps for students to learn on the land each season;
- School cultural programming such as Heritage Fairs, Culture Based Integrated Programming, Tłı̨chǫ History Project resources, high school course work in language, culture, drumming, and Tłı̨chǫ Agreement;
- Participation and hosting of drumming and hand games extracurricular;
- Support for staff to participate in MAP, CILLDI, and other language development programs; and
- Translation services to support Tłı̨chǫ language and immersion programs in schools.



Handgames tournament at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School in Behchokò.



Student Achievement



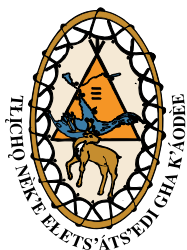
Based on a variety of age-appropriate literacy assessments from Provincial Assessment Tests (PATs or AATs), Fountas and Pinnell reading, and Teacher Rating of Oral Language (TROLL) there is significant evidence that Tłı̄chǫ̀ students underperform in oral language, early literacy, and reading. In recognition of this, reading and literacy continue to be a priority. Mathematics including reasoning and critical thinking is also a key element of student achievement. As oral language is required before a student is ready to learn to read we use the measures of TROLL as an indicator of 'reading readiness' as well as school level phonological assessments that support pre-reading behaviours.

Specific targets:

1. Oral Language (measured by Teacher Rating Oral Language and Literacy (TROLL)) - by Spring 2020, 50% of Kindergarten students at or above the 25th percentile – Exceeded – 55% of Kindergarten students met this target by spring 2020, and 48.9% of Junior Kindergarten students met this target. Students who have strong oral language and speech in JK-2 are better positioned to learn to read.
2. Reading (measured by Fountas and Pinnell) - Close the Gap: by Spring 2020, 50% of students will close their reading gap by improving more than one grade level – Not met - Due to COVID-19 the year's end reading assessment was not completed. However, using the most recent reading assessments (Jan – March) we can report that 14.3% (46 of 321 grade 1-9 students) gained at least one year in their reading level.



Elizabeth Mackenzie Elementary School staff and students celebrate reaching their reading targets.



In addition to the stated targets, there are other notable approaches to supporting student achievement:

- Reading – Through extensive efforts to provide onsite coaching, increased literacy interventions, and PLC teams are improving reading outcomes for Tłı̨chǫ students;
- Oral language and literacy continue to be an area that the TCSA will need to prioritize as only 4% of the total grade 1-9 population is reading at level. Increased funding for reading specialists and improved instruction of reading is required to make systemic change in this area;
- Mathematics – In 2019-20 the TCSA coached mathematics teachers to use strategies including manipulatives, math/number talks, use of the approved resources, and worked collaboratively to improve high school math options; and
- Attendance – Attendance rates dramatically impact the ability of the schools to successfully meet the operating and strategic goals. Improved attendance will be the result of a comprehensive strategy between schools, community partners, parents, and students. TCSA schools have an average attendance rate of 77%. For an average student this means that they lose one whole year of school each 4 years, and by grade 12 are at least 3 years behind.

Wellness and Student Support

An increased number of students (65%) are entering the school system with “vulnerabilities” as identified by the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The Middle Years Development Index (MDI) for grade 4 and 7 students also points to a large majority (76-80%) of Tłı̨chǫ students in the “low well-being” category (which uses 5 dimensions to measure a population’s health and well-being). Finally, the majority students (74-85%) in the Tłı̨chǫ region require supports through Inclusive Schooling to provide Individualized (IEP), modified, and accommodated educational programs.



David Gon working with elementary students.



Specific targets:

1. Access to Counselling (CYCC) - Continue participation in the territorial CYCC and NCTS pilot – Exceeded – in addition to professional counselling services available to all students, the Indigenous Health and Wellness Elders (IHWE) are also available in every school.
2. Regular review of SSPs and IEPs - The RISC will review all of the IEPs and audit the SSPs – met – the use of Making a Plan (MAP) and increased support for students during key transitions (ex: into kindergarten, from elementary to junior high, grade 9-10, and from grade 12 to post-secondary or directly to work.
3. Active School Based Support Team (SBST) – partially met - there is an increase in the number of parent consultation meetings to encourage wrap around support for students that include teachers, administrations, parents, students, counsellors, speech and language, occupational therapy, educational psychologists, and other professionals.

In addition to the stated targets, there are other related considerations to student wellness and support:

- Indigenous Health and Wellness Elders – Through partnerships with HSS and third party funding the TCSA was able to secure Elders positions in each school to support Mental Health and Wellness. The IHWE plays an integral role in supporting children and youth with complex mental health needs, and their families, to build community and identity in the school. The IHWE is responsible for engaging with students to use traditional mental, social, cultural, and spiritual supports;
- Speech Therapy – In response to the significant data we have collected on oral language development the TCSA has increased the availability of SLP services in the region: 3 SLP full time positions, online therapy, support in school for families, and March break and summer camps in Behchokò. 234 students received over 750 hours of speech and language support through our Jordan's Principle funded online speech services. This continues to be an area that we will need to develop our supports, and increase community participation; and
- Jordan's Principle – Thanks to continue support from Jordan's Principle the TCSA will be able to continue to offer: increased SLP services, increased access to counselling in Wekweètì and Gamètì, a tutor at CJBS, occupational therapy supports at EMES, one-on-one supports for many students, continued support for the Indigenous Health and Wellness Elders, and now an increase in the reading interventions we can provide.



Lifelong Learning



In an effort to support every Tłı̨chǫ̀ student to become a capable and contributing member of our communities, the Agency prioritizes developing programs, structures, and processes that develop lifelong learners. This includes career focusing, inquiry based learning, integrated project based learning, and support for educators to improve their teaching practice.

Specific targets:

1. Purposeful coaching and in-servicing for teachers - Ensure every teacher receives onsite coaching throughout the year – met – extensive coaching and support was provided to every teacher and school staff to support their professional development from mentoring language instructors, to in-servicing for math instruction, to non-violent crisis intervention training for support assistants, and many more.
2. Quality career path support for students in grades 7-12 – to participate in the territorial career education advisory (CEA) pilot project - exceeded – in addition to the participation in the CEA pilot the TCSA is a partner in collaborative work between Tłı̨chǫ̀ Government and GNWT to support career focused supports for grade 7-12 students.



Chief Jimmy Bruneau School students learning a trade.

In addition to the stated targets, there are other related considerations to lifelong learning and supporting TCSA programs:

- Career – The TCSA is working with ECE's Career Education Advisors and Tłı̨chǫ̀ Government's Career Officers to enhance career and post-secondary guidance and support for grades 7-12;



- Staffing – There are teacher shortages across the country and we continue to have challenges to staff these and other school positions. Housing has been identified as a major barrier to recruiting and retention. We are working with several teacher programs to have more teacher placements and to provide opportunities to existing staff to get their degrees; and
- Quality and Accountability – Each school has Parent Advisor Committee and we are currently looking to expand and develop these committees. Each school has a School Improvement Plan that parents and community members are welcome to provide feedback and direction on.

COVID-19 Response and School Reopening Plans

School boards across the Northwest Territories – including the Tłı̄chǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) continue to plan for the 2020-2021 school year after the closure in March 2020. School boards are working closely with the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment (ECE), the Northwest Territories Teacher's Association (NWTTA), and the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCHPO) on detailed plans so we can safely reopen schools.

The TCSA has developed and submitted to the OCHPO a risk management plan to start the 2020-21 school year. As we can't predict what phase will be in by August, the risk plan must include contingencies for if we have progressed forward or reverted in Emerging Wisely. This includes plans for bussing, food provision, learning, and infection prevention and control. As we return to schools parents should expect a 'different' back to school experience; things will not be as we remember and everyone will need time to adjust. Some changes that parents should expect:

Continued Learning & Wellness Supports

- Schools will provide full-time in-person learning whenever possible and safe to do so.
- Schools will ensure that opportunities for learning continue at home or on the land for the portion of the school day that students cannot be in school.
- Students who cannot attend school will receive remote learning and ongoing contact from school staff to supplement in-school instruction.
- Counselling programming will continue remotely and potentially in-person.
- Focus will be placed on mental health supports, especially for those learning remotely.
- Focus will be placed on self-regulation and social/emotional learning to help students cope with changes in school.



Food programs will continue to be available with additional health and safety, physical distancing and hygiene measures in place.



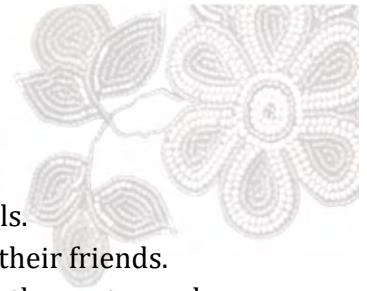
Freda Gon preparing work at home packages.



Sewing projects provided to Gamètì students during COVID school closures.

Increased Health & Safety Measures

- Parents will be asked to monitor their children daily for symptoms and not send them to school if they are sick. A screening process has been developed, and people who are sick will not be allowed in school.
- Students will be required to wash their hands frequently, including before coming to school. They will have access to hand sanitizer when hand washing is not available.
- Schools will be cleaned and disinfected more frequently, including classrooms and high touch areas.
- Schools may stagger drop-off and pick-up times and modify lunch and break times to limit gatherings and promote physical distancing. This will include changes to the bussing schedules.
- Schools will have designated entrances and exits, and restrict/manage flow in hallways and common areas with floor markings and/or physical barriers.
- Students will be asked to label personal items and not share them. No sharing of food will be allowed.
- There will be limitations on assemblies and gatherings.
- Parents, guardians and visitors will have limited access to schools and will be encouraged to drop off their children from outside the school.



There will be changes to emergency evacuation procedures and fire drills.

- Students will get frequent reminders to minimize physical contact with their friends.
- Students will be asked to wear a non-medical mask in common areas, as they enter and leave the school, and at other times during the day.
- Classrooms and instructional time will also look different, with:
 - Increased spacing between desks and other furniture
 - Limits on class sizes for Grades 7-12
 - Possibly more time spent learning outside
 - Non-medical masks for students
 - Face shields for teachers and other staff
 - Changes to schedules and hours of instruction

Students and their families will be kept informed of any changes and receive ongoing, regular updates from the TCSA and GNWT. Updates will be made available on social media and radio announcements. All parents are encouraged to follow the TCSA and their school on Facebook for up to date information.



FINANCIAL STRATEGY



The TCSA is committed to ensuring our programs and services are sustainable and supported by strong financial management processes. To that end, the following activities were foundational to our 2019-20 operations:

- Introduce enhanced accountability through improved financial policies, controls and training
- Enhance financial management oversight through middle and senior management training
- Enhance operational and workforce planning through strategic review and oversight

Section 32 (1) of the *Financial Administration Act* specifies that a public agency will submit its annual report to the responsible Minister no later than 90 days after the end of a fiscal year. Section 32 (1) of the *Financial Administration Act* also provides for a 60-day extension, subject to the approval of the Minister of Finance.

Due to the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the 2019-20 audit is still underway and as such, the final audited financial statements will be available on or before August 29, 2020.