

STRATEGIC PLAN

Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Planning
Tobique First Nation Education

Qey,

On January 18, 2022, Tobique First Nation Education received confirmation of approval of funding from Heritage Canada's Indigenous Languages Component (ILC) to support Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Planning until March 2023.

As we embark on the work ahead of us, we'd like to acknowledge the many community members who have worked, and continue to work, tirelessly dedicating themselves to Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey language preservation. Without these teachers, activists, scholars, musicians, artists, elders, linguists, etc, we would not have the number of speakers and resources currently available to us today.

Tobique Education recognizes that many believe that language revitalization belongs in the school and/or with Education. As such, Tobique Education will lead a strategic planning process for Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Planning until March, 2023. In addition, while we know the importance of planning, we also acknowledge the critical state of our language and will be taking action towards increasing resources (written, audio, living) while working to establish a common vision for our language and how to achieve it.

Tobique First Nation Education's Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Planning between 2021-23 proposal to ILC centres on the following five components:

- Community mobilization
- Public Awareness
- Language Camps
- Master Apprenticeship Program
- Documentation

Tobique Education will be working closely with our Regional Management Organization in Education, Three Nations Education Group Initiative (TNEGI), who is also placing greater focus on language revitalization in the year ahead. Together, we will carve a path forward for increased proficiency in our language(s).

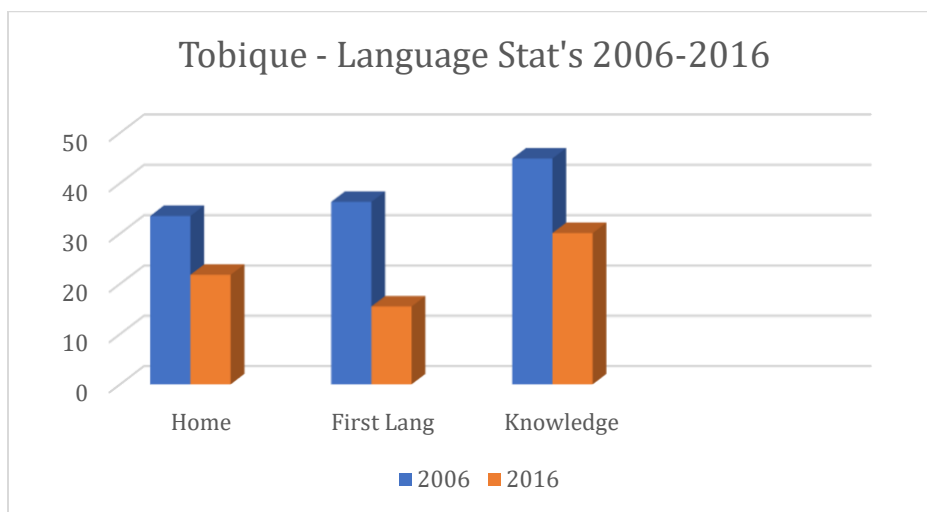
Enclosed is the engagement plan to lead us towards development of the strategy. On behalf of Tobique Education, I hope that you participate in the many language events and public engagement processes over the next year to reclaim, recover and preserve the beautiful language of our people.

Woliwon/ Wəliwən,

Candace Dee,
A/Director of Education
Tobique First Nation

Overview:

The last decade of census data research (2006 and 2016) shows a steady decline of Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey speakers identifying with “Language Spoken in the Home” and “First Language Speakers,” confirming that urgent and coordinated action is needed. Data has indicated that of the 16,120 respondents identifying as First Nations within New Brunswick, 280 identified with *Maliseet* (hereinafter referred to as Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey) as their mother tongue, but only 32 identified Maliseet as the language spoken in the home.



These respondents were likely only within households that had a family member aged sixty-five years and older. With many of the language holders being from our community, Neqotkuk (Tobique) First Nation. This is an opportunity for our community, with our own Band operated elementary school, the community is well positioned to increase Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey language proficiency. Neqotkuk Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey researchers on Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey language have identified the responsibility of language revitalization being with leadership, educational administration as well as with individual members within the nation. The workplan and engagement strategy responds to their call and the urgency of this issue with intentions to invite all community members into a process to aid in the creation of a Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan.

Community Engagement Strategy Summary

This community engagement strategy will complement the Tobique First Nation (TFN) – Education Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan and guide the on-going work to be done in order to create and foster an environment that supports the learning and teaching of the Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey language.

Community engagement activities will be an ongoing cumulative process enabling relationships and trust to build and strengthen over time. Individual engagement events will be planned and designed with this in mind and aim to contribute to the overall aims of the process. Community and voluntary groups often want to participate at a range of levels – from providing advice to co-designing the process and from undertaking some aspects of the engagement to delivering projects to meet some of the objectives.

The purpose of this community engagement plan is to:

- Identify and priorities the needs for fostering the TFN-Education Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan
- Develop collaborative ways of implementing element of the Language Revitalization Plan
- Review the progress and feedback of the community engagement plan
- Develop a proposal/plan from engagement feedback

Engagement activities and meetings may pose difficulty with the inability to gather due to COVID 19. The reliance on social media and direct contact with TFN community members, fluent language speakers, and teachers will be integral. All events hosted by TFN-Education will ensure to be inclusive and safe-spaces for youth, elders and LGBTQ2s+ participants.

To ensure the sustainability of the Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey language, Tobique First Nation will create a plan to include increasing documentation through recording living speakers, connect second language learners with fluent language speakers, and raise awareness to the threats against the current state of the Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey language.

Through this Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan, Tobique First Nation will be positioned to support other Maliseet communities. Tobique First Nation has many PhD scholars that are focussed on linguistics and revitalization and until now have not had the capacity to pull these experts

together for a collaboration. The Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan will bring this knowledge together in an inclusive and coordinated approach.

Neqotkuk/Tobique First Nation

Tobique First Nation (TFN) is located on the north side of the Tobique River in New Brunswick. It is one of six Wolastoqiyik (people of the beautiful river) Nations in Canada with a population of approximately 2500. TFN describes itself as a safe & vibrant community promoting healthy lifestyles while advancing its education, culture and traditions to secure opportunities for its next seven generations. The band is dedicated to advancing Tobique forward by providing strong governance, leadership, financial management, and transparent communications to its membership.

TFN has the most living speakers of the six communities but data shows that there has been a rapid decline over the past ten years, with only 15% reporting Maliseet as the first language learned. There is a need to move forward with a coordinated approach to conduct an environmental scan of what resources (living and documented) available within the community to support a language revitalization plan.

Project Scope

The project scope details the deliverables of the community engagement strategy, the work required to create those deliverables, and a timeline.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline an community engagement strategy for Tobique First Nation as they lead the development of a Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization plan for their community, by utilizing linguistic scholars, consulting with teachers, connecting second language learners with speakers, and raising language awareness.

TFN Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Guiding Principles:

TFN Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan will adhere to the following guiding principles that provide the framework for strategies, plans and programs, as well as guidance to staff in planning their work. They include:

- Safety, Integrity, Excellence, Accountability and Transparency
- Inclusion and participation
- Facilitate collaborations and capacity building
- Build on the strengths of TFN community
- Ethical and Social Framework
- Creating safe learning spaces
- Respect, humility, and tolerance

Goals and Objectives:

The goals of the community engagement process are to:

- Build awareness, maintain and implement the TFN Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan.
- Build trust and credibility.
- Ensure thoughts shared are gathered, understood and integrated into Plan design and execution, as applicable
- Establish lasting communication channels to share and receive information.
- Manage communication and understanding to incorporate in Plan.
- Document and record Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey speakers
- Develop programs to support language revitalization; and
- Take the necessary steps to ensure the Plan is effectively implemented.

The objectives of the community engagement strategy are to:

- Ensure that the Plan process has one voice with coordinated messaging.
- Ensure TFN and community members understand that Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey language revitalization is imperative to community development.
- Identify language speakers as a resource, connect second language learners with these speakers.
- Identify threats against the current state of the Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey language.
- Support Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey early learning initiatives.
- Provide timely, honest, accurate information to share “what we heard” report to guide the drafting of the final TFN Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan.
- Proactively engage the TFN community in:
 - Plan-related information.
 - Define potential strengths/weaknesses,
 - Contribute to the development of TFN Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan.
 - Provide input into how the Plan can be implemented.
- Ensure TFN community members have information on how they can get involved in the planning process.
- Ensure that all communications materials and platforms are consistent, straightforward, and easy to understand.
- Ensure that TFN community members have a variety of means to engage with the process (e.g., interactive website, open houses, social media, etc.)
- Ensure TFN community members are aware of how their input has shaped/impacted the design of the Plan.

Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language Groups

Tobique First Nation has the most living speakers of all the six Maliseet communities within New Brunswick. Census data shows a sharp decline in the past ten years, with only 21.8 % reported Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey as the first language learned. Language groups within TFN can be defined as:

Fluent Speakers

Language fluency generally refers to a person's ability to use the language to communicate clearly with others. A fluent speaker can use the language to speak with ease on a variety of topics to discuss abstract of complex ideas without using English or other aids like pictures or props. Fluency is not defined by knowledge of vocabulary alone, but by the ability to sue the language correctly, effectively and creatively and in the appropriate way according to the situation.

Second Language Learners

A second language learner is learning a language in addition to other language a person first learned as a young child. Acquiring a second language can be a lifelong learning process for many and despite persistent efforts, most learners of a second language will never become fully fluent unless given the tools and support for continuous language use and environment.

Teachers

Tobique First Nation operates Mah-Sos elementary school, offering K-4 to Grade 5, as well as, the Tobique Headstart Program. This provides an opportunity for the children to learn Wolastoqey within community operated settings. Teachers within these environments have the primary role in a multidimensional language class to establish conditions and develop activities so that students are able to practise the language in a meaningful context supported by cultural teachings. Teachers are integral to the revitalization of the Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey language at an early stage.

Youth

Youth in TFN are exposed to the Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language in informal ways such as community programs, ceremonies, socials, pow wows and home. Although TFN has language programs at the Mah-

Sos school, some students attend school off-reserve. If options are given for youth to partake in immersion camps and programs, this could lead to common peer use of the Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language.

Early Years

Children learn languages much more quickly and effectively than adult, this makes it important to introduce the Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language at an early stage.

An environmental scan shows the sites within and nearby the community that may offer Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language learning opportunities for members.



Participation Opportunities

TFN Education acknowledges that for the Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan to be successful, it must incorporate meaningful engagement and communication throughout the project life cycle including opportunities to be active participants in the creations of the Plan. The following are ways to ensure active participation and opportunities to engage:

Website

The Neqotkuk website will create a space specifically designed for the Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan and will have interactive ways to deliver information, contact registrants with updates, surveys, and upcoming events. A drop-down menu with specific information will be ideal.

Open House

Information sessions will be held for participants to receive information on the Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan and gather information on how people would like to participate. This is also a good opportunity to conduct an environmental scan. While these venues typically open the floor for Q&As, there is an opportunity to have a more controlled environment by having questions submitted and vetted by a facilitator.

Focus Groups

A TFN community focus group or working group will be coordinated in order to deliver Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan information and gather initial thoughts on the Plan. This will be an opportunity for TFN Education to engage on a more intimate level with a smaller group. We may consider holding a number of focus groups to include Youth specifically or Elders, or a mixed group from the language groups identified, and incorporate land-based learning events.

Surveys

Surveys can be hosted on our website, delivered in-person, and linked to social media. Direct links for surveys can be sent electronically to some participants, such as post-secondary students who may be away for studies.

Indigenous Media Outlets

By leveraging existing relationships with Indigenous media outlets, information on the Plan and how to get involved can be shared with constituents by way of social media posts, print newsletters and email blasts. These outlets can be directly contacted for ads. These will usually come with a cost (paid ad, etc.). These tools can be effective for off-reserve members.

Social Media

Social Media can be an effective tool to share information on the Plan, but it is dependent on monitoring for content and spreading awareness for users. TFN Education will work to ensure clear and concise messaging, along with social media monitoring.

Since the costs and benefits of various mechanisms depend on such things as participant’s capacity and desire or willingness to participate, there can be no “one size fits all” solution to optimizing the value of engagement. Further discussions community will be necessary to determine the best approach that works them.

Engagement Approach and Timelines

To manage some of the restraints to the schedule, we propose the following approach to timely develop of community engagement activities:

Timelines	Actions
Phase 1 February 2022-March 2022	Draft and finalize TFN Education community engagement strategy on Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan
Phase 2 April 2022-May 2022	Announce Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan and intent to engage community.
Phase 3 June 2022-August 2022	Preparation of materials and engagement strategies, prepare engagement activities schedule and prepare for website launch, initial community engagement activities, focus/working groups, interactive participation.
Phase 4 September 2022 – December 2022	Continuation/commence community engagement activities, focus/working groups, interactive participation,
Phase 5 January 2023 – March 2023	Reporting, final report on all activities and deliverables. “What We Heard” Report

Multi-Phase Engagement Process

The TFN community engagement process is designed as a systematic multi-phase process and is linked to the timeline and milestones. Each phase will require internal assessment and adjustments as needed to the Plan design, information application, and the draft Strategy. The methodology is the same for stakeholders; however, the execution may be unique to each language group respective category. The five phases are outlined below:

Phase 1- Pre-Planning and Strategy Development

Duration: January 18, 2022 - March 31, 2022

Scope of Work:

This phase focuses on Draft and finalize TFN Education community engagement strategy on Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan. It will focus on gathering information and undertaking research to identify each of the Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Groups who may be interested in participating in community engagement activities. This information sets the scope of the engagement process and informs the risk analysis. Extensive planning work is undertaken to understand resource requirements, build the engagement team, identify key activities and milestones, and to develop a list of information needs. This information is the foundation of the TFN Community Engagement Strategy.

Objectives (what is the specific result within the period):

- Complete planning, review and summarize Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan, assessment and discussion of implementation of TFN Community Engagement Strategy.

Phase 2 – Announcement/Project Information Sharing

Duration: April 2022-May 2022

Scope of Work:

This phase initiates the substantive tasks of announcing the TFN Community Engagement Strategy that support the Plan milestones. There are three main categories for this phase: (1) Announcement of the

Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan; (2) Sharing project information; and (3) Intent to engage community;. The following objectives apply to each sub-phase; however, there are separate and distinct tasks that are outlined in the corresponding section.

Objectives (what is the specific result within the period):

- Plan announcement, complete planning, assessment and formal implementation of TFN community engagement plan.
- Complete internal meetings with TFN Education staff, stakeholders, and Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language Groups to present the Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan and community engagement strategy and to gather initial comments or issues. During these meetings, TFN will provide:
 - The Revitalization Plan summary materials including handouts, brochures, and videos.
 - Information on how to access the website to review and access additional related resources.
 - an overview of the scope, timelines, individual roles in the process.
- Complete engagement approach to initiate respectful relationships/partnerships.

Phase 3: Engagement Implementation

Duration: June 2022-August 2022

Scope of Work:

This Phase is integral to the TFN Education Preparation of materials and engagement strategies, prepare engagement activities schedule and prepare for website launch, initial community engagement activities, focus/working groups, interactive participation. The community engagement will complement the overall comprehensive Revitalization Plan. In order to be inclusive and community driven, participants (stakeholders/language groups) need to see themselves reflected in the Plan.

Objectives (what is the specific result within the period):

- Discuss a range of options to formulate and secure community engagement participation (door prizes, etc).
- Initiate and complete schedule for Open House events, Information sessions, online survey.
- Identify working group and focus groups participants.
- Ongoing update to issue tracking documents and record of participant information.

Community (Stakeholder/Language Groups) Engagement Activities:

- Recommend that a number of pre-engagement meetings be held with internal staff, stakeholders/fluent speakers to seek advice on how best to engage and have high-level discussions about communication or protocol. Meetings can be conducted by phone or in-person.
- This information can help inform the engagement process by getting early feedback on perceived adequacy and efficacy in obtaining local support, refine the communications tools and approach, test knowledge and understanding of the Plan, and identify benefits or identify risks.
- Ensure stakeholders/language groups have a comprehensive understanding of the TFN-Education Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan including the community engagement strategy, opportunities for input, the What We Heard Report.
- Participate in the Tobique First Nation pow wow with an information booth to spread awareness and foster stakeholder/language groups interest in the Plan.
- Document identified specific issues of concern, risks and expectations for involvement.
- Actively seek and respectfully consider comments on the TFN-Education Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan.
- Create a foundation for ongoing communications and meaningful engagement that will continue through the finalization of the Plan and beyond.

- Report back to stakeholders/language groups with information as it becomes available and as questions and concerns can be answered and/or resolved.

Phase 4: Engagement, Information Gathering and Issues Identification

Duration: September 2022 – December 2022

Scope of Work:

This Phase is the wrap up of community engagement on the TFN-Education Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan. Ensure adequate opportunity to review materials and participate in engagement activities, update website, end of survey and analysis of information gathered, final community engagement activities, focus/working groups, interactive participation. The community engagement strategy information gathered will shape the Revitalization Plan, and issues identified will be addressed.

Objectives (what is the specific result within the period):

- Follow up directly with Indigenous groups to confirm receipt of the project information materials, and to determine their interest in engaging in engagement activities.
- Offer opportunities to exchange information and identify potential issues through individual or group meetings, website interaction, surveys, and online information sessions.
- Leverage communication opportunities: blogs, social media, project mail outs or updates, hosting online information sessions, online technical workshops to discuss environmental and socio-economic issues and sponsored ads in Indigenous media outlets.
- Document and record Project-related issues identified by Indigenous groups according to concern (i.e., environmental, economic, social, assertion of or claims to treaty or Indigenous rights).
- Regularly update communications materials to appropriately address or incorporate feedback/issues/questions that arise throughout discussions.

Phase 5 – “What We Heard” Report

Duration: January 2023 – March 2023

Scope of Work:

This phase focuses on the capture and synthesizes of information, feedback and key messages emerging from stakeholders/language groups who engaged on the TFN-Education Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan through the community engagement strategy. The information gathered from the engagement processes will assist with the development and implementation of the Wolastoqey/Maliseet Language Revitalization Plan. Through the extensive work undertaken to engage and the multiple tools implemented to ensure stakeholders/language groups have been given the opportunity to participate, it is anticipated a variety of issue and key messages may emerge. This important information is the result of the community engagement strategy and implementation, and the objective of the overall process. It is imperative that stakeholders/language groups see themselves reflected in the What We Heard Report that will ultimately shape the TFN-Education Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan.

Objectives (what is the specific result within the period):

- Complete the What We Heard Report with respect to the community engagement activities done with Tobique First Nation stakeholders/language groups.
- Include immersed key messages, themes and issues raised to shape the TFN-Education Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan.
- Continue respectful relationships with Tobique First Nation stakeholders/language groups by sharing information captured and key messages emerging from national engagement.

Key Activities

As outlined, the TFN-Education Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan Community Engagement Strategy proposes a multi-phased approach with numerous key activities. They include the following:

- Finalization of the TFN-Education Wolastoqey/Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Community Engagement Strategy for stakeholders/language groups.

- Create community engagement schedule to undertake meaningful engagement activities with community members including youth, Elders, parents, teachers, and fluent language speakers to understand their respective interests and preferences creating a working Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey Language Revitalization Plan.
- Organize and participate in community meetings, virtual engagement, and undertaking research to collect and analyse existing Wolastoqey/ Wəlastəkwey language information.
- Attend community meetings and open houses (virtual) with off-Reserve stakeholders/language groups to ensure they are included in the engagement process to share information on the Plan, seek input, and work towards mutually beneficial opportunities.
- Organizing and facilitating Indigenous focus groups and working groups.
- Create a What We Heard Report to foster participation, create transparency, communication and identify issues/concerns.