

## **Town Hall on Before and After School Care in Huron County**

January 30, 2026

- Marnie Van Esbroeck, organizer
- Hannah Field, Owner of The Trees & Me Forest School.
- Avon Maitland District School Board: Graham Shantz, Director of Education, Michael Bannerman, Chair of the Board, Robert Hunking, School Trustee for Southwest Huron, and Cheri Carter, Superintendent of Corporate Services.
- Huron Perth Catholic District School Board: Karent Tigani, Director of Education, Mary Helen Van Loon, Chair of the Board, and Mary-Ellen Ducharme, Superintendent of Business.

### **Themes**

#### **Trees and Me Forest School (TAM)**

- Policies and procedures are being submitted to the ministry for approval.
- Insurance has been approved for all schools, and health unit inspections will occur next week.
- TAM will do their best to honour childcare spaces for children who were enrolled in the programs with London Bridge.
- Please contact [Hannah.forestschool@gmail.com](mailto:Hannah.forestschool@gmail.com) to enroll.
- There are plans to offer summer and PA day programs as well.
- Follow @tam.forestschool on Instagram/Facebook for more information.

#### **Third Party Child Care vs. Board Operated Before and After School Programs (BASP)**

- Both school boards have been putting their efforts into onboarding the Trees & Me Forest School to operate BASP.
- Out of 70 school boards in Ontario, only 4 offer board operated BASP. The cost to run a board operated program would be greater than if run by a third party.
- Parents would like the school board to continue to consider board operated BASP to fill existing gaps in availability across the region and in the event TAM is unable to move forward.
- Trustees encouraged parents to keep this discussion going at future board meetings.
- Parents expressed frustration that the board is passing responsibility onto a small business owner with fewer resources.
- Further advocacy with the provincial government is needed to make this a mandated responsibility of school boards and ensure they are funded to provide this service accordingly.

## **Staffing Challenges in the ECE sector**

- There is a lack of ECE's in our region and other rural areas of Ontario. School boards are finding it difficult to fill their vacancies.
- Huron and Perth County both offer tuition rebate programs for ECE training.
- ECE's that are employed with school boards are unionized. The school boards are having discussions with the local union to inquire if ECE's could work for both boards and third party child care providers.
- TAM needs to fill ECE vacancies for 6 before and after school programs (one at PBS, one at BCES and four at EES) in order to meet Ministry of Education requirement to run BASP.
- School boards have shared the opportunity with staff on their supply lists.

## **Summary**

Parents, elected officials, ECEs and school board representatives appreciated the opportunity to speak openly about this issue. All parties are eager to find a solution to support families and children in Huron County.