

Protect Before and After School Programs in Huron County

On August 19, 2025, London Bridge announced it will cease all Before and After School Programs (BASP) in Huron County effective **September 26, 2025**. This decision impacts three schools in Huron County, eliminating approximately **240 child care spaces—140 of which are used by students in the Avon Maitland District School Board (AMDSB)**. This number does not reflect the many children still on waiting lists for care.

While we acknowledge the reason given for the closure to be staffing challenges, we disagree that this means that a BASP is not viable. This is a reflection of the working conditions offered by London Bridge, including low wages and part-time/split shift work. It is reasonable to assume that positions offered by the school board would be more attractive for recruitment to these college educated professionals.

On behalf of families at **Exeter Elementary School** and **Bluewater Coast Public School**, we are urging the **Avon Maitland District School Board** to take immediate action by **providing board operated BASP** in schools **where third-party providers are not available**.

The Need for Leadership and Equity

Out of 30 elementary schools in the AMDSB, **11 schools (36%) will not have access to BASP** for the 2025–2026 school year. This is a stark contrast to our neighbouring boards:

- **Bluewater District School Board** (similar in size and demographics): Only 4 out of 36 schools (11%) do not offer BASP. All of these programs are operated by third parties¹.
- **Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB)**: Offers BASP in 100% of its 123 elementary schools, with only 22 run by third parties—the remainder are operated directly by the board².

Learning from Proven Models

On August 25, 2025, I shared a valuable webinar with our Superintendent of Education. Hosted by *Building Blocks for Child Care* in Spring 2025, the webinar features insights from WRDSB, Halton DSB, and Ottawa-Carleton DSB on how to operate, staff, and fund board operated BASP. These boards found such success that they now commit to offering board operated BASP in every new school they open.

Watch the webinar here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5o3vKfxIEA>

Why It Matters

Providing BASP directly through AMDSB means:

- Early Childhood Educators can access stable employment with better wages, benefits, and career growth.
- Children experience a safe, reliable, and consistent environment throughout their school day.
- Families gain equitable access to child care, rather than having childcare opportunities dictated by where you live and what school boundary you belong to.

¹ https://www.bwdsb.on.ca/families_community/child_care

² <https://www.wrdsb.ca/beforeafter/2024-2025-before-and-after-rates/>

We Urge the AMDSB to Take Action

We call on the Avon Maitland District School Board to:

- Follow the leadership of boards like WRDSB, HDSB, and OCDSB by exploring direct operation models.
- Pilot a board operated BASP program in January 2026 at Exeter Elementary and Bluewater Coast Schools.
- If successful, commit to expanding and offering board operated BASP in all elementary schools where third-party operators are unavailable for the 2026-27 school year.
- Invest in equitable, accessible childcare that supports working families and empowers local educators.

Our children, families, and educators deserve better. Let's build a stronger, more inclusive future in Huron Perth—starting now.

Sincerely,

Marnie Van Esbroeck
Parent in Huron County

September 9, 2025