



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Before & After School Program Delivery

POSITION PAPER

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Prepared by:

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

Prepared for:

Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education

Brief

The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) requests that the Ministry of Education provide firm direction to School Boards to maximize their responsibility for Before and After School program delivery in order to meet the current demand for Before and After School child care.

Summary

The District of Thunder Bay currently has a Before and After School care waitlist of 886 (JK/SK and School Aged). The School Boards within the District of Thunder Bay are not fulfilling their role in establishing new spaces and the provision of care resulting in hardships for families requiring this service.

Background

School Boards are required to ensure the provision of Before and After School programs (school board operated or third-party programs) in each elementary school in Ontario for students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 where there is sufficient demand.

School Boards are required to comply with the provisions for Before and After School programs set out under Part IX.1 of the *Education Act, Regulation 221/11* entitled “Extended Day and Third-Party Programs,” and policies set out in the Before and After School Programs Kindergarten to Grade 6 – Policies and Guidelines for School Boards.

Currently, the District of Thunder Bay has a Before and After School care waitlist of 886 children¹. The District of Thunder Bay has 59 elementary schools, and 59.3% of those schools have child care programs operated through contracts with third party operators. These centres offer a total of 1405 licensed child care spaces for school aged children, and have been unable to operate at full capacity due to staff shortages. There is more demand for child care than the system can accommodate, and not enough qualified staff to support the spaces that are available.

Unfortunately, the child care programs have struggled to retain and recruit staff due to a shortage of qualified child care workers. These programs have had to operate at a reduced capacity or suspend the school-aged program entirely. Currently, there are four Before and After School programs that are unable to operate due to staffing shortages in the District of Thunder Bay.

Despite School Boards having qualified educators on staff, these educators are not made available to fill shortages in the Before and After School programs. The School Boards do not prioritize the before and after school operations, and have not worked with the third party operators to ensure adequate staffing levels by utilizing their own qualified child care workers. School Boards remain at arm's length from Before and After school programs run by third parties in their schools and as a result they often do not consider the before and after school programs in their decision making. As such, the School Boards within the District of Thunder Bay are not appropriately fulfilling their role in establishing new spaces and the provision of care, resulting in hardships for families requiring this service.

Though TBDSSAB continues to engage the local School Boards in discussions around the stability of the child care sector, there has been little progress towards establishing new Before and After School programs. A reimagining of the system where the School Boards work closely in partnership with the third party providers to ensure adequate staffing levels and operating spaces would better serve the families in the District of Thunder Bay. With School Boards taking more responsibility for meeting demand for child care spaces, there may also be opportunities to open

¹ Based on TBDSSAB operational statistics for October 2021

centres in schools that do not currently offer Before and After school care, or expand existing programs to meet the demand.

Therefore, TBDSSAB requests that the Ministry of Education provide firm direction to School Boards to maximize their responsibility for Before and After School program delivery in order to meet the current demand for Before & After School child care.