

Brought to you by NJSACC: New Jersey's Afterschool & Out-of-School Time (OST) Professional Network

## Afterschool Advocacy In Action

March 2025

Join NJSACC at the Trenton Statehouse! Monday March 17 - 10am

**Join NJSACC**  
**Let Your Voice Be Heard!**  
**Monday, March 17**  
**10am**

**New Jersey Statehouse Annex**  
**131 West State Street**  
**Trenton, NJ**

**Committee Room 6, 1st Floor**

The Senate Education Committee will hold a hearing on Bill S3457, which establishes the Out-of-School Time (OST) Commission.

NJSACC invites you to join us in speaking up for the importance of OST programs in New Jersey.

Your voice as a parent, provider, or stakeholder is crucial in ensuring this issue is heard!

[njsacc.org/advocacy](https://njsacc.org/advocacy)

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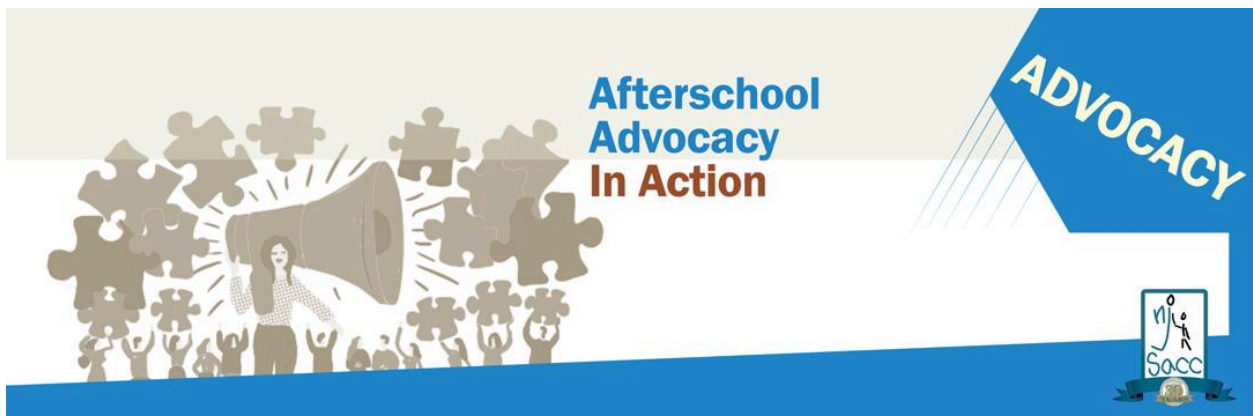
[\(click here to view the enlarged version\)](#)

On Monday, March 17th, at 10:00 AM, the Senate Education Committee will hold a hearing on Bill S3457, which establishes the Out-of-School Time (OST) Commission in Committee Room 6, 1st Floor, State House Annex, Trenton, NJ.

NJSACC has been invited to testify, advocating for the critical need to invest in and strengthen New Jersey's OST programs. High-quality, accessible out-of-school time programming is essential for providing children with enriching learning experiences, supporting working families, and fostering a resilient economy.

We invite you to join us in speaking up for the importance of OST programs in New Jersey. Your voice as a parent, provider, or stakeholder is crucial in ensuring this bill moves forward. Let's make sure our voices are heard!

For questions about this session, please contact Tyneisha Gibbs, NJSACC's Director of Policy & Youth Advocacy at: [tgibbs@njsacc.org](mailto:tgibbs@njsacc.org)



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## Assembly Education Committee Passes Bill A4365

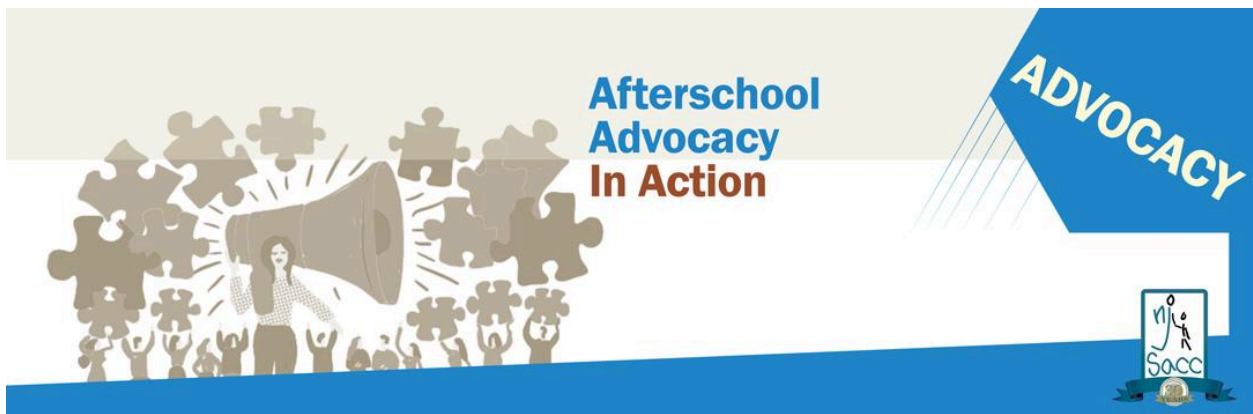
This Assembly Education Committee unanimously passed Bill A4365, which establishes a Council for Community Recovery and Family Success within the Department of Community Affairs to oversee a Statewide initiative promoting the social and economic well-being of infants, children, youth, and families. The council, made up of 25 members from state agencies and community representatives, will coordinate services, develop policies, and advocate for a State Bill of Rights for Infants, Children, Youth, and Families.

Key responsibilities include:

- Identifying gaps in existing support services.
- Recommending improvements to coordination between state agencies and community-based organizations.
- Developing preventive services to reduce the need for distress services (e.g., crisis intervention).
- Exploring public-private funding strategies.
- Establishing county-level family success councils to assess needs and provide local support.

The bill appropriates \$4 million for these initiatives, with funds carrying over annually if unused. If this passes through the house and becomes codified, opportunities for OST providers are:

1. Participate in Local Family Success Councils – By engaging in county-level councils, OST providers can help shape policies and ensure out-of-school programs are included in funding and support networks.
2. Access New Funding Streams – The council will oversee funding priorities, and OST providers could advocate for inclusion in preventive service allocations.
3. Enhance Cross-Sector Collaboration – OST programs can partner with schools, health organizations, and social services to provide integrated support for children and families.



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## **OMB temporarily pauses federal agency grants, loans, and assistance**

*By Erik Peterson - Originally posted on January 28, 2025*



***Update: February 10, 2025: Today the federal judge in the case brought by Attorney Generals in 22 states and the District of Columbia found that the Trump administration has not fully followed his order to unfreeze federal spending and told the White House to release all funds from grants. U.S. District Court Judge John McConnell ruled that ongoing struggles to get federal money for things like early childhood education, pollution reduction and HIV prevention research violated his Jan. 31 order. He ordered the Trump administration to “immediately take every step necessary” to follow his temporary restraining over halting its plans for a sweeping freeze of federal funding.***



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*Update: February 4, 2025: Yesterday, U.S. District Judge Loren AliKhan in Washington, D.C., [granted a temporary restraining order](#) against the federal grant, loan and aid freeze, siding with the National Council of Nonprofits and other nonprofit organization defendants that claimed they were still unable to access federal funds despite the government's insistence that the OMB memo from January 27 was no longer in effect. The decision follows the administrative stay Judge AliKhan issued last Tuesday, January 28 that was set to expire by 5 p.m. yesterday. Update: February 3. The temporary restraining order preventing the freeze or pause of federal funds went into effect and will be reviewed when the court reconvenes on February 7.*

*Note - this decision is [separate from the case being heard by a Rhode Island federal judge](#) who ruled Friday, January 31 to block the Trump Administration's freeze of various federal spending programs tied to his executive orders. The Rhode Island case only applies to the 22 states and District of Columbia that had filed the lawsuit.*

*Update: January 31, 2025: Clarification that while the Administration's Office of Management and Budget rescinded the memo from last Monday, the review and vetting of all federal assistance grants and loans (except those to individuals) being conducted by federal agencies is still underway. Federal agencies are reviewing all grants and loans to ensure they comply with new Executive Orders including the Order "Ending Radical And Wasteful Government DEI Programs And Preferencing," which ceases all federal government and contracted DEI, DEIA, and "environmental justice" programs and policies, positions, committees, programs, services, activities, budgets, and expenditures. The two federal court cases, filed to stop the review and vetting of grants to ensure compliance with the Orders, continue as of this morning.*

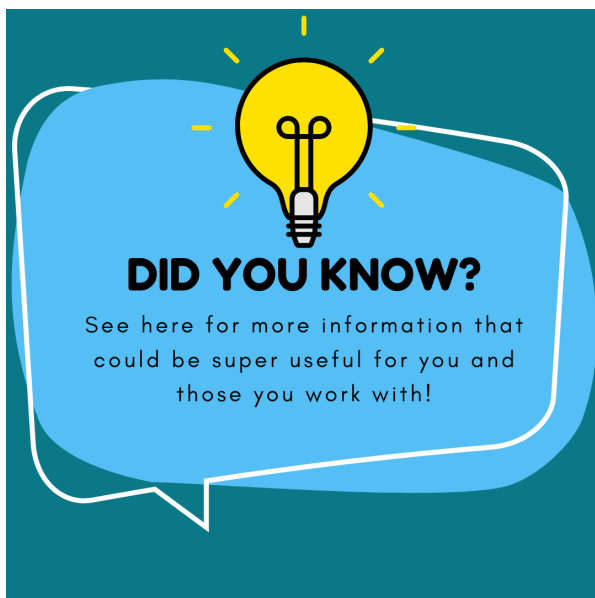
PLEASE NOTE: Most K-12 formula grant programs already have their FY 2024 funding – this pause should not affect most K-12 formula grant programs between now and February 10 or whenever OMB completes its review of the submitted information because those programs. Title I, IDEA, Title II, etc. received all their FY 2024 funding on either July 1 or October 1, 2024. Virtually all K-12 programs, except Impact Aid, get their funding not at the beginning of the fiscal year or when a continuing resolution is enacted but on the following July 1 as "forward funding" or as "advance funding" that becomes available the first day of the subsequent fiscal year. These programs have their current funding already, so it is not at risk. These programs wouldn't get their FY 2025 funding until this July or October.

[Click here to read more from this article's source.](#)



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## Resources on Immigrant Students and Families



### **Office of New Americans: Community Support Resources**

NJDHS' Office of New Americans has developed Know-Your-Rights materials for immigrants and refugees and organizations/businesses who serve them. Resources are available in English and Spanish. Other languages will be available soon.

### **School-Related State and Federal Requirements Pertaining to Immigrant Students and Families**

NJDOE's Office of School Preparedness & Emergency Planning has provided resources designed to support school officials, staff, and communities in safeguarding the physical well-being of students.

[Click here to read more and access these resources!](#)



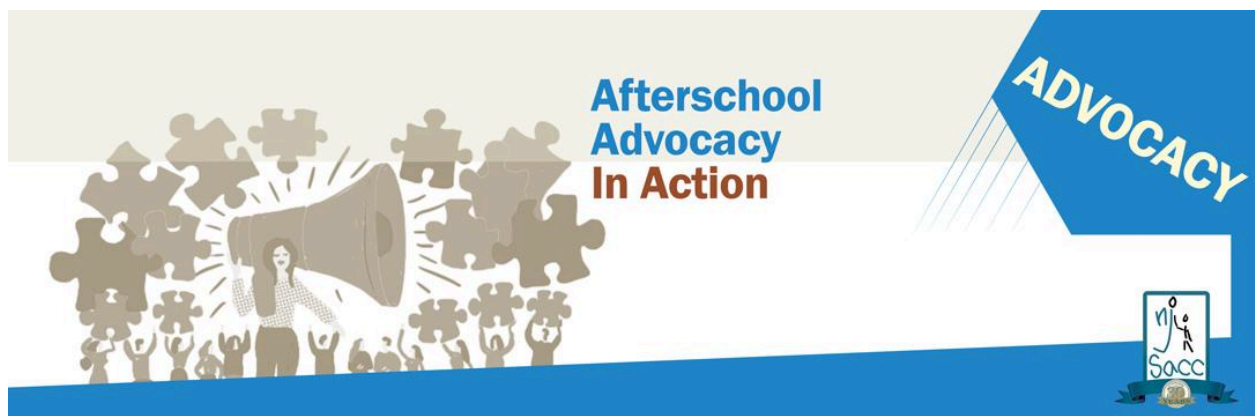
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## NJSACC meets with New Jersey State Senator Angela V. McKnight



Recently, NJSACC CEO Ebony D. Grace had the honor of meeting with New Jersey State Senator Angela V. McKnight to discuss the critical challenges facing school-age childcare in New Jersey. Did you know that low-income families access OST (Out-of-School Time) programs at just 38% — less than half the rate of their upper-middle-income peers? With 650,000 children left without access, the need for equitable, high-quality OST programs has never been more urgent. By investing in OST, NJ will join the ranks of 27 other states who have made addressing this issue a priority.

[Click here to read more from this article's source.](#)

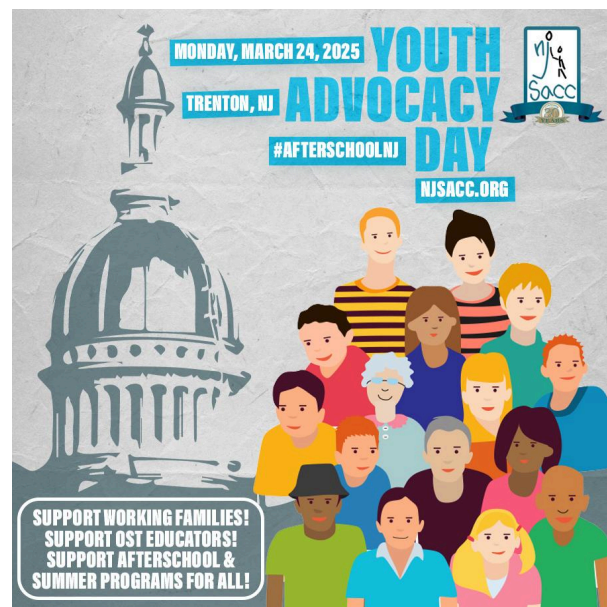


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## Youth Advocacy Day (March 24, 2025)

NJSACC: New Jersey's Afterschool & Out-of-School Time Professional Network is proud to host its Annual Youth Advocacy Day on Monday, March 24, 2025, at the New Jersey State House in Trenton. Youth Advocacy Day aims to educate and empower young people about the legislative process and encourage them to advocate for their communities and issues they care about.

Building on the success of last year's impactful gathering, this year's event will once again provide students with an invaluable opportunity to engage directly with state legislators, witness a live Senate voting session, and learn about the legislative process.



[\(click here to view the enlarged version\)](#)

Students will meet with policymakers, tour the NJ State House, and advocate for issues critical to youth and afterschool programs throughout New Jersey. This highly anticipated event serves as the kickoff to National Youth Voice Week March 24- 28, 2025, celebrating youth empowerment and advocacy.

[Click here to read more from this article's source.](#)



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## Youth Voice Week (March 24-28, 2025)

Youth Voice Week is a dedicated period where young people are encouraged to actively share their opinions, experiences, and ideas on issues that matter to them, often focusing on the importance of afterschool programs and highlighting the value of youth voices in decision-making processes within their communities. We're lifting up youth perspectives. Join us in elevating youth voices and the role of afterschool and summer programs in providing youth with opportunities to lead and grow.

With federal budget cuts looming, it's particularly important to connect with our representatives in Congress and share with them the power of afterschool.

Get featured on Afterschool Alliance's website! Each day of Youth Voice Week Afterschool Alliance will publish a guest blog submitted by a program or youth. Your submission can be an existing piece; no need to create something new! Selected pieces will be published on the Afterschool Snack, and promoted on their social feed and their weekly newsletter. Send an email with your submission to [info@afterschoolalliance.org](mailto:info@afterschoolalliance.org).

[Check out some of NJSACC's highlights from last year!](#)

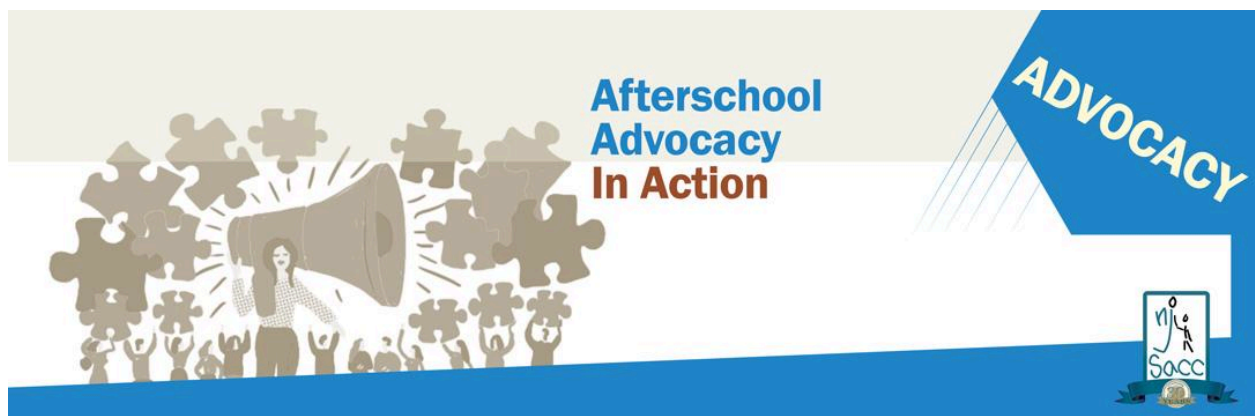
## NJ State Budget Hearings

The NJ State Budget process is underway, and you have the opportunity to make your voice heard! The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee and the Assembly Budget Committee will be holding public hearings on the Fiscal Year 2026 State Budget, where individuals can register to testify. Assembly public hearings are scheduled for March 19th and March 25th, while Senate hearing dates are March 26th and April 10th (remotely). Space is limited, and participants may testify at only one Senate and/or one Assembly hearing. Register today to share your perspective! [Sign up here!](#)

## Civic Learning Week March 10-14, 2025

NJSACC was honored to attend the launch of [CivicsNJ](#)—a groundbreaking coalition of thought leaders, funders, educational institutions, community-based organizations, and educators dedicated to fostering a more informed and engaged citizenry in New Jersey. As one of the founding member organizations of this coalition, We are proud to champion youth voice and civic engagement.





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At the event, Tyneisha Gibbs, Director of Policy & Youth Advocacy, reflected on how our work, particularly through out-of-school time (OST) programs, has continually empowered youth to become active participants in their communities.

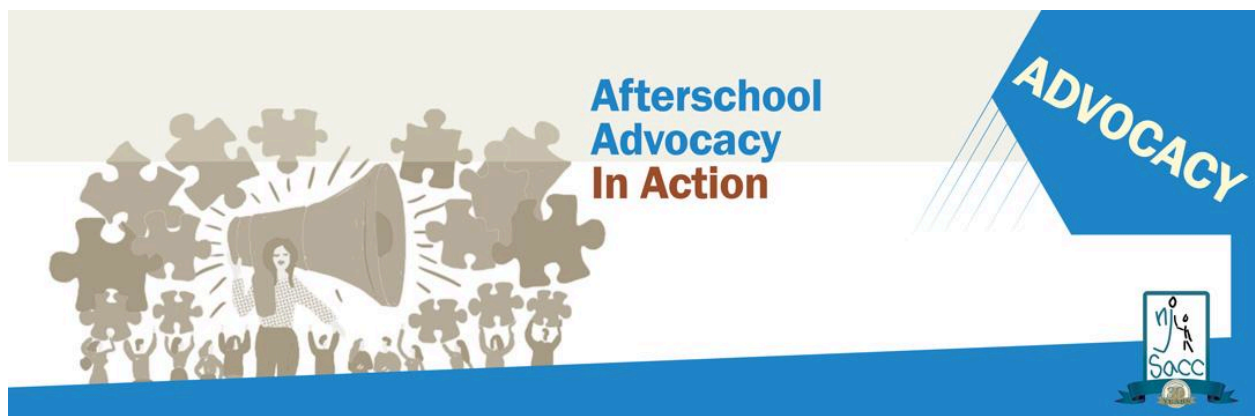
For more than two decades, NJSACC has supported the NJDOE Civic Engagement grantees as their training and technical assistance provider.

- Egg Harbor City Public Schools
- Future Leaders Organization, Pleasantville Public Schools
- La Casa De Don Pedro, Newark Public Schools
- Raritan Bay YMCA, Perth Amboy Public Schools
- Rutgers University—Camden, Camden Public Schools

Over the past year, NJSACC has reached several key milestones in advancing civic engagement:

- We secured a supplemental grant from NJDOE to further expand our civic engagement initiatives.
- We helped plan and execute a highly successful Youth Advocacy Day at the NJ State House, where students from Paterson and Newark shared their voices.
- We partnered with The Gem Project to provide technical assistance to NJDOE 21st Century Community Learning Center grantees focused on civic engagement.
- In collaboration with Generation Citizen, we delivered training for educators and youth development practitioners using their nationally recognized curriculum.
- Each of our grantees successfully launched local Youth Councils at their 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which spearheaded a statewide youth letter-writing campaign to the Governor's office last December.
- We wrapped up a Civic Engagement Community of Practice with The Gem Project and NJDOE 21st CCLC Project Directors, ensuring every grantee received an individualized support plan for 2025.

Looking ahead, We are excited about our plans for 2025. We will be launching a Statewide Youth Advisory Board and preparing for Youth Advocacy Day on March 24, 2025.



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## **NJSACC and Advocacy Partners Champion OST Commission Bill at Senate Education Committee Hearing**

On March 17, 2025, NJSACC and its advocacy partners took a significant step forward in advancing out-of-school time (OST) opportunities for New Jersey's youth. At the Senate Education Committee hearing, Ebony D. Grace, CEO of NJSACC, delivered compelling testimony in support of [bill S3457](#), which would establish the New Jersey Out-of-School Time Advisory Commission.

Ebony emphasized the commission's critical role in fostering collaboration among key state agencies—including the Departments of Human Services, Children and Families, Education, and Health. "Establishing the commission will align efforts and identify service gaps, ensuring every child, regardless of zip code, has access to quality Afterschool and Summer experiences," she stated.

Thanks to the dedication of advocates, partners, and supporters, we are pleased to share that the OST Commission Bill was unanimously approved by the Senate Education Committee. The bill now moves forward to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee for further consideration.

We extend our gratitude to everyone who has supported this critical initiative. Stay tuned for updates as we continue working toward a stronger, more equitable future for New Jersey's youth!

## **Empowering the Next Generation: Highlights from Youth Advocacy Day 2025**

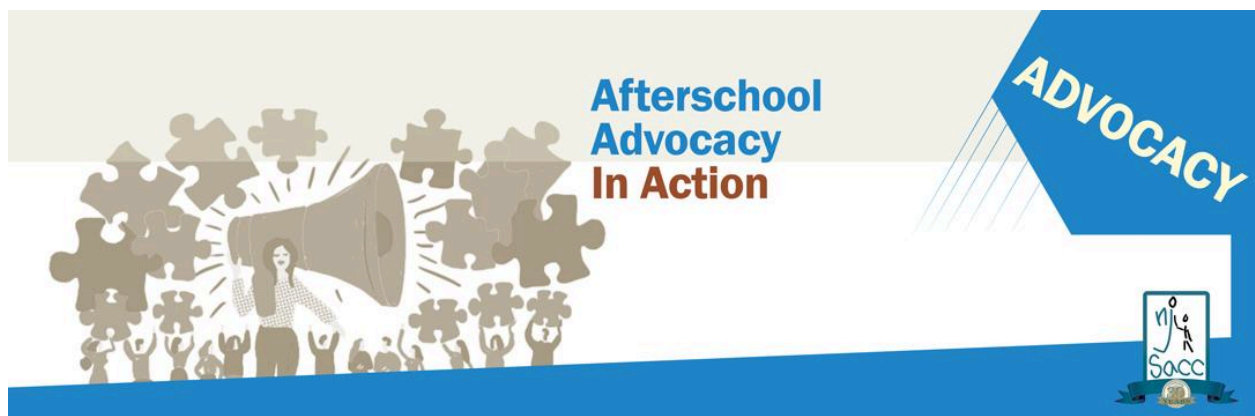
On Monday, March 24th, **NJSACC: New Jersey's Statewide Network for Afterschool Communities** hosted its **2nd Annual Youth Advocacy Day** at the New Jersey State House. It was an inspiring day filled with passionate youth voices, meaningful conversations with legislators, and first hand exposure to the policymaking process.



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## Youth in Action: By the Numbers

- 🚌 **47 youth advocates** and **8 chaperones** from **Newark, Jersey City, and Trenton** participated.
- 💡 **12 legislative visits** took place, allowing youth to share their experiences and advocate for increased investment in out-of-school time (OST) programs.
- 👥 Youth engaged with the following legislators and representatives:
  - **Senator Vin Gopal (LD-11)**
  - **Senator Owen Henry (LD-12)**
  - **Senator McKnight (LD-**
  - **Assemblywoman Carmen Morales (LD-34)**
  - **Assemblyman Michael Venezia (LD-34)**
  - **Assemblywoman Shama Haider (LD-37)**
  - **Assemblywoman Andrea Katz (LD-8)**
  - **Senator Benjie Wimberly (LD-35)**
  - **Assemblywoman Ellen Park (LD-37)**
  - **Shadaya Bennett** representing **Assemblywoman Shanique Speight (LD-29)**
  - **Senator Teresa Ruiz (LD-29)**
  - **Assemblywoman Rosaura Bagolie (LD-27)**
  - **Assemblyman Balvir Singh (LD-7)**



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## An Unforgettable Experience

The day was filled with powerful moments that brought policy to life.

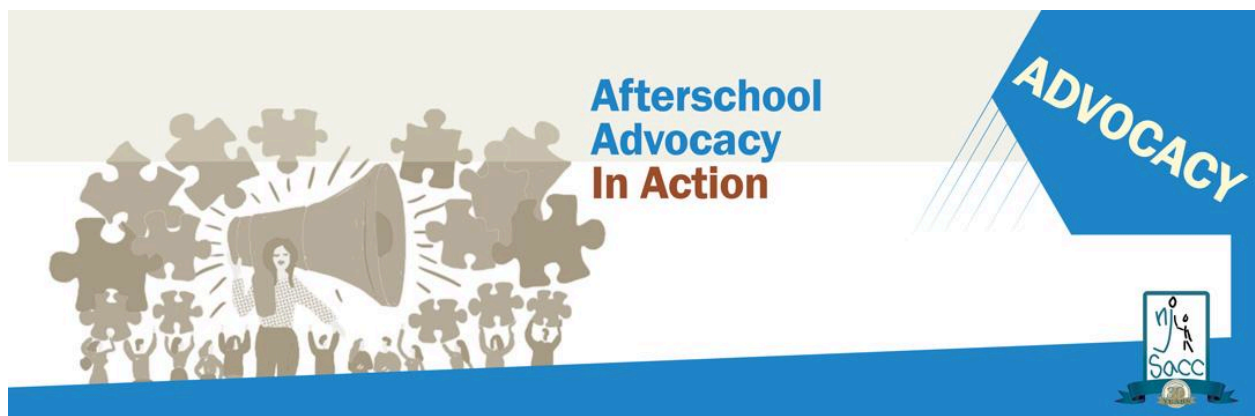
✔ Youth observed a **live Senate and Assembly voting session**, gaining insight into the legislative process in action.

🏛️ They toured the **State House and Governor's office**, getting a behind-the-scenes look at where laws are shaped.

📸 The highlight of the day? A **huge photo op with Governor Phil Murphy**, capturing a moment of unity and empowerment.

💬 Additionally, youth engaged with key representatives from the **Governor's Office**, including:

- **Emy Quispe**, Director of Constituent Relations
- **Aaron Williams**, Senior Policy Advisor
- **Kenneth Clayton**



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## Why It Matters

Youth Advocacy Day is more than a field trip—it's a platform for young people to make their voices heard. They shared their personal stories about how afterschool and summer programs have impacted their lives, highlighting the need for **greater investment in OST programs** to support working families and expand opportunities for youth development.

These young leaders demonstrated that they are not just the leaders of tomorrow—they are the advocates of today.

### **Get Featured During Youth Voice Week!**

Keep the momentum going by participating in **Youth Voice Week!** This is an exciting opportunity to **get featured on the Afterschool Alliance's website** and share your advocacy experiences.

 Each day during **Youth Voice Week**, Afterschool Alliance will publish a guest blog submitted by a program or youth. This is your chance to showcase the powerful voices and stories that emerged from Youth Advocacy Day—or share any existing piece that highlights the importance of OST programs.

 Selected pieces will be published on the **Afterschool Snack blog**, promoted on their social channels, and included in their weekly newsletter.

### **To submit:**

Email your piece to [info@afterschoolalliance.org](mailto:info@afterschoolalliance.org). No need to create something new—existing blogs, essays, or reflections are welcome!

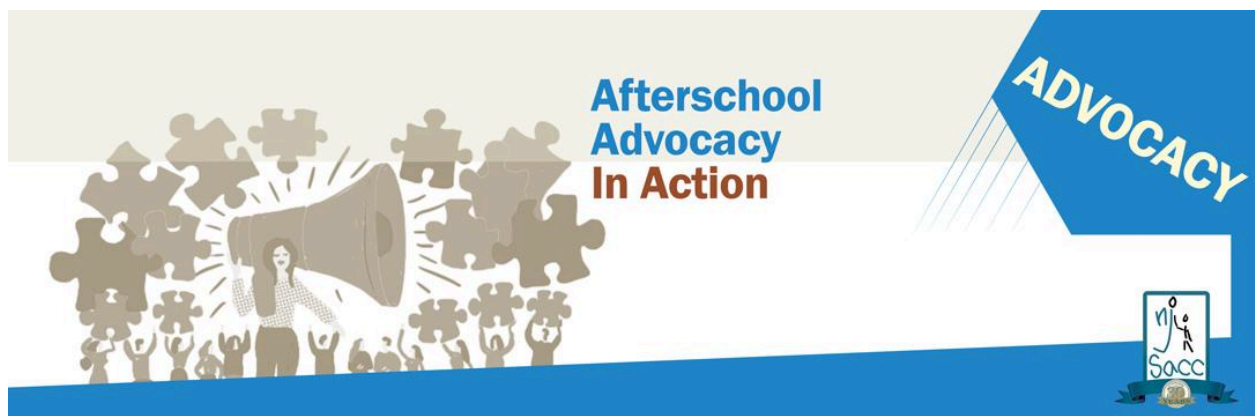


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## Thank You for Making a Difference

To every youth advocate, chaperone, and partner who participated—**thank you for your passion, courage, and commitment** to making New Jersey a better place for youth. Your voices matter. Let's continue to elevate them—at the State House, online, and in every community across New Jersey.





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## **A Powerful Week of Advocacy for NJ's Youth!**

This week, NJSACC led a strong push for afterschool and OST (out-of-school time) programs in New Jersey! On Monday, March 24, Nearly 60 students from 3 cities gathered at the NJ State House for Youth Advocacy Day, meeting with 12 legislators.

On Tuesday, March 25: Our CEO, Ebony D. Grace, testified before the Assembly Budget and Appropriations Committee.

On Wednesday, March 26: Our Director of Policy & Youth Advocacy, Tyneisha Gibbs, testified before the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

Our message was clear: We support the OST Commission Bill & we're asking the legislature to support Dedicated Funding for Afterschool & Summer Programs!

Every child, no matter their zip code, deserves access to quality OST programs. These programs:

- ◆ Support working families
- ◆ Improve academic outcomes
- ◆ Reduce youth crime during peak hours
- ◆ Address workforce shortages in the childcare and OST sectors

For FY 2026, we're calling on New Jersey to:

- ➔ Invest \$5M to expand OST programs, creating 3,333 new seats statewide.
- ➔ Allocate \$1.5M to strengthen the OST workforce, training 1,714 opportunity youth for childcare & afterschool careers.
- ➔ Dedicate at least 25% of recreational cannabis social excise tax revenue to fund OST programs—building equity, preventing substance misuse & strengthening NJ's workforce.

The time to act is NOW! Let's invest in our children's future. #AfterschoolMatters #OSTFunding #YouthAdvocacy #NJ