



🥂 Join Us in Celebrating the Moments That Shaped Our Year 🥂

Throughout the past year, NJSACC has had the privilege of working alongside dedicated afterschool and out-of-school time professionals who continue to make an extraordinary difference in the lives of New Jersey's youth. Every conference, training, partnership, coaching session, and conversation reflected a shared commitment to creating stronger programs, supporting one another, and investing in the future of our communities.

[Agency Highlights](#)

[Staff Highlights](#)

[NJQSA - The NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool](#)

[Professional Development](#)

[Quality Coaching & Support](#)

[Annual Conference On Afterschool & OST](#)

[Showcase Alley Vendor Fair](#)

[Regional Mini-Conferences](#)

[Soaring Beyond Expectations](#)

[Lights On Afterschool](#)

[21st CCLC Site Coordinator Summit](#)

[Networking Opportunities](#)

[National Partnerships](#)

[Kids Included Together \(KIT\)](#)

[21st CCLC Technical Assistance Grant](#)

[Diane Genco Award](#)

[A Few Of The Resources We Offer](#)

[Spotlighting Innovation with STEM Next](#)

[FLASH Afterschool Blog](#)

[Heroes and Highlights](#)

[Follow Our Socials To Stay In The Loop](#)

Agency Highlights



New agency initiatives

- Youth Mental Health First Aid Training
- OST Career Pathways Program
- Nutrition Newsletter
- Advocacy Newsletter
- Regional Mini-Conferences

NJSACC Board grows to 10 Board of Trustees Members

- Samuel Frisby, Mercer County NJ Commissioner / Vice President of Certification, Membership Standards, YMCA of the USA
- Joseph Licata, Chief Executive Officer of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lower Bergen County
- Yolanda Greene, Associate at the Taylor Law Group LLC
- Michael Fletcher, Chief of Staff and Director, SEEDS-Access Changes Everything
- Celeste Banks, Director of Government Programs, Retention, and Recruitment, Irvington Public Schools
- Justin Brant, Senior Product Marketing Manager, Protestant, at Ministry Brands
- TJ Coakley, Harrison Township Extended Care Programs & Summer Camps / Healthcare Information Technology
- Robert Foster, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Club of Clifton
- Suad Gacham, Director of Family and Children's Services, Bergen Family Center, Englewood
- Krista Glynn, NJSACC Board President, Child Care Service Area Director for Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen

OST Advocacy for Afterschool

- **Youth Leadership Summit – Thursday, April 9, 2026**
 - A leadership-focused day for high school students featuring civic education, a State House tour, and engagement with elected legislators presented by NJSACC.

NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool included in NJCCIS

- NJSACC has partnered with the NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development to include the NJQSA as a continuous program quality resource to be utilized by any state funded school-age provider, via NJCCIS.

Things people are saying about NJSACC

- “I have learned so much during my time with you, I think I could do the job. My summer camp has benefited from my training with you. We have community time in the morning from 9:00am – 9:30am and I do games with them that I learned from you guys and mizzen and the internet. They are helping them with listening skills, being interactive with each other. Here is a video to show you. “
 - “”Patricia was an excellent presenter! She knows her stuff! Love her trainings””
 - “Patricia was great! She is very helpful in answering any questions that you might pose during the sessions. Patricia takes her time in going over the material and ensuring everyone understands.”
-

Staff Highlights



Patricia Pugliese –

Patricia Pugliese, Senior Program Quality Specialist – Congratulations to our own Patricia Pugliese who has been promoted to the newly created Senior Quality Specialist position in recognition of her ongoing expertise, leadership, & dedication to NJSACC's Quality Team these past 3 years! Patricia's sincerity, warmth, sense of humor, & depth of OST knowledge, continues to help NJSACC's quality initiatives thrive & grow.



Kyle Vandenberg –

Kyle Vandenberg, Quality Specialist – After a comprehensive search this spring, Kyle Vandenberg was invited to join the NJSACC team as a Quality Specialist. Kyle’s many years in the OST field and very active engagement with NJSACC’s professional development made him the perfect choice among a large field of very qualified applicants. Kyle “hit the ground running” in July & is a very welcome addition to the growing Quality Team.



This is



Afterschool

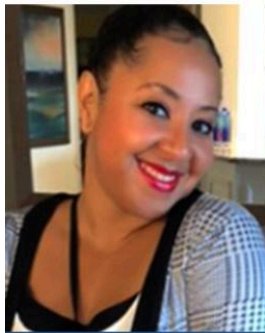
"In the field of Out-of-School Time, we all have the wonderful opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of the kids in our care and the adults they will become. My own summer experiences as a camper, CIT, and camp counselor were so positive that they not only influenced my future career choices, but also how I approach working with youth and youth workers."

I am so proud to be part of the work that NJSACC does statewide to provide support to OST professionals making a positive impact on the lives of kids and families every day."

Dagmar Wojcik
NJSACC's
Quality Team Director

Dagmar Wojcik –

Dagmar Wojcik, Quality Team Director – Dagmar Wojcik proudly leads the Quality Team in delivering a wealth of professional development, coaching, technical assistance, networking opportunities, & resources. The QTeam's ongoing commitment to quality has led to the upcoming growth of the QTeam staff & the many offerings that they bring to the field of afterschool & OST. Fun fact – Dagmar has worked with NJSACC since 1999, initially as a consultant & trainer, & subsequently transitioning to her current full time position in 2019.



This is



Afterschool

"The world of Out-of-School Time, OST, is nothing short of amazing! Whether it be a traditional afterschool program, a Saturday program, or a 6-week summer camp, the opportunity for youth to explore interests and learn new skills in a safe space while simultaneously supporting working families is truly empowering. OST fuels exposure to and builds creativity, confidence, and careers for all youth as well as the professionals in the field.

NJSACC has the honor of advocating, coaching, and supporting the field of OST, and I have the pleasure of being a piece to the bigger picture as I know the impact OST had in making me who I am."

Dorine Francis
NJSACC's
Director of Expanded
Learning Opportunities

Dorine Francis –

Dorine Francis, Director of Expanded Learning Opportunities – Congratulations to Dorine Francis on her promotion to **Director of Expanded Learning Opportunities**.

Throughout her time with NJSACC, Dorine has been a passionate advocate for high-quality out-of-school time programs, building strong partnerships and expanding opportunities that benefit youth, families, and communities across New Jersey. Her leadership, vision, and unwavering commitment to the OST field make her exceptionally well suited for this new role, and we look forward to the continued impact she will have in advancing expanded learning opportunities throughout the state.

NJQSA - The NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool



Proudly Helping Our Communities Raise Their Standards

The cost free NJ Quality Standards for Afterschool – together with the Self-Assessment Tool – provide a consistent standard for quality in afterschool and OST programs whether they are licensed or license exempt. It gives everyone involved in afterschool the same definition of quality to work with.

The NJQSA comes in several formats to fit every program's self-assessment needs. From a handy poster that lists the quality standards in a quick & easy check-in format to a deep dive that is an ongoing process, NJSACC offers a variety of NJQSA support & guidance to suit each program's needs.

At NJSACC, the NJQSA very much guides our work. Hand in hand with the NJQSA, NJSACC provides support through free & low cost professional development, resources, & technical assistance to help all OST programs on their path to Continuous Quality Improvement in afterschool & OST.

[Learn How To Raise Your Standards Here](#)

Professional Development



Behavior & Inclusion Initiative

- Now entering its 8th year, our Behavior & Inclusion Initiative has included a close partnership with Kids Included Together (KIT) to equip out-of-school time professionals with the knowledge, strategies, and confidence to create welcoming, inclusive environments where all young people can thrive. The project included 5 evening workshops for all levels of staff.

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) Certification

- This nationally recognized course aims to equip youth work professionals with the skills to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among youth ages 12–18. NJSACC offers 3 Youth MHFA certification courses throughout the year & certified 46 participants in 2025-26.

On-site Workshops

- NJSACC provides fee based workshops directly on site to staff teams by request. This year over 25 programs throughout the state brought in an NJSACC trainer to work with their staff on a range of topics. A big highlight of the year included the NJSACC Quality Team delivering 5 days of summer camp training to both leadership & direct service staff for the Rutgers University DICE Collaboration which brings 3 community agencies together to run summer camps for youth throughout the city of Camden.

Quality Coaching & Technical Support



The (TTA) Program

- NJSACC proudly supports programs throughout the state through quality coaching & support. From spontaneous requests to in depth grant funded opportunities, NJSACC delivers.
- Targeted Technical Assistance (TTA) – Over the summer & at the beginning of each school year, NJSACC accepts applications for its grant funded Targeted Technical Assistance program. During the 2025–2026 year, NJSACC partnered with five programs in a comprehensive quality improvement process guided by the New Jersey Quality Standards for Afterschool (NJQSA). Working alongside Quality Coaches, program leaders engaged in a reflective self-assessment that celebrated existing strengths, identified opportunities for growth, and informed the development of meaningful action plans to strengthen program quality. Throughout the process, participants also benefited from individualized coaching, a wealth of professional development opportunities, practical resources, and peer networking designed to support their continuous quality improvement journey. Newly expanded & rebranded for this coming year, TTA is now the Quality Support for Afterschool (QSA) program & is accepting applications through early September.

[Learn More Here](#)

Annual Conference On Afterschool & OST



Evolving While Remaining Deeply Committed to Supporting Children, Families, and Communities.

The 2026 [NJSACC](#) Annual Conference brought together professionals from across New Jersey for two days filled with learning, collaboration, and renewed purpose. Held at the Princeton Marriott at Forrestal, this year's gathering welcomed hundreds of educators, coordinators, directors, advocates, and partners who share one common goal: creating stronger opportunities for youth beyond the school day.

Over the course of the conference, attendees explored more than 45 workshops covering topics that continue to shape the future of OST programming, including S.T.E.A.M., youth engagement, leadership development, social-emotional learning, program quality, and staff sustainability. Sessions sparked meaningful conversations and practical takeaways, giving participants ideas they could bring directly back to their programs.

[Read Full Article Here](#)



Showcase Alley Vendor Fair



😄 The 2026 Meet The Vendors List Will Bring You Smiles 😄

One of the highlights once again was Showcase Alley, where vendors and organizations connected directly with afterschool professionals seeking fresh resources, partnerships, and creative solutions. With the vendor fair selling out in advance, the exhibit space became a lively hub of networking and discovery. From innovative curriculum tools to youth-centered enrichment opportunities, Showcase Alley reinforced the importance of collaboration between providers and the organizations that support them.

Showcase Alley took on a new look this year located in The Tree House Lounge. The Ballroom was used beautifully for a spacious gathering and presentation. In order to facilitate everyone better, the Tree House Lounge was spread out to accommodate the wide variety of vendors. There was representation from all different aspects of the afterschool and OST world and with 32 tables this year, we saw a great group of friendly faces on the Meet the Vendors list.

[See the Full List Here](#)



Regional Mini-Conferences



Fall Conference: The Leadership Mirror

This new workshop brought together leaders from throughout the state for an extended training provided by the NJSACC Quality Team. OST supervisors focused on strengthening relationships, boosting retention, and fostering a culture of growth and appreciation in their programs by reflecting on their own leadership styles and gaining tools to identify & support staff needs.

Spring Mini-Conferences for Summer Camp Leadership

Through 2 regional conferences (north-central & south-central), NJSACC's Quality Team equipped camp leaders with practical strategies for planning engaging staff trainings, fostering team connection, and preparing staff for a successful summer. Together, these interactive learning experiences strengthened the leadership capacity and confidence of professionals across the field.



Soaring Beyond Expectations



✨ Inspiring New Ideas for a Changing OST Landscape ✨

21st CCLC Soaring Beyond Expectations: Statewide Afterschool Celebration – This year's event once again brought together afterschool professionals from across New Jersey to explore innovative practices, exchange fresh ideas, and strengthen the future of out-of-school time and reaffirming that growth begins when passionate professionals come together with a willingness to learn from one another.

[Read Full Article Here](#)



Lights On Afterschool



New Jersey Legislators and Community Leaders Help Shine a Light On Afterschool and OST and The Role it Plays

This past October 2025, New Jersey turned up the brightness for afterschool programs statewide as communities, schools, and partners came together to celebrate Lights On Afterschool. We were honored to have Governor Phil Murphy officially proclaim October 23 as Lights On Afterschool Day in New Jersey, a public recognition that underscores how vital afterschool programs are to students, families, and neighborhoods across our state.

[Read the full article here](#)



First things first, The first thing we do is spend one hour on Homework, Reading books, projects and more.

Next, We do our "Growth Mindset" give examples for how we did the growth mindset and go to our assigned academy such as

- Stem
- Engineering
- Business



21st CCLC Site Coordinator Summit



Conversations Centered on Leadership Development, Staff Supervision, Social-Emotional Learning

The day before the NJSACC Annual Conference began, site coordinators and youth development leaders from across New Jersey gathered for the 21st CCLC Site Coordinator Summit, a focused event created exclusively for current 21st Century Community Learning Centers grantees. The Summit offered a meaningful opportunity to step away from daily program demands and spend time connecting with peers who understand the unique challenges and rewards of leading high-quality out-of-school time programs.

[Read the full article here](#)



Networking Opportunities



Afterschool Conversations

This year marked the continued success of NJSACC's refreshed Afterschool Conversations series, bringing together afterschool and out-of-school time professionals on the third Thursday of each month (September-June) for engaging discussions led by NJSACC staff and featuring guest speakers. Each session explored timely topics impacting the OST field, creating opportunities for participants to share ideas, ask questions, and learn from one another in an interactive virtual setting.



Peer Learning Communities

EVERY FIRST
THURSDAY OF
THE MONTH



OST LEADERS

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

URBAN COMMUNITIES

Peer Learning Communities (PLCs)

In 2025-26, NJSACC offered two Peer Learning Communities including the OST Leaders PLC which just wrapped up its third year, & the newly re-launched Young Professionals PLC. Each group met virtually via zoom monthly October-May. Guided & facilitated by NJSACC staff & leaders currently working in the field of OST, these groups create a safe space for small group networking, information sharing, and dynamic conversations on all things afterschool & OST.

National Partners



National Afterschool Association

NJSACC is the New Jersey Affiliate of the National AfterShool Association. NAA and its State Affiliates share a mutual purpose and agreement to support, develop, and advocate for Out-of-School Time professionals and the profession. NAA and its State Affiliates build connectivity among stakeholders and create opportunities for engagement to ensure a vibrant future for the Out-of-School Time profession.

OST professionals who are not currently paid NAA members and live in New Jersey, our state affiliation and annual conference registration make you eligible for a free NAA membership. If you prefer, NAA membership may be purchased directly from NAA on a sliding scale from \$25 to \$150. Membership options may be found [here](#) on the NAA website.



50 State afterschool network

NJSACC is also a proud partner of the 50 State Afterschool Network.

[See more from them here](#)



Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Over more than nine decades, the Mott Foundation has sought to advance and strengthen the well-being of all aspects of the community.

[See more from them here](#)

[See All Our Friends & Partners Here](#)

Kids Included Together (KIT)



Kit & NJSACC work together like peanut butter & jelly

[KIT](#) partners with NJSACC to provide behavior and inclusion professional development throughout the year.

[See our trainings here](#)

21st CCLC Technical Assistance Grant



Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Technical Assistance Grant

For 15 years, NJSACC partners with the New Jersey Department of Education to develop and conduct capacity building training and technical assistance to the Nita M. Lowey 21st CCLC program staff and other eligible entities within New Jersey.

[Grant Yourself Access To More Information Here](#)

Diane Genco Award



**CONGRATULATIONS
2026 HONOREE
TINISHIA BASS**

**DIANE GENCO
EXCELLENCE IN OST
2026 Award**

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CONSULTING GROUP**

Celebrating Excellence Through the Diane Genco Award

The Diane Genco Award for Excellence in Out-of-School Time remains one of NJSACC's most meaningful traditions, recognizing individuals whose leadership, dedication, and passion continue to elevate the afterschool and out-of-school time profession. Named in honor of NJSACC founder Diane Genco, the award celebrates those who embody the values of innovation, quality, and unwavering commitment to

New Jersey's youth. Presented annually at the NJSACC Annual Conference, the award recognizes individuals whose leadership, dedication, and commitment have made a lasting impact on New Jersey's afterschool and out-of-school time profession.

The 2026 Award:

These words, shared by Tinishia Bass's nominator, beautifully capture why she was selected as the 2026 recipient of NJSACC's Diane Genco Award for Excellence in Out-of-School Time:

"Her work exemplifies the spirit of the Diane Genco Excellence in Out-of-School Time Award: sustained commitment, measurable impact, collaborative leadership, and equity-centered programming that strengthens both youth and community."

As the leader of federally funded, research-informed programming serving hundreds of Camden youth each year, Tinishia Bass has embedded literacy development, youth leadership, family engagement, and exposure to higher education into daily practice. Her sustained commitment to excellence, collaborative leadership, and dedication to creating equitable opportunities for young people exemplify the values celebrated by the Diane Genco Award for Excellence in Out-of-School Time.

A Few Of The Resources We Offer



Annual Conferences

- NJSACC Annual Conference For Afterschool and OST Professionals
- Annual Soaring Beyond Expectations 21st CCLC Showcase
- Regional Mini Conferences

Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Toolkit: A free implementation and resource guide for New Jersey School and District Leaders

- Assisting school districts utilize available district funds to implement quality afterschool and OST programs.

Afterschool FLASH

- NJSACC's online blog connecting Afterschool and OST professionals with the most relevant news and events.

Professional Development

- Used as part of the process of continuous quality improvement.

Technical Assistance & Quality Coaching

- Provided with funding from the NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development as part of a Federal CCDF Block Grant Earmark, quality coaching staff provide targeted, technical assistance for school-age programs and providers.

- “New Jersey Quality Standards for Afterschool (NJQSA) Available in the New Jersey Child Care Information System (NJCCIS). Any youth development professional with a NJCCIS account, can access all of the NJQSA tools and resources.

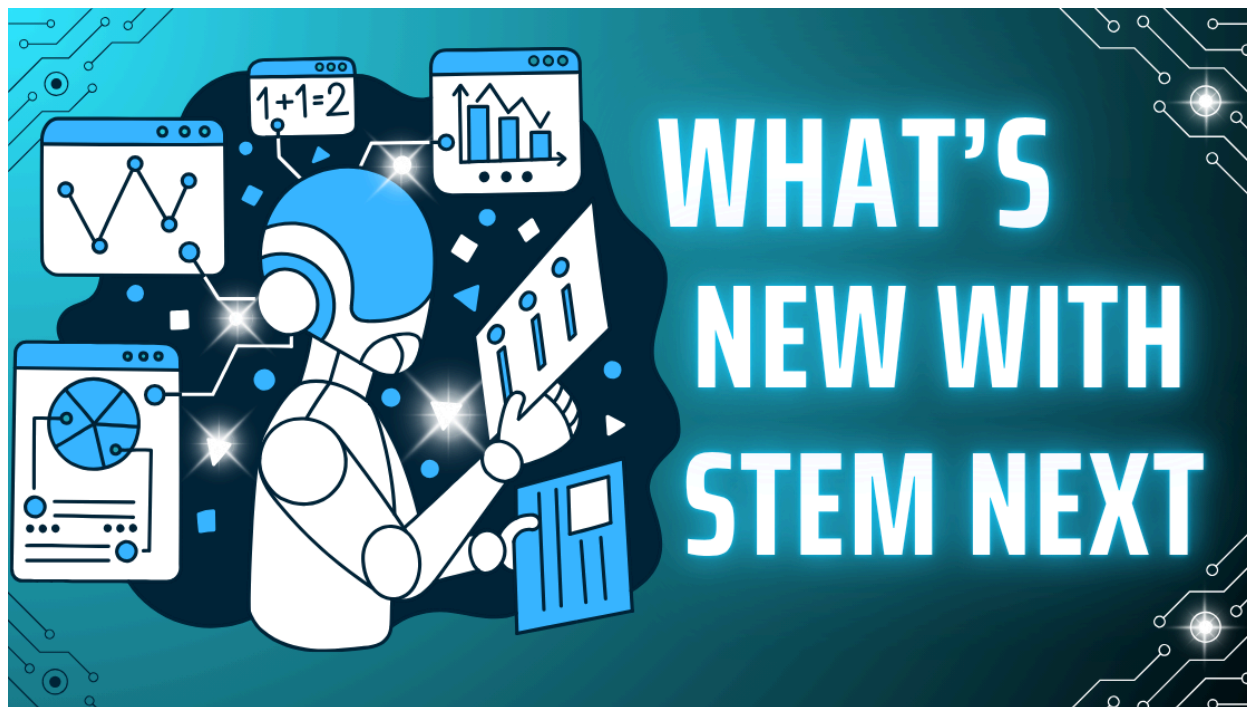
Afterschool Conversations

- Join us for our monthly virtual networking sessions where we share updates from the field, resources, guest experts and speakers, and dynamic conversations with the OST school-age community throughout NJ.

[Click here to check out NJSACC's many available resources](#)



Spotlighting Innovation with STEM Next



STEM Next Brought New Opportunities in Innovation

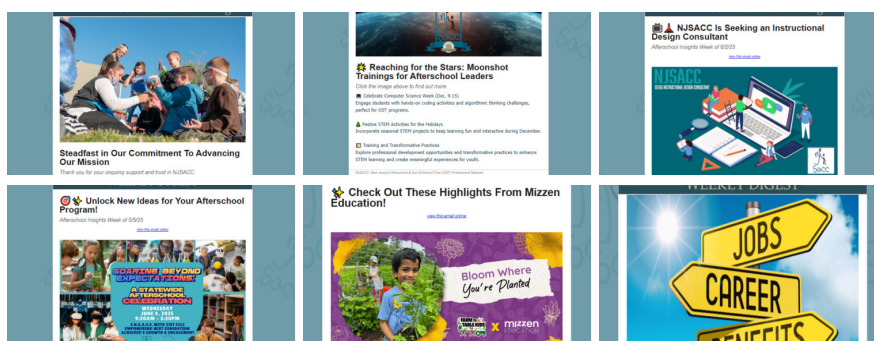
Throughout the year, NJSACC proudly highlighted the latest news, research, and resources from STEM Next, helping connect New Jersey's afterschool professionals with national conversations shaping the future of STEM learning. By sharing monthly spotlights, innovative practices, and timely opportunities, we encouraged programs to explore new ideas, strengthen STEM experiences, and expand access to engaging, hands-on learning for youth. Together, these updates reinforced our commitment to keeping the OST community informed, inspired, and connected to the growing movement advancing high-quality STEM opportunities beyond the school day.

FLASH Afterschool Blog



We Changed a Few Things this Year with Our FLASH

- Developed using new tools to streamline communications
- Began using video to bring more information to our network
- Highlighted program's great events
- Continued to help our network finding work and filling job positions



Heroes and Highlights



Remember Our Heroes

We also took moments to pause, reflect, and remember those in our field who are no longer with us. Through the “Remember Our Heroes” initiative, we honored the legacy of afterschool champions who paved the way. Their commitment continues to inspire and guide our work every day.

Highlight Your Program

This year, we reinvigorated our “Highlight Your Program” initiative — bringing fresh energy and visibility to a beloved tradition that hadn’t been active in recent years. Designed to showcase the incredible stories, people, and creativity within New Jersey’s afterschool programs, this initiative returned with new momentum and a renewed sense of purpose. Programs across the state shared vibrant photos, uplifting staff shout-outs, and student-driven projects that reflected the heart of OST. It was a joyful reminder of just how much talent, passion, and innovation exists in every corner of our community — and a testament to why afterschool matters.

Follow Our Socials To Stay In The Loop

Stay in the Loop



Follow Us Online

As we close out another impactful year, we extend our deepest thanks to the dedicated professionals, partners, advocates, and supporters who make this work possible. Every training session attended, program delivered, and young person reached is a direct result of your commitment to excellence in out-of-school time.

We're proud of what we've accomplished together — and we know there's more ahead. With your continued support, NJSACC will continue to advocate for stronger systems, equitable policies, and increased access to quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities across New Jersey. Stay connected, stay inspired — and we'll see you in the next chapter.

[Facebook: @NJSACC](#)

[Instagram: @NJSACC](#)

[LinkedIn: @NJSACC](#)

[YouTube: @NJSACC1](#)