



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, the citizens of the State of New Jersey stand firmly committed to quality afterschool and out-of-school time programs and opportunities because they:

- Provide safe and engaging learning experiences that help children realize their full potential;
- Support working families by ensuring their children are safe and productive when they are out of their classrooms;
- Build stronger communities by involving students, parents, business leaders and adult volunteers in the lives of young people, thereby promoting positive relationships among youth, families and adults;
- Engage families, schools and community partners in advancing the welfare of our children; and

WHEREAS, NJSACC: New Jersey's Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Professional Network, has risen to the moment to support afterschool professionals serving youth in addressing their needs as they recover from the pandemic. Out-of-school time (OST) programs are an important way to accelerate learning outside of the classroom, build relationships between students and teachers, engage the whole family and community, increase opportunities and address inequities; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has provided significant leadership in the area of community involvement in the education and well-being of our youth, grounded in the principle that quality afterschool and OST programs are key to helping our children become successful adults; and

WHEREAS, Lights On Afterschool, the national celebration of afterschool programs held this year on Thursday, October 22, 2026, promotes the importance of quality afterschool and OST programs in the lives of children, families and communities; and

WHEREAS, nearly 25 million families report that they would enroll their child in an afterschool program if one were available, according to the Afterschool Alliance; and

WHEREAS, many afterschool and OST programs across the country are facing operating challenges so severe that they are forced to consider closing their doors and turning off their lights; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey is committed to investing in the health and safety of all young people by providing expanded learning opportunities that help our children learn and grow, while helping them develop the skills essential for success in life and work;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mikie Sherrill, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim:

OCTOBER 22, 2026

AS

LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL DAY

in the Garden State.



GIVEN, under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey, this twenty-eighth day of September in the year two thousand twenty-six, the two hundred fifty-first year of the Independence of the United States.

Mikie Sherrill
GOVERNOR