KCONNECT

Out-of-School Time (OST) Campaign

Out-of-school time (OST) programs have historically been underfunded in Michigan, even though they play a critical role in supporting students, families, and the workforce. We aim to increase and protect state investment in OST programs so that every Michigan child has access to safe, enriching opportunities beyond the school day.

KConnect, the Expanded Learning Opportunities Network, business leaders, and community partners across Michigan are working together to expand access to high-quality programs that support student success, strengthen working families, and build Michigan's future workforce and economic competitiveness.

OST programs provide safe, engaging learning opportunities for young people before and after-school, during the summer, and throughout the year. Offered through schools and community organizations across Michigan, these programs help students strengthen academic skills, explore their interests, and build important life skills beyond the traditional school day.

Research shows that every $1 invested in after-school programs returns at least $3 in benefits... (Afterschool Alliance).

Afterschool Alliance

Why OST Programs Matter for Kids

- **Academic Success** - High-quality OST programs help students strengthen skills in reading, math, and problem-solving. These programs often include hands-on projects, tutoring, and enrichment activities that reinforce what students learn during the school day.
- **Career Exploration** - Many programs introduce students to STEM, career pathways, mentorship, and internships. These experiences help young people discover their interests and build skills such as teamwork, communication, and critical thinking that prepare them for future careers.
- **Safe and Supportive Spaces** - After-school hours are when young people are most likely to be unsupervised. OST programs provide safe, structured environments where youth can learn, grow, and build positive relationships with peers and caring adults.

What We're Working Toward

This campaign is focused on ensuring that every child and family in Michigan has access to high-quality OST opportunities.

By protecting and increasing state funding, we can:

- **Expand** access to programs for more families
- **Strengthen** student learning and enrichment opportunities
- **Support** working parents
- **Build** a stronger future workforce for Michigan

Why These Programs Matter for Families

1. Out-of-school time programs are essential for working families. Nearly **90% of working parents say that after-school and summer programs help them** keep their jobs and maintain financial stability (Michigan Afterschool Partnership).
2. When families have access to reliable programs, parents can work with peace of mind knowing their children are safe and engaged in meaningful activities.
3. Many Michigan families still cannot access these opportunities. More than **750,000 children** in Michigan are missing out on after-school programs because there aren't enough available (Afterschool Alliance).
4. **24.6 million children** nationwide want to participate in after-school programs but cannot due to cost, transportation, or limited availability (Afterschool Alliance).
5. OST programs benefit the entire community. Research shows that every **$1 invested in after-school programs returns at least $3 in benefits** through improved student outcomes, increased earning potential, and stronger community safety (Afterschool Alliance).

Why This Campaign

Michigan has recently increased funding for OST programs, investing **$50 million in 2023–2024 and $75 million in 2025–2026, and the Governor's 2026-2027 executive budget includes a $135 million investment into OST.** Continued advocacy is needed to sustain and increase investment and access to these opportunities for families across the state.

Learn More at **k-connect.org**