COALITION TOOLKIT
LET’S MAKE THIS EASY.

So you can readily show your support for Michigan’s after school and summer programs, we’re offering ready-made tools for sharing accurate information, news, and advocacy messages.

Please voice your strong enthusiasm for OST learning as often as you can!
COALITION MEMBER ACTIVITIES

Here’s everything we need you to do, rendered as one simple graphic memory aid (see, we told you this would be easy).

We even put the items in order—by how often we hope you’ll be thinking about them.
SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

• Be purposeful in your posting.
  Social media is designed to engage people in conversation. Before you post, ask yourself whether the information you’re sharing helps you advance the conversation in a way that makes sense and supports your objectives.

• Use visual content.
  Images, GIFs and videos are more likely to get noticed and shared. Lots of resources related to OST are online; take a moment to find and amplify them whenever you can.

• Tagging lawmakers boosts visibility.
  Adding a social media tag will help draw notice from specific policy leaders and can increase views.

• Stay positive and constructive.
  Whether posting or commenting, be sure to think carefully about what you’re saying. Be polite and professional in your words, exercise clear judgment, and don’t let social media trolling get you down.

• Amplify, amplify, amplify!
  Look for content from like-minded organizations and individuals, and retweet/repost it with your own thoughts.
POST CLIPS TO SOCIAL MEDIA

• **Interview students, parents and partners.**
  Capture 15 seconds of folks telling you, in their own words, what OST programming means in their lives. Make it short, compelling, and to the point.

• **Post and tag a lawmaker or two.**
  When you do, you’ll help share the story of OST in your community and help ensure strong funding for the future.

• **Repeat!**
  Consider repeating the process every week or so. It will help increase awareness of the need for OST funding—and create positive PR for your program.
TIPS FOR POSTING A “SELFIE” VIDEO

• Choose the right background.
  Make sure it’s simple, clean and free of objects and images that you don’t wish the entire world to see.

• Check your lighting.
  Make sure your face isn’t in shadow, or that you have a bright light/window behind you. Nothing is worse than watching a dark silhouette!

• Record horizontally.
  This helps with video quality and sharing.

• Make sure your voice can be heard.
  Look out for noise pollution (crying babies, barking dogs) and do a quick sound check to make sure you’re not muffled or echoing.

• Choose your words.
  Think about what you’ll say before you press the red button. Use the MASP talking points as a foundation for your comments. Practice once or twice. Then go!

• Keep it short.
  The average social media scroller will only pause for about 15 seconds (at the most) to listen to your video. Keep your message tight!
READY-MADE SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

Support for the OST Budget/Supplemental Efforts

During COVID, #Michigan’s community after school programs where there for MI families. Now it’s time for our state to support them. #FundMichOST

#Michigan has the funds to support community learning programs. We call on our state’s lawmakers to help make it happen. #FundMichOST

#Michigan’s children have a lot of learning to catch up on after COVID-19. Let’s fund the programs that can make that happen. #FundMichOST

Proud to support the after-school and summer programs that are keeping our children engaged and learning. #FundMichOST

When it comes to building #Michigan’s economic future, we need skilled, educated talent. After school and summer programs are essential to keep our state strong and growing. #FundMichOST

There are 53,200 #Michigan children who are disconnected from their schools. Let’s bring them back by funding the after school and summer programs they need to keep growing. #FundMichOST

OSTs used their own funds to keep children and families stable during the pandemic. They shouldn’t have to compete with every other business and organization in the state for economic relief. #FundMichOST

#Michigan can’t afford to wait to fund its after school and summer programs. We urge our lawmakers to act NOW to #FundMichOST

Schools and communities are planning now for their summer programming. If these OST dollars aren’t awarded within the next six weeks, our window will close. Important student learning and engagement opportunities will be lost. #FundMichOST

Nearly 90 percent of working parents say community-based after-school and summer programs have helped them keep their jobs. #FundMichOST

Fast facts about OST

Approximately 81% of parents with children in OST programs say the support they received helped them keep their jobs—and their household earnings—intact. #FundMichOST

National data show roughly half of students who participate in local OST partnerships are able to boost their own math and reading grades. Nearly 70 percent improve their homework completion and classroom participation efforts. #FundMichOST

Survey Responses

As the pandemic continues into 2021, 30% of #Michigan after school programs have said they may have to raise parent fees. Eight percent said they may have to shut down. #FundMichOST

After school programs in #Michigan have stepped up to serve children of essential workers, with 56% of programs providing a safe, supervised learning environment during virtual school days. #FundMichOST

Around 30% of Michigan OSTs have extended their program hours to support students during COVID. Many are doing it on their own dime. It’s time for #Michigan lawmakers to #FundMichOST.

Concerns regarding #Detroit students are high, with nearly 9 in 10 after school programs “extremely” or “very” concerned about students’ mental and emotional health (88%) and students experiencing learning loss (88%). #FundMichOST
It’s widely recognized some extended learning time is needed to address COVID learning loss. Proven, local OST programs are ideally positioned to help get students ready to hit the ground running. The MI Legislature needs to fund them now.

With 53,200 Michigan students becoming disconnected from the state’s K–12 system during the pandemic, community after school programs offer our best hope for bringing them back. It’s time Michigan lawmakers provide the funding providers need.

National data show roughly half of students who participate in local OST partnerships are able to boost their own math and reading grades. Nearly 70 percent improve their homework completion and classroom participation efforts. It’s time to fund MI after school programming.
TIPS FOR CONTACTING YOUR LAWMAKERS

• **Be clear.**

Use your time wisely and plan out your remarks. Busy policymakers appreciate it when you get to the point quickly and ask for clear action. Always be honest and direct without sacrificing courtesy.

• **Communicate multiple ways.**

Sometimes a personal meeting isn’t possible. Use email, written correspondence, telephone and in-district coffee hours to reach your lawmaker and share your views.

• **Follow up.**

If you can obtain a personal meeting with a lawmaker, be sure to send a personal thank you note. It’ll give you a chance to restate your arguments and show you care.
OTHER GRASSROOTS APPROACHES

• **Attend coffees and/or office hours.**
  Many legislators set up local coffee hours where they can meet with members of the public. Make it a point to be present—and bring your student, if possible! These visits are highly impactful.

• **Reach out to policymakers when appropriate.**
  If you hear your issue is up for a vote, make a call or shoot an email to the lawmaker’s office. They need to hear from you before they push their buttons to vote!
Dear <<NAME>>

I am writing to urge your support for after school and summer (OST) learning programs in Michigan. These programs are about to provide essential help for students who’ve experienced significant learning loss during COVID-19.

OST programs are essential to help remediate the lost learning our state’s children suffered during the pandemic. Today, more than 53,200 children have become disconnected from the state’s K–12 system during the pandemic. Community organizations offer our best hope for bringing them back.

Community-based after school and summer program providers know these students and their families and can serve as a link, particularly for those students whose lives have veered sharply off track due to their unique personal circumstances and unmet learning needs.

National data show roughly half of students who participate in local OST partnerships can boost their own math and reading grades. Nearly 70 percent improve their homework completion and classroom participation efforts.

Moreover, working families benefit when they can send their children to local after school and summer programs. Nearly 90 percent of working parents say these kinds of programs have helped them keep their jobs.

Michigan must look ahead the future, when additional funds are going to be needed to remediate children’s learning losses and keep our economy on track for the future. The dollars are there. The time is now. Our children deserve it.

Sincerely,

/S/

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**SAMPLE GENERIC LETTER TO POLICYMAKERS**

Find your lawmakers:
- House.Michigan.gov

Email the Governor:
Gretchen.Whitmer@michigan.gov
TIPS FOR WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

• Get right to the point!
  LTEs are usually short. Make your strongest arguments early in the letter and take a firm position. The best letters have a short, crisp introduction, make just 1–3 points (supported with data), then offer a concise conclusion.

• Make each letter your own
  While sample content is sometimes provided (see next), it’s never wise to use it as is. Research the issues yourself and use your own distinctive voice to state your opinion.

• Don’t send the same letter to multiple media outlets.
  Publications prefer original content.

• Be sure to include your contact info.
  The media outlet will likely reach out to be sure you are a real person.
To Whom It May Concern,

Throughout the pandemic, community-based after-school and summer learning programs provided excellent resources to students and families. Now, these program leaders are asking for much-needed state legislative support to provide the ability to keep students and families strong. It’s essential for after-school program providers to receive the funds they’ll need both this year and next. Michigan’s children have experienced significant learning losses from their time out of school, and community-based summer programs are essential to help address them. With 53,200 Michigan students becoming disconnected from the state’s K–12 system during the pandemic, community organizations offer our best hope for bringing them back. We know these students and their families and can serve as a link, particularly for those students whose lives have veered sharply off track due to their unique personal circumstances and unmet learning needs.

Today’s policy leaders must take specific action to appropriate supplemental funds for this purpose. We know the funds are there—now all that’s needed is the political will, action and strategic follow-up.

Sincerely,

/S/

Before submitting, be sure to check with each publication to ensure your letter meets guidelines for length and formatting.
RECRUITING MORE ISSUE SUPPORTERS
HELP US GROW.

• Tell your friends, family and colleagues you support the Michigan After School Partnership
• Invite them to visit MIAfterSchool.org.
• Encourage folks to reach out to their policymakers and partner with each other.
• Share information with your employer and volunteer organizations.
For more information, contact stephanie@reschstrategies.com