



Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® is an education-based project that uses the sports and education programs of Special Olympics to activate young people across the U.S in order to promote school communities where all young people are agents of change – fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics believes that through sports, young people can make a difference in friendships, schools and communities.

UNIFIED SCHOOL KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Youth Leadership
- Unifying Programming
- Anti-bullying Message
- Positive School Climates

CORE ACTIVITIES

Inclusive Sports: Unified Sports provides opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities to participate in sports activities alongside one another and which have been found to be among the most conducive activity for breaking down stereotypes.

Inclusive Youth Leadership: Each school forms a Youth Activation Committee (YAC) comprised of students with and without intellectual disabilities that gives them opportunities to take on leadership roles in promoting Unified Champion Schools activities in their schools and in the community.

Whole School Engagement: Provides opportunities for *all* students in the school to participate in Unified Champion Schools through school-wide activities (e.g. R-word campaigns, Fans in the Stands, Polar Plunges).

UNIFIED SCHOOL OUTCOMES

- The magic of Unified Champion Schools is manifested in the inclusive friendships formed, seeing paired youth in action as leaders, creating communities of caring and respect.
- Youth become core leaders in their school communities using Unified Sports and Spread the Word to End the Word as the catalyst for impacting change in a school climate.
- Administrators and teachers take the educated risk to support the vision and insight of youth to create inclusive environments in their schools through Unified Sports and youth leadership opportunities with a clear vision of impacting school environments.
- The inspiration and passion that comes from experiencing Special Olympics sports motivates young people to seek a world of unity, and then provides students with and without disabilities with the skills and opportunities to create social change.
- Policymakers and education leaders develop policies and support quality practices to encourage positive school climates with safe and nurturing learning environments for all students.

BECOME A UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOL

Funding is available to state Unified Champion Schools in your school. Information can be found on our website at www.somi.org/projectunify. Complete a brief application and a Special Olympics Michigan staff member will contact you directly.

