Unified Champion Schools®

2018-2019 Toolkit

Special Olympics
Texas
WELCOME
Welcome to the Special Olympics Texas (SOTX) family! Special Olympics Texas aims to build a society of acceptance and inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities and, by extension, for everyone. We know that sports training and competition can help achieve that goal. And we know that students – with their energy, idealism, intelligence, and creativity – can be not only participants but game changers in our mission.

To ignite young people’s passion for our cause, we must reach them where they are most often, school. At all grade levels, students’ lives revolve around their schools and school activities. That is why Unified Champion Schools® is a school-based initiative to create opportunities for authentic social inclusion.

This toolkit is set up so users can get just what they need. Students might want ideas for an R-Word campaign, Unified Sports competition, or school fundraisers like the Minute That Matters. While teachers, coaches, and advisors might need to know when the monthly reports are due and how to help youth leaders raise awareness across the entire campus!

We are sure that this toolkit will be a great first step in ensuring you feel comfortable and help to inform on all that your Unified Champion School® can do, but we have one additional great resource: staff at Special Olympics! At Special Olympics Texas (SOTX), we are committed to the success of your Unified Champion School®. There is nothing that inspires more excitement and optimism that activating young people around the mission of inclusion and acceptance for all – so we are here to help every step of the way.

SOTX is proud to take part in this journey with you!

Alice Keller
Director of Youth Initiatives
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WHAT IS A UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOL®?
REQUIREMENTS, IMPORTANT DATES & ROLES
What does it take to be an official Unified Champion School® with SOTX? All Unified Champion Schools® will be required to do the following during the 2018-2019 school year:

1. **Unified Sports**
   - Offer a Unified Sport in at least 1 season throughout the school year
   - An adult coach for each sport who has received training on Special Olympics Unified Sports
   - Unified Sports is officially recognized by the school in a similar style as other athletics/activities

2. **Inclusive Youth Leadership**
   - Form a Unified Club which offers leadership opportunities/training for students with and without intellectual disabilities
   - The inclusive club/group meets at least once per month throughout the school year
   - The inclusive club/group has an adult liaison and is officially recognized by the school in a similar style as other clubs/activities

3. **Whole School Engagement:**
   - Host At Least 2 Whole School Engagement Activities (ex: Spread the Word to End the Word campaign, Unified Sports Day, Pep Rally, Unified Dance, etc.)
   - Students with and without disabilities are involved with planning and the leading your whole school engagement events/activities

4. **Additional Requirements:**
   - SOTX and Unified Champion School® logos used on all printed materials.
   - Completion of the mid-term and final reports to SOTX
   - Completion of the brief monthly reports (to be completed by the student leader(s) when possible)
   - HAVE FUN 😊
## 2018-2019 CHECKLIST

Stay on Track with the Unified Champion Schools® Checklist

*These are just guidelines! Be creative and have fun!*

| Fall |  
|---|---|
| □ Obtain permission from a school administrator to submit the Commitment to Inclusion registration  
□ Complete and submit the online Commitment to Inclusion  
□ Form a Unified Club (including students with & without intellectual disabilities) to meet on a regular basis & plan to participate in the Unified Arts Contests & help fundraise for your Unified Sports team!  
□ Identify a Unified Sport to be offered, set dates on your calendar, and let us know if you need any Unified Sports Trainings or Equipment  
□ Hold first whole school engagement event  
□ Implement Unified Sport and #PlayUnified!  
**Optional ideas:**  
▪ Have your Unified Club volunteer at an Area Fall Competition! |

| Winter |  
|---|---|
| □ School liaison to complete the online Unified Champion School® mid-term report  
□ Continue to regularly host Unified Club meetings & help fundraise for your Unified Sports team!  
□ Implement Unified Sport (if the sport you chose falls under this season)  
□ Continue to #PlayUnified on your campus  
□ Begin planning for the next whole school engagement events (we recommend the R-Word Campaign & Minute That Matters!)  
**Optional ideas:**  
▪ Have your Unified Club participate in one of the SOTX Over the Edge Events  
▪ Have your Unified Club participate in a local Polar Plunge |

| Spring |  
|---|---|
| □ Hold second whole school engagement event and share your success with SOTX  
□ Continue to regularly host Unified Club meetings! Be sure to share your plans for Disability Awareness Week or Spread the Word Day!  
□ Implement Unified Sport (if the sport you chose falls under this season)  
□ School liaison to complete the required online Unified Champion Schools® final report  
□ Be sure your school completes the UMass Boston Survey  
**Optional ideas:**  
▪ Create a Unified Mural on one of your campus walls!  
▪ Have your Unified Club volunteer at your Area’s Spring Games or a local Fire Truck Pull! |
National Banner Recognition
A Special Olympics Unified Champion School® has an inclusive school climate and exudes a sense of collaboration, engagement and respect for all members of the student body and staff. A Unified Champion School® receiving national banner recognition is one that has demonstrated commitment to inclusion by meeting 10 national standards of excellence. These standards were developed by a national panel of leaders from Special Olympics and the education community.

To achieve **National Banner Recognition Status**, you must incorporate and sustain 10 standards, which include: Special Olympics Unified Sports® (where students with and without disabilities train and compete as teammates), Inclusive Youth Leadership and Whole-School Engagement. Banner Unified Champion Schools should also be able to demonstrate they are self-sustainable or have a plan in place to sustain these activities into the future.

Once your school achieves this recognition status, not only is your school recognized on the Special Olympics International website, you also get an awesome pep rally and are awarded a gym-sized banner to celebrate your outstanding achievements!
WORKING WITH SOTX
Special Olympics Texas Staff

Special Olympics Texas is committed to the success of all Unified Champion Schools®, and dedicated to providing support, assistance and a helping-hand whenever possible. Our Regional Executive Directors, Area Directors and Support Services staff can be a great resource to call when brainstorming an event, problem-solving a Unified Champion School® related question or when you would like to share your successes and celebrations!

Not sure who our Support Programs Staff is? Meet us below!

Alice Keller, Director of Youth Initiatives
akeller@sotx.org
512.491.2951
Oversees and facilitates support programs including Unified Champion Schools®, Inclusive Youth Leadership, Young Athletes, Transition, and Banner Recognition

Jody Foshee, Field Services Administrative Assistant
jfoshee@sotx.org
512.491.2951
Keeps everyone in line, on time, and moving forward.
Not sure who your Area Director is? Refer to the chart below and contact the Area Director for the area in which your school is located in!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA 1 – RIO GRANDE VALLEY</th>
<th>AREA 10 – GREATER DALLAS</th>
<th>AREA 17 – SOUTH PLAINS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lauro Garza – Area Director 2708-D East Griffin Parkway Mission, TX 78572 956/630-3434 956/630-4659 (fax)</td>
<td>Alex Hubbard – Program Director 400 South Zang #926 Dallas, TX 75208 214/943-9981 214/943-3774 (fax)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AREA 2 – SOUTH TEXAS</td>
<td>AREA 11 – GREATER FORT WORTH</td>
<td>AREA 18 – PERMIAN BASIN/BIG BEND</td>
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<td>AREA 4 – GREATER HOUSTON</td>
<td>AREA 12 – HEART OF TEXAS</td>
<td>AREA 19 – GREATER EL PASO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renee Klovenski – Program Director 10777 Northwest Freeway, Suite 110 Houston, TX 77092 713/290-0049 713/290-0226 (fax)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREA 5 – BEAUMONT</td>
<td>AREA 13 – CENTRAL TEXAS</td>
<td>AREA 20 – SAN ANTONIO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Jason Miller – Program Director 1804 Rutherford Lane Austin, TX 78754 512/835-9873 512/835-7756 (fax)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREA 6 – HEART OF EAST TEXAS</td>
<td>AREA 14 – BIG COUNTRY</td>
<td>AREA 21 – LAREDO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Stewart – Area Director 402 Simonton, Suite 125 Conroe, TX 77301 936/756-6906 936/756-6901 (fax)</td>
<td>Luann Chastain – Area Director 500 Chestnut Street, Suite 1821 Abilene, TX 79602 325/677-3200 325/677-3211 (fax)</td>
<td>Maribel Santoya-Maciel – Area Director 6108 McPherson Road, Suite 3 Laredo, TX 78041 956/712-2144 956/712-2408 (fax)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREA 7 – EAST TEXAS</td>
<td>AREA 15 – PANHANDLE</td>
<td>AREA 22 – GULF COAST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant – Area Director 3416 Denman Avenue, # 4 Lufkin, TX 75901 936/639-1755 936/637-7726 (fax)</td>
<td>Jacob Ray – Area Director 203 SW 8th Avenue, #400 Amarillo, TX 79101 806/374-7171 806/374-7173 (fax)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREA 9 – NORTH TEXAS</td>
<td>SUPPORT SERVICES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Strickland – Area Director 710 Lamar Street, Suite 430 Wichita Falls, TX 76301 940/692-2986 940/696-3775 (fax)</td>
<td>1804 Rutherford Lane Austin, TX 78754 512.835.9873 (Phone) 512.835.7756 (Fax)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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UNIFIED SPORTS®
LET'S #PLAYUNIFIED!
Introduction

Special Olympics Unified Sports® is a program that combines Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) on the same sports team. Unified Sports® is an important program because it expands sports opportunities for athletes seeking new challenges and dramatically increases inclusion in the community.

Unified Sports® is a unique and important program because it:

- Integrates athletes with and without intellectual disabilities in a setting where all teammates are challenged to improve their skills.
- Provides valuable sports opportunities to individuals with intellectual disabilities who may not be presently involved with Special Olympics, especially those with mild intellectual disabilities and those in communities where there are not enough Special Olympics athletes to create teams.
- Prepares athletes for participation in school or community sports.
- Increases public awareness of the spirit and skills of individuals with intellectual disabilities.
- Models genuine inclusion for the entire school community.

Goals of Special Olympics Unified Sports®:

- Sport skill development – under the direction of certified coaches, participants will have the opportunity to develop sports skills to prepare themselves for participation in other community sports.
- Competition experience – athletes benefit from physical and mental challenges participating in a variety of competitions organized by Special Olympics or by community sports organizations.
- Meaningful inclusion – Unified Sports® rules and guidelines on age and ability help ensure all teammates play important, meaningful and valued roles on the team.
- Friendship and socialization – this program provides a forum for positive social interactions.
UNIFIED SPORTS STEPS
Getting Started Checklist

1. Make contact with your Special Olympics Texas staff member

2. Choose the sport(s) you will implement this year, and request a start-up kit of equipment and uniforms for your team:
   - Aquatics
   - Athletics (Track & Field)
   - *Basketball
   - Bocce
   - Bowling
   - Cheerleading (spirit line)
   - Equestrian
   - Figure Skating
   - Flag Football
   - Golf
   - Kayaking
   - Powerlifting
   - Soccer
   - Softball
   - Speed Skating
   - Swimming
   - Tennis
   - Volleyball
   - Young Athletes

3. Identify a coach (Note: coaches will need to become certified as a Unified Sports® coach, https://nfhslearn.com/courses/61127/coaching-unified-sports)
   - Hold an interest meeting at the school to promote the team
   - Look for those who are passionate about the cause and/or the sport.

4. Recruit Special Olympics athletes
   - Athletes are anyone who has an intellectual disability
   - Athletes also include people who have closely related developmental disabilities, such as those with functional limitations, both in general learning and in adaptive skills such as recreation, work, independent living, self-direction or self-care. Many eligible Special Olympics athletes may not be in special education classrooms or programs.
   - Ask for permission to send a school-wide email with details about the program and contact information
   - Meet the special education staff in your school to help identify and recruit athletes.
5. Recruit Unified Partners
   • Unified Partners are any student without an intellectual disability. Students with other types of disabilities may be eligible to participate as a Unified Partner so long as there are a proportional number of students without any disability on the team.
   • A “targeted approach” is recommended when recruiting partners to ensure they are committed to the team. Also, some schools have an issue with recruiting too many partners and then don’t have a meaningful role for them. Recruit participants from your school’s Unified Club, Key Club, Student Council, and/or Buddy/Partners Club.

6. Submit teammate forms
   • Special Olympics athletes must fill out the Athlete Medical Forms, which must be signed by a medical professional before the first team practice
   • Unified Partners must fill out the Unified Partner Application
   • The team’s coach(es) must fill out the Volunteer Application & complete online trainings

7. Secure a facility and set a team schedule
   • Work with Athletic Director on team practice schedule, transportation and facility needs
   • Develop a competition schedule (working with neighboring schools and/or State staff)
   • Provide state SOTX staff with a copy of your competition schedule

8. Hold regular practices and competitions
   • Unified Sports® teams should practice and compete similarly to any other high school team at your school.
   • Remember, your team must practice at least once a week, with the majority of athletes and partners on the team participating in each practice.
PLANNING TEMPLATE
Planning a Unified Sports® Event or Invitational

The following template can be a great place to start when planning a Unified Sports event of invitational.

2 Months Prior
- Monthly planning meeting
- Decide on sports to be showcased
- Order plaques, banners, signage, etc., if applicable
- Article in newspaper or school newsletter to promote the event
- Secure videographer / photographer for event
- Committee Meeting - Plan out all of the day-of responsibilities.

1 Month Prior
- Monthly planning meeting
- Inventory and obtain all sports/event equipment
- Equipment maintenance / prep inventory – replace if needed
- Assign volunteers to stations
- Prepare and print brochures, bulletins, etc.
- Make purchases if necessary
- Confirm location/use of fields

2 Weeks Prior
- Volunteer meeting / training
- Reminder letters to participants/volunteers/unified partners
- Inspection of the facility
- Confirm equipment

1 Week Prior
- Prepare equipment / finalize needs / shop if necessary

Day Prior
- Mark all fields/stations as needed or prepare facility
- Take all supplies to host location – do some prep if possible (hang banners, etc)
- Final safety check of facility
INCLUSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP
ALL STUDENTS ARE LEADERS
Inclusive youth leadership offers opportunities for young people of all abilities to be leaders in their schools and communities by promoting equality and acceptance. These leadership activities help students with and without intellectual disabilities find their voices by teaching them to become change agents striving for respect and inclusion. Through collaborative efforts that are inclusive of diverse students within the school, these leadership opportunities foster social inclusion by designing and implementing activities within classrooms, school-wide, extracurricular, and community contexts.

Inclusive Youth leadership is a unique and important component because it:

- Recognizes the leadership assets and value that all students possess and can use to contribute meaningfully to the school community.
- Brings together students with and without intellectual disabilities as leaders in their school, creating a socially inclusive environment in which lasting friendships can form.
- Helps fundraise for your Unified Sports team and raises awareness with your whole school
- Provides students with and without intellectual disabilities the knowledge, skills and dispositions to take on leadership roles in their school.
- Offers opportunities for all students to become leaders, developing an understanding that all students can lead and expanding student investment in creating a socially inclusive school.
- Encourages co-leadership opportunities that promote a deeper understanding of the strengths, gifts and skills of all students.
UNIFIED CLUB 101

Steps to Starting a Sustainable Unified Club

What is a Unified Club?
A Unified Club is a club for students with and without intellectual disabilities that comes together for sports, games, community service, school events, and most of all, to have fun!

Steps to starting and maintaining a Unified Club:

1. Find out what your schools requirements are for starting a club, and make sure you follow their steps.
2. Make sure your school completes the 2018-2019 Commitment to Inclusion
3. Select 2-3 fundraisers your school can do this year to raise funds for Unified on your campus! (page 31)
4. MAKE A PLAN TO HAVE FUN!

School Clubs/ Organizations
The success of Inclusive Youth leadership depends on the participation of a diverse group of youth leaders with and without intellectual disabilities on your campus! SOTX encourages Unified Clubs to pursue partnerships with clubs that promote leadership and are working towards acceptance, understanding, and an overall more inclusive and diverse environment for all students. Try reaching out to partner clubs and organizations like: Student Council/ Government, Best Buddies, National Honor Society, (or other service-orientated clubs), and more!

Unified Club Structure
- 15-30 members (minimum of 7 athletes & 7 partners)
  - A 50/50 ratio is ideal, but we recognize that this is difficult so work towards an equal athlete-partner ratio when possible.
## Unified Club/Class Year at a Glance Guide

### Fall

- **Mini-Lesson - Understanding Disability**
- **Mini-Lesson - Tolerating and Accepting**
- **Get Into It - Activity 1**

Tips for **Meaningful Mentorship**

- **Bocce - Coach Guide**
- **Aquatics – Coach Guide**
- **Flag Football – Coach Guide**
- **Golf - Coach Guide**
- **Softball – Coach Guide**

#### Minute that Matters

### Winter

- **Mini-Lesson - Taking Action to Become a Socially Inclusive School**
- **Mini Lesson – Visions of a Socially Inclusive Community**
- **Get Into It - Activity 2**

Tips for **Shared Learning**

- **Powerlifting – Coaching Guide**
- **Volleyball – Coaching Guide**
- **Bowling- Coach Guide**
- **Roller Skating – Coaching Guide**
- **Basketball – Coaching Guide**

#### Polar Plunge

### Spring

- **Get Into It - Activity 3 and 4**

Practice and Perform - **It's Our School Too!**

- **Athletics – Coaching Guide**
- **Soccer – Coaching Guide**
- **Tennis – Coaching Guide**

#### Spread the Word Campaign
Each committee could have one Lead Chairperson and 5-10 committee members. Committees should be made up of individuals with and without intellectual disabilities. The Lead Chairperson(s) of each committee will be considered the Leadership Committee that organizes and leads committee projects and meetings, manages all communication for that committee.

**Communications Committee**—focuses on communication and public relations
- Manage all communication within Unified Club and Unified Sports® Team
  - Send out information via email (i.e. newsletters, reminders, updates, meeting minutes)
- Develop and implement public relations strategies within school and local community
  - Promotes Unified Champion Schools® on campus through marketing campaigns and recruitment. Fosters relationships with local businesses, community leaders, and media outlets to gain support (i.e. partnerships, donations, media coverage)

**Outreach Committee**—focuses on organizing collaborative efforts and promoting Unified Champion Schools® within school and district
- Foster collaboration with other youth-led, youth-focused clubs/organizations on campus
  - Work together to develop and implement action plans that seek to reverse negative stereotypes and promote social inclusion on your campus
    - Ex: Inclusive Student Council (members with and without intellectual disabilities)
- Promote Unified Champion Schools® within feeder junior high and elementary schools through mentorship
  - Assist with the implementation of Unified Champion Schools® on these campuses
    - Ex: Organize “Unified Fan Activation Event” and/or “Young Athletes Day”

**Programming Committee**—focuses on supporting Unified Sports® program and implementing inclusive youth leadership initiatives;
- Support Unified Sports® program
  - Develop and manage all recruitment and sustainability efforts
  - Organize practice, competition, and events calendar
- Implement Youth Activation Initiatives
  - R-Word Campaign, Minute That Matters, Disability Awareness Week, Pep Rallies, and more! The world is your oyster!
- Serve on your local GMT to help organize and run sports competitions in your area
Come up with a plan to recruit club members and engage them in the club:
- Make personal invitations to friends, teammates, and other interested students to join the club
- Advertise the club through posters, announcements, etc.
- Connect with SOTX on social media including: Facebook (@UnifiedChampionsTX), Instagram (@specialolympicstx), & Twitter (@SOTexas) and use social media to promote the club: Create a Facebook group and include info about the club, pictures and descriptions of past activities, and updates on any upcoming activities. Invite students from your school to join these social media groups and stay up-to-date with the Unified Club’s activities.

Talk to the Special education Teacher(s) on your campus. Find out:
- How many special education students might be interested?
- Ask the Special Education Teacher and/or Special Olympics coach to share the Unified Club information with athletes, partners, and parents if they are unable to provide you with their contact information.
- Would the teacher(s) be able to participate in the meetings to help supervise the club?
- What advice do they have for you?

Come up with a list of activities for the first few meetings.
- The first meeting should include a ‘get to know you’ activity to start establishing friendships amongst the Unified Club members.
- Consider having a disability awareness training as part of one of your first few meetings to ensure all participants have a clear understanding of the benefits and challenges associated with various disabilities so students can better support each other.
UNIFIED CLUB 101
Next Steps for Your Unified Club’s Student Leaders

Hold your first meeting. Have the Executive Committee establish an agenda for the meeting that includes the following:

- Provide a description of the Unified Club and its purpose. This includes the responsibility for leading three unified activities that will impact the whole school and forming a Unified Sports team (if not yet established). Consider the R-Word Campaign, and Minute That Matters. Your club is instrumental in helping fundraise for Unified on your campus!
- Have the Executive Committee and all members introduce themselves and explain their roles. Be sure to include ice breakers and fun activities so all members can begin to get to know one another.
- Collect information on who attends the meetings, including: Name, email, phone number, and social media handles. Maybe even ask what other clubs they may be involved with!
- Establish club routines and protocols for interacting and collaborating.
- Have the dates for all of your activities for at least the next month (if you could do the whole semester, that’s even better!)
- Encourage everyone to join the Facebook group. If one hasn’t been created, assign this task to a member to develop it and invite all Unified Club members.

After your introductory meeting, continue with a regular meeting schedule to further education of Unified Club members, while accomplishing goals and planning for activities.

- Meetings should be led by the Unified Club’s Executive Committee but try to find opportunities for all students to take a leadership role within the meetings. In all meetings, consider the following concepts:
  - Discuss ideas and strategies with the group. Be certain each individual has the opportunity to share his or her thoughts and feel that they are involved and a contributing member.
  - If you see an individual controlling conversation or group leadership, be sure to pause and ask others about their opinion on the topic.
  - Email or Facebook everyone involved with the notes of the meeting and action items to be carried out.
  - After the first year of the club, encourage them to continue their growth through state-level opportunities like the State Youth Activation Committee!
UNIFIED CLUB 101
Activities & In Their Words

Ideas for Unified Club activities:

- Implement the R-Word campaign and fundraiser (see more on Page 28)
- Join/create a Unified Sports team together (a team where individuals with and without intellectual disabilities play on a sports team together)
- Plan and organize a school fundraiser to raise money for unified on your campus. Students have great success raising funds with the Minute That Matters fundraiser (see more on Page 29)
- Create educational/promotional videos to be shown during school announcements
- Create banners and be Fans in the Stands at a local Special Olympics event

“At our Unified basketball games, the stands are more full than for the actual varsity games...[since] the program started...it’s like everyone’s equal and no one’s different.” - Unified Partner

“Before Special Olympics, I never felt included in the activities. Kids would ignore me. I felt invisible...Once I started Special Olympics, I was no longer invisible. I was a peer. I was just like everybody else.”
- Unified Sports/Special Olympics Athlete

“Not only did we become a ‘team,’ we became friends, and that made all the difference. Being a partner for my school’s Unified Sports team was life-changing...”
- YAC Member
UNIFIED CLUB ON CAMPUS

WHEN
Insert date here

WHERE
Insert location here

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE AHEAD?
(List planned or potential yearly activities here)
  • Unified Club Fundraisers
  •
  •
  •

WHO
Insert student contact info here
Insert teacher contact info here

INSERT SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS HERE

ALL ABILITIES ARE WELCOME

WHAT IS A UNIFIED CLUB?
A Unified Club® is a school-based club for students with and without disabilities. Members of the club participate in social, recreational and sports activities together. This club is sponsored by Special Olympics Texas.

WHAT ARE UNIFIED SPORTS?
Unified Sports® is an initiative that combines approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes and athletes without intellectual disabilities (partners) on sports teams for training and competition.

HOW CAN YOU JOIN THE FUN?
Attend this meeting to find out more about some of the awesome things we’ll be doing on our campus this year to promote inclusion!
To: Special Education Directors  
From: Alice Keller, Director of Youth Initiatives  
Date: (enter date here)  
Re: Special Olympics Texas Unified Programs  

Special Olympics Texas would like to introduce the school based program to your school/ district. Special Olympics Texas provides year-round sports training and competition to youth and adults with intellectual disabilities. In Texas, we are working to partner with schools and school districts across the state to provide these opportunities to students during the school day. Within this partnership, Special Olympics Texas is a resource to students, teachers, districts and families. This inclusive and innovative program is funded by Special Olympics Texas, and sustained through Law Enforcement Torch Run school fundraising efforts.

Programs

**Unified Club®**: The Unified Club® is a unique Special Olympics Texas sponsored, school based program that teams students with and without intellectual disabilities, through sports training and competition. This club offers social and recreational opportunities as well.

**Unified Sports®**: Unified Sports® is an initiative that combines approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes and athletes without intellectual disabilities (partners) on sports teams for training and competition.

**Young Athletes Program®**: The Young Athletes Program® is a developmentally appropriate play program for children with intellectual disabilities ages two through seven. It focuses on skills such as walking, running, balancing, jumping, trapping, catching, throwing, striking, kicking, and advanced and foundational skills.

Please contact me to get your school or district involved. I am happy to answer any questions you may have when making that decision.

Sincerely,

**Alice Keller**  
Director of Youth Initiatives  
Dir: 512.491.2951  Fax: 512.835.9873  
Email: akeller@sotx.org  
Website: www.sotx.org
SAMPLE MEMO TO PARENT

To: Parents
From: Alice Keller, Director of Youth Initiatives
Date: (enter date here)
Re: Special Olympics Texas Unified Programs

Dear Parent,

The Unified Club® is a Special Olympics Arizona school-based program. It teams students with and without intellectual disabilities through sports training, competition, social, academic, and recreational opportunities.

The Unified Club® program provides opportunities to build student character, increase acceptance of disabilities, develop leadership and other skills in a service-learning environment, and enhance their school community. It is a program that teaches beyond the classroom and expands students’ social horizons.

Each Unified Club® determines what activities and events they wish to participate in throughout the school year. In addition to social and recreational activities, Unified Sports® will be offered by Special Olympics Texas. Clubs are encouraged to participate in sports opportunities offered by Special Olympics Texas, but are not required to do so. Clubs meet on a regular basis during the school day or before/after school.

Attached you will find the permission slip and forms required for your son/daughter to participate in the Unified Club® and/or Unified Sports® this year. Please review the forms and contact me if you have any questions. When the forms are complete, send them back to school with your son/daughter.

Sincerely,

(Insert teacher and student name/title here)
WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT
UNITY BEYOND THE CLASSROOM
Students of all abilities have the power to positively impact their school communities by promoting social inclusion. With tools such as Spread the Word to End the Word®, Minute That Matters, Fans in the Stands, and Unified Sports Field Days, youth raise awareness and begin creating an educational environment where respect and acceptance are the norm and all students feel included and engaged. Whole School activities engage students, teachers, staff, community leaders and others to increase their social inclusion knowledge, skills and dispositions and support a socially inclusive school climate. Through whole school engagement, the school becomes a powerful community that represents new ways of thinking and acting. When the school climate conveys and fosters understanding, inclusion, and respect for all, the students internalize those lessons for their lives both within and beyond school.

**Whole School engagement is a unique and important component because it:**

- Engages the entire staff and student body in building awareness and understanding of the benefit to all when the assets and contributions of each individual are recognized, honored and supported.
- Energizes social inclusion efforts and expands stakeholder involvement beyond a passionate few.
- Is a critical component to creating a socially inclusive school climate.
- Provides an opportunity for the most engaged students at a Unified Champion School to create a ripple effect from their actions and advocacy.

**Goals of Whole School engagement:**

- Students without disabilities will hold more positive attitudes toward their peers with intellectual disabilities.
- Schools will become communities of acceptance where students with intellectual disabilities feel welcome and are routinely included in, and feel a part of, all school activities, opportunities and functions.
R-WORD CAMPAIGN
Spread the Word to End the Word

Spread the Word to End the Word is an ongoing effort created by youth and is intended to engage schools, organizations and communities to rally and pledge their support and to promote inclusion and acceptance for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Steps:

2 Months Prior
- Set a meeting with your Principal or administrator to obtain permission to hold the fundraiser (ensure that your school financial secretary is also informed).
- Set a date on your school calendar for the fundraiser. Spread the Word to End the Word is usually held on the first Wednesday of March (March 6th, 2019) but can be implemented whenever it works best for your school!
- Request R-word stickers for your event from akeller@sotx.org.

1 Month Prior
- Let SOTX know what you have planned!
- Visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/STWEvents and share the details of your Spread the Word to End the Word event so Special Olympics Texas can know more about the great things happening at your campus!
- Begin to promote fundraiser around the school (include it in the daily announcements, newspaper, social media sites and posters).

1 Week Prior
- Continue to advertise throughout the school (reminders on the announcements).
- Gather a bunch of sharpies and permanent pens to sign your school’s banner!
- Find out where you can display the banner after it has been signed (maybe the front desk or gym!)

Day Prior
- Set up materials & prepare table
- Play some music and find cool ways to engage students into your campaign

Immediately after your R-Word Campaign is completed, please communicate the success of your event to the Director of Youth Initiatives with SOTX by emailing akeller@sotx.org!
MINUTE THAT MATTERS FUNDRAISER
Raising Funds in 60 Seconds

The Minute That Matters is a one-minute fundraiser for the entire school to collect money in each classroom. Best part is, 100% of funds raised goes directly back to your Unified Programs on school! Plus, the school that raises the most money will get a pizza party!

Steps:

2 Months Prior

- Talk with your administrators and School Resource Officer (SRO) at your school and get them on board.
- Reach out to any student groups/clubs on campus that’s willing to help!
- Go challenge an administrator or a figure head on campus to do something wacky, creative or fun if the school raises a certain amount!
- Promote the fundraiser to your entire school so everyone knows about the challenge.

1 Month Prior

- Once it’s approved by administration, promote this event through social media, put up posters, make announcements over school intercom and remind students to bring in their loose change all the way up until the Minute That Matters.
- Visit https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/STWevents and share the details of your Minute That Matters fundraiser so Special Olympics Texas can know more about the great things happening at your campus!

1 Week Prior

- To collect the money, put envelopes in each teacher’s mailbox with a note explaining the Minute That Matters and give time in which the fundraiser will be taking place.
- Confirm with your school what happens once funds are collected. You can go through your bookstore or even just let SOTX know you’ll be dropping off your loose change at our office!

Day Prior

- Execute Minute That Matters by announcing it to the school and count down from 60 seconds over school intercom. While this is happening, the envelopes will be traveling around the classroom collecting the money!
- Collect the money from the classrooms with students from the teachers. After the challenge, please contact SOTX to share your school’s success with your event and what your plan is with the money raised!

Immediately after the fundraiser is completed, please communicate the total amount raised to your SOTX Senior Development Director, Law Enforcement Torch Run, Doug Ray (dray@sotx.org | 214-943-9981). At that time, he will work with you on collecting the funds from your school.
SUSTAINABILITY
MAINTAINING UNIFIED EVERY YEAR
What does this mean for our Unified Champion School®?
Special Olympics Texas does not charge athletes and Unified Partners to participate in Unified programs so it’s important that each year, your school promotes a culture of inclusion but also sustainability! Each year, plan to add another element of fundraising to your program to help support Unified Sports, Inclusive Youth Leadership, and Whole School Engagement!

What funding opportunities do we have at our school?

**Minute That Matters**
- The Minute That Matters is a one-minute fundraiser for the entire school to collect money in each classroom with 100% of funds raised going back to your Unified Programs on school! Plus, the school who raises the most money will get a pizza party!

**Unified Fundraisers**
- **Unified Dance Marathon** - The Unified Dance Marathon is a totally fun way to raise funds for the Unified programs on your campus! You can have your students dance all day or come when they can and for every hour they dance, more dollars are donated! Get excited because 100% of funds raised goes back to your Unified Programs on campus!
- **Paint the Principal** - During lunch, have everyone gather in the courtyard as you raise funds for inclusion! Students can donate $5 to paint a colorful stripe in your principal’s hair with temporary hair color spray! Step it up a notch by having the principal stand in front of a large canvas and see how many people will donate $10 to throw a sponge with (non-permanent) paint at the principal! They’ll look colorful for inclusion and you’ll make a unified art piece during the process (if anyone misses that is!)

**Snack Bar Fundraiser**
- Have your Unified Club plan to take over the snack bar during a game and receive a percentage of sales from that night! Make signs about where the funds received are going and have some students go around the stands encouraging people to check out the snack bar during halftime! Some clubs can receive 50% of sales in one night!

**Cool School Polar Plunge**
- The Cool School Polar Plunge is an event designed specifically for students, staff and families of schools to participate in the Polar Plunge. While receiving a fun and educational experience about Special Olympics Texas (SOTX), the Cool School Polar Plunge aims to teach youth from a young age about inclusion. Find a place to hold the Plunge (school pool, dunk tank, the options are endless!) and challenge others within their school as well as neighboring schools to participate by raising money for your Unified programs on campus!

**Unified Hat Day**
- Have students donate $1 to be able to wear a #PlayUnified sticker (from your Unified Club Kit) on your hat and be able to wear your hat all day on campus!
RESOURCES
WE GET BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS
Special Olympics School Resource Homepage
https://resources.specialolympics.org/unified-champion-schools-resources/?_ga=2.60591021.1664813763.1526056170-296861445.1501513803

Special Olympics Texas Unified Champion School® Homepage
http://www.sotx.org/programs/ucs/

Coaching Unified Sports Online Certification
A free online certification course to become a Unified Sports coach.
https://nfhslearn.com/courses/36000/coaching-unified-sports

Unified Club Kit
All the resources, information, and guidance you will need to have a successful and sustainable Unified Club on campus!

R-Word Toolkit
All the resources and activation ideas necessary to have a successful Spread the Word to End the Word campaign at your school!

Minute That Matters Fact Sheet
All the resources and information you will need to implement this 60-second fundraiser to be able to raise funds for your Unified programs on campus!

School Enrichment Videos
Short videos created to empower students to be agents of change and support the Special Olympics movement:
http://www.specialolympics.org/schoolenhancement/

Special Olympics National Banner Recognition
Want to know how to become a Banner school?
https://www.specialolympics.org/Sections/What_We_Do/Unified_Champion_Schools/UCS_Banner_Recognition_Program.aspx
RESOURCE PAGE

Special Olympics Texas 2018-2019 Commitment to Inclusion
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/commitmenttoinclusion18-19

Special Olympics Texas Staff
Get to know who we are!
http://www.sotx.org/about/

Special Olympics Texas Internships and Job Openings
Want to get even more involved? This is a great place to start looking!
http://www.sotx.org/about/jobs/

Special Olympics Volunteer Opportunities
Want to help us out at an area or state competition?
http://www.sotx.org/get-involved/volunteer/

Special Olympics Texas Forms
Looking for more information, resources, or downloadable logos? Try searching here!
http://www.sotx.org/get-involved/sig/#forms

Special Olympics Texas Social Media Handles
Follow us!
Facebook (@SpecialOlympicsTX)
Twitter (@SOTexas)
Snapchat (so.texas)
YouTube (specialolympicstexas)
Instagram (@specialolympicsTX)