



Unified Champion School

(formerly known as Project UNIFY)

2016-2017 Toolkit

*Special
Olympics*
North Carolina



Special Olympics
**Unified Champion
Schools**

WELCOME



WELCOME

Welcome to the Special Olympics North Carolina (SONC) family! Special Olympics 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 *leaders* in our mission.

To ignite young people's passion for our cause, we have to reach them *where they most often are*: school. At all grade levels, students' lives revolve around their schools and school activities. That is why we conceived Unified Champion Schools as 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, teachers might need to know when the monthly reports are due, and a physical education teacher might be seeking knowledge about Unified Sports®.

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

SONC's Youth Initiatives Team is excited to take part in this journey with you!

Kaitlyn Smith (*East*) & Kelly Merkl (*West*)
Youth Initiatives Directors

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WHAT IS A UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOL?

REQUIREMENTS, IMPORTANT DATES
& ROLES

UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOL

101

Unified Champion School Requirements:

What does it take to be an official Unified Champion school with SONC? All Unified Champion schools will be **required** to do the following during the 2016-2017 school-year:

1. 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.)

2. Unified Sports

- Offer a Unified Sport in at least 1 season throughout the school year**
- Identify an adult coach for each sport offered to complete the online Coaching Special Olympics Unified Sports Certification** (email your Youth Initiatives Director for the code!)

3. Youth Leadership

- Form a Unified Club** (for students with and without intellectual disabilities)

Additional Requirements:

- SONC and Unified Champion School logos** used on all printed materials.
- Completion of the **mid-term and final reports** to SONC
- Completion of the brief **monthly reports** (to be completed by the student leader(s) when possible)
- HAVE FUN** 😊

2016-2017 CHECKLIST

Stay on Track!

Use the check-list below to stay on track of your roles and responsibilities!

	Unified Champion School Task Checklist
<i>Fall</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain permission from a school administrator to submit the Unified Champion School participation form to SONC <input type="checkbox"/> Visit www.sonc.net to complete and submit the online participation form <input type="checkbox"/> Form a Unified Club (including students with and without intellectual disabilities) to meet on a regular basis <input type="checkbox"/> Identify a Unified Sport to be offered and set dates on calendar <input type="checkbox"/> Hold first whole school engagement event <input type="checkbox"/> Implement Unified Sport (if the sport you chose falls under this season)
<i>Winter</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Staff liaison to complete the online Unified Champion School mid-term report <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to regularly host Unified Club meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Implement Unified Sport (if the sport you chose falls under this season) <input type="checkbox"/> Begin planning for the second whole school engagement event <p>Optional ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have your Unified Club participate in your local Special Olympics Polar Plunge
<i>Spring</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hold second whole school engagement event <input type="checkbox"/> Continue to regularly host Unified Club meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Implement Unified Sport (if the sport you chose falls under this season) <input type="checkbox"/> Staff liaison to complete the online Unified Champion School final report <input type="checkbox"/> Staff liaison to complete the required liaison survey <p>Optional ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Celebrate Spread the Word to End the Word Day (March 1st, 2017) with a school wide fundraiser (check out page ____ details) ▪ Volunteer at local program Spring Games

SHARED LEADERSHIP

School Liaison (aka “Adult Ally”)

A school liaison is the school’s main contact for Unified Champion Schools. The school liaison oversees and empowers youth leaders to implement the 3 components into the school community.

Responsibilities of the School Liaison:

- Obtain permission from a school administrator for all Unified Champion School activities and events
- Download Special Olympics [Get Into It](#)
- Communicate regularly with your SONC Youth Initiatives Director
- Complete all required financial paperwork
- Ensure that the student leader completes the monthly reports to SONC*
- Complete the required mid-term and final reports to SONC (these reports ask for # of participants in all activities)
- Complete the required end of the year liaison survey for University of Massachusetts



**Elementary school: all reports to be completed by school liaison; Middle, high school and college: monthly reports to be completed by the student leader(s)*

Student Leadership

Unified Champion Schools are youth-led! Youth Shared leadership is a critical component of successful implementation of social inclusion in the school.

Responsibilities of the Student Leaders:

- Brainstorm inclusive activities that will positively impact the school climate
- Serve as the primary youth voice for inclusion and respect within the school
- Include EC students in leadership roles
- Submit the monthly reports to SONC*
- Communicate regularly with the SONC Youth Initiatives Director
- Connect with SONC on social media: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)



**Elementary school: all reports to be completed by school liaison; Middle, high school and college: monthly reports to be completed by the student leader(s)*

WORKING WITH SONC

Special Olympics North Carolina Staff

The Youth Initiatives Team at Special Olympics North Carolina is committed to the success of all Unified Champion Schools, and dedicated to providing support, assistance and a helping-hand whenever possible. The Youth Initiatives staff members are 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 your Youth Initiatives Director is? Refer to the map below and contact the Youth initiatives Director for the county in which your school is located in.



WEST

Kelly Merkl
Phone: 240.723.6601
Email: kmerkl@sonc.net

EAST

Kaitlyn Smith
Phone: 919.819.8744
Email: ksmith@sonc.net

UNIFIED SPORTS®

LET'S PLAY UNIFIED!

UNIFIED SPORTS®

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 Youth Initiatives staff member

2. Choose the sport you will implement this year:

- Bocce (Fall)
- Soccer (Fall)
- Basketball (Winter)
- Track & Field (Spring)
- Young Athletes (year-round)

3. Identify a coach (Note: coaches will need to become certified as a Unified Sports® coach)

- 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. A few ideas on where to start:

- Student organizations such as: Key Club, Student Council or Buddy/Partners Club.
- Students that are already involved with students with disabilities

6. Submit teammate forms

- Special Olympics athletes must fill out the Athlete Participation Form, 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 Special Olympics 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 or invitational.

2 months out

- 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 out

- 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 out

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

1 week out

- Prepare equipment / finalize needs / shop if necessary

Day before

- 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

WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

UNIFYING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

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®, 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, 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.

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 Partners Club:

1. Find out what your schools requirements are for starting a club, and make sure you follow their steps.
 - a. Does your school require a presentation as part of the process of approval or organization?
 - If necessary, come up with a presentation on why it is important to have a Unified Club (to improve the school environment) and what type of events you plan to do, etc.
2. Talk to the Special Education teacher(s) in your school.
 - a. How many Special Education students might be interested?
 - b. Would the Special Education teacher or Special Olympics coach be able to participate in the meetings to help supervise and/or sponsor the club?
 - c. What advice does the administration or faculty have for you?
3. Talk to your local Special Olympics office and show your interest in starting a Unified Club in your school.
 - a. This is a very important step if your school does not now have a Special Education program. They can help identify students with intellectual disabilities to come to your club.
4. Get a core group of students to be your “executive committee”
 - a. This core group of students can help with organizing the meetings, planning the agenda, and setting the action-items and next steps.
5. First Meeting
 - a. Provide a description of the club and its purpose.
 - b. Walk through the agenda – include introductions/icebreakers, club overview, and planning for the year.
 - c. Introduce all of the executive members and explain what their roles are.

- d. Discuss next-steps and the future events that students are interested in planning.

Ideas for club activities:

- Implement the R-Word campaign and fundraiser (see next page for more information)
- 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 future Partners Club events.
- Create educational/promotional videos to be shown during the schools announcements.
- Be Fans in the Stands at a local Special Olympics event.

R-Word Campaign Fundraiser

The Chain of Unity



The Chain of Unity is an easy fundraiser to hold in your school that will bring an inclusive group of students together to spread awareness around respect and unity, all while supporting your local SONC program! Your school's goal is to form a paper "Chain of Unity" long enough to reach around the building on your Spread the Word to End the Word Day. When students agree to sign the R-Word pledge, they will be asked to pay \$1.00 for a chain link. On that link they will be encouraged to write a positive message or word about inclusion. Throughout the day the chain links will be linked together to represent Unity within your school.

Materials Needed:

- 2"X11" slips of paper (to form a chain)
- Markers
- Glue and/or tape
- Envelope to collect money
- Location to set up during school lunch period(s)

Steps:

(2 months prior)

1. Set a meeting with your Principal or administrator to obtain permission to hold the fundraiser (ensure that your school financial secretary is also informed).
2. Set a date on your school calendar for the fundraiser.

(1 months prior)

3. Begin to promote fundraiser around the school (include it in the daily announcements, newspaper, social media sites and posters).
4. Collaborate with art teacher/department for scrap paper and other resources to use for the fundraiser.
5. Contact your SONC Youth Initiatives Director to let them know the date of your fundraiser.

(1 week prior)

6. Cut slips of paper.
7. Continue to advertise throughout the school (reminders on the announcements).

(Day of)

8. Set up materials & prepare table
9. As paper slips are collected, use tape or glue to begin linking the chains. See how far around the building your chain can reach!

Immediately after the fundraiser is completed, please communicate the total amount raised to your SONC Youth Initiatives Director. At that time, they will work with you on collecting the funds from your school.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

ALL STUDENTS ARE LEADERS



YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Introduction

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.
- 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.

GETTING STARTED

Inclusive Youth Leadership Checklist

- 1. Identify a teacher or administrator to serve as the advisor to the inclusive club (this could be you, or another invested teacher).**
- 2. Make personal invitations to students (both with and without intellectual disabilities) you know who are interested in this type of work. Identify a core group of 3 – 5 students who can serve as an “advisory committee” during the initial set-up stages of the club and club leadership after it is established.**
- 3. Work with student advisory committee to accomplish the steps necessary to establish the club within the school, ensuring the adult advisor supports the student leaders in their efforts, but allows the students to take primary leadership over the steps below:**
 - Find out what your school’s requirements are for starting a club and make sure you follow the appropriate steps for approval.
 - Work with your principal to have the socially inclusive student club designated as a sanctioned school club, following all rules and policies that are expected of other clubs in the school.
- 4. Have an introductory meeting with the advisory committee and club advisor to determine key logistics for the club:**
 - How often will the club meet?
 - This will depend on the activities or events the club will be organizing, but a minimum of monthly meetings is recommended.
 - When will the club meet & how often?
 - Consider taking advantage of time during the school day, like activities or free periods, to maximize club participation. Be considerate of busing and transportation challenges for afterschool meeting times.
 - Where will the club meet?

NEXT STEPS

Next Steps for your Club's Student Leaders

- **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.
 - Use social media to promote the club: Create a Facebook group. Include information about the club, pictures and descriptions of past activities, and updates on any upcoming activities. Invite students from your school to join the Facebook group and stay up-to-date with the club's activities.
 - Talk to the special education teacher(s) in your school. Find out:
 - How many special education students might be interested?
 - Would the teacher(s) be able to participate in the meetings to help supervise the club?
 - What advice do they have for you?
 - Ask the special education teacher and/or Special Olympics coach to share club information with athletes and parents if they are unable to give you the contact information.
- **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 club members.
 - Consider including a diversity or disabilities awareness training as part of one of your first few meetings to ensure all participants have a better understanding of the nuances and challenges associated with various disabilities so students can better support each other.
- **Hold your first meeting. Establish an agenda for the meeting that includes the following:**
 - Provide a description of the club and its purpose. This includes the responsibility for leading three activities that will impact the whole school and forming a Unified Sports team (if not established yet).
 - Have all of the executive members introduce themselves and explain their roles. Be sure to include icebreakers or fun activities so the members can begin to get to know one another.
 - Collect information on who attends the meeting, including: name, email and phone number.

- 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 would be great)
 - Brainstorm ideas for future activities and the whole-school involvement events.
 - Encourage everyone to join the Facebook group. If one hasn't been created, give a member the responsibility of developing it and inviting all of the club's members.
- **After your introductory meeting, continue with regular meeting schedule to further education of club members, while accomplishing goals and planning for activities. Meetings should be led by the club's student advisory 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.
 - If you see an individual controlling conversation or group leadership, be sure to pause and ask others (sometimes ask by their name) about their opinion on the topic.
 - If some people cannot attend a meeting, it's critical get the information to them as soon as possible in order for everyone to feel as if they are involved and a contributing member.
 - 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, students with and without intellectual disabilities will have developed amazing leadership skills. Encourage them to continue their leadership growth through state-level opportunities like the state Youth activation committee.**

Remember your purpose - to help students make friends, create a socially inclusive school, and HAVE FUN!

FUNDING

Receiving Funding for your School

FUNDING 101

Checklist

Unified Champion Schools are funded through the Department of Education and use of federal funding must be pre-approved, requested, and then exclusively for inclusive activities that are budget reducing for your school, club, center, etc. Every school is given a set amount of funding that can be used to enhance their programs. Below are the regulations and steps towards receiving the funding from SONC:

STEP 1: Make a list at the beginning of the year with the expenses you anticipate for your club:

Examples of ALLOWABLE expenses:	Examples of NON-ALLOWABLE expenses:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cost of bus travel to SO/Unified competitions ✓ Sports equipment ✓ Food (for Unified Competition ONLY) ✓ Uniforms ✓ Coach stipends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Inclusive trips (ex: museums, conferences, social gatherings) ✗ Food for club gatherings (cannot have meals reimbursed for meetings or socials) ✗ Clothing (except shirts/uniforms for competition) ✗ Entertainment ✗ Computers, iPad or other electronic equipment ✗ Gifts/Souvenirs

Step 2: Email your SONC Youth Initiatives Director with the list of expenses so that they can be **pre-approved**.

***Important:** NO expense will be reimbursed or funded without **PRE-APPROVAL** from the SONC Youth Initiatives Director. **Once approved, all required forms will be sent to you.**

Step 3: Determine whether **receipt reimbursement** (reimbursement for pre-approved expenses with receipt) or **cash advance** (funding provided in advance of a pre-approved purchase)

Receipt Reimbursement: A request for reimbursement can be sent using the Volunteer Expense Report and receipts for pre-approved purchases

- a. FORMS REQUIRED: **Volunteer Expense Report, Volunteer Screening Form** (will be sent by your Youth Initiatives Director after approval).
- b. Must include original receipt
- c. Cannot accept statement of accounts

Cash Advance: A request can be sent using the School Check Request Form, along with a completed Volunteer Screening Form and IRS W-9

- a. FORMS REQUIRED: **School Check Request, Volunteer Screening Form, W-9** (will be sent by your Youth Initiatives Director after approval).
- b. At least a 2 week notice is required for processing
- c. Receipts and any unused monies are to be returned no later than 60 days from issuance
- d. Must have original or copies of receipts showing items purchased and any sales tax paid – we cannot accept a statement.
- e. Any unused funds cannot be deposited into the school's account for keeping until needed
- f. IRS requires that all 503(c) organizations (i.e. non-profits) to have a W-9 forms of any volunteer requesting funds for use

Step 4: Submit paperwork to your SONC Youth Initiatives Director via email or fax.

Step 5: Receive reimbursement or cash advance within 2 weeks of confirmation from SONC Youth Initiatives Director.

RESOURCES

TO HELP IN YOUR UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOL



RESOURCE PAGE

Special Olympics School Resource Homepage

<http://www.specialolympics.org/projectunifyresources/>

Coaching Unified Sports Online Certification

A free online certification course to become a Unified Sports coach.

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/36000/coaching-unified-sports>

Get Into It Curriculum

K-12 Curriculum for educators to teach lessons around respect, inclusion and school climate:

<https://getintoit.specialolympics.org/educators/>

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!

http://media.specialolympics.org/soi/files/resources/Project_Unify/PUToolkit/R-WordToolkit.pdf

School Enrichment Videos

Short videos created to empower students to be agents of change and support the Special Olympics movement:

<http://www.specialolympics.org/schoolenrichment/>