



# Inclusive Youth Leadership

Unified Champion School's Guidelines for Inclusive Youth Leadership



Special Olympics  
**Unified Champion  
Schools**

## Introduction

Schools across the country struggle with alarming dropout rates, averaging as many as 7,000 high school students each day. The statistics are even grimmer for students with disabilities. In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education report, "Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 1972-2009," found students with disabilities significantly less likely to graduate from high school than their non-disabled peers.

In our world of technology, youth are accustomed to having opportunities, choices, power and continuous engagement. Conversely, the one place in which they often cannot actively participate or customize their work is the classroom, highlighting the contrast between school and real-life. This reality calls for the exigency to focus on new models of education in which the students are co-creators of their experiences.

## Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools: What is it?

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools is a program for creating school climates of inclusion, acceptance, respect and human dignity for all students with and without intellectual disabilities. It is youth driven, with youth leadership teams at the national, state and school levels working together to develop strategies promoting school communities where all young people are agents of change.

Unified Champion Schools builds on Special Olympics values, principles, practices, experiences and impacts. It incorporates Special Olympics sports and related activities; however, this new way of operating (youth centered, school focused) requires a shift in current programs and paradigms from focus on events to committing to a movement advocating for youth as change agents now and in the future.

Inclusion

Acceptance

Respect

Human Dignity

## The Role of Youth Leadership

For years, Special Olympics International (SOI) has recognized the role that youth play in achieving long-term societal goals of acceptance and inclusion. Special Olympics believes that it is through sports and related programming that young people can make a difference in friendships, schools and communities.

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools is built upon the premise that in order to have the greatest impact, the change process needs to start with young people. SOI views youth as powerful and effective advocates...open-minded to new things and as having the courage of conviction to step up and defend their beliefs. For this reason, SOI considers young people to be some of the most powerful and effective advocates of social inclusion and acceptance. In keeping with this belief, one of the main goals of Unified Champion Schools is to foster youth leadership, providing youth with opportunities to have a voice and to take on active leading roles in their schools and beyond.

For more data and information about social inclusion, please reference the document, "A Framework for Socially Inclusive Schools."

<http://www.specialolympics.org/hsplaybook-resources>

Youth demonstrate to policymakers, education leaders, practitioners, and others that not only can they provide leadership, but that youth should provide leadership. Unified Champion Schools is focused on youth engagement, ensuring that the next generation of citizens acquires and enhances the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective leaders. Youth leadership requires adults to create the conditions necessary for youth to understand how to effectively lead and acquire the skills required for leadership.



## Engaging Youth

Disengaged students are not likely to learn or stay in school. Research shows that 69% of students who drop out of high school report they leave because classroom learning and curriculum is uninteresting and unrelated to their real lives (The Silent Epidemic, March 2006).

A commonly cited reason for this frequent disengagement is a lack of sense of belonging, a condition heightened by the absence of inclusive practices throughout the school. Only through establishing our schools as inclusive centers of learning can we provide educational environments in which all students flourish, all students belong, and all students have the opportunity to benefit from building relationships with a diverse peer group. When we embed youth engagement in such an environment; nurture all students; and create school climates that are respectful, caring and equitable; we increase the likelihood all students will find success in their learning journeys.

Essential elements of an inclusive school are youth leadership and engagement. Inclusiveness requires schools to re-think which students are engaged as leaders and what strategies are consistently employed and assessed to ensure the involvement of all.

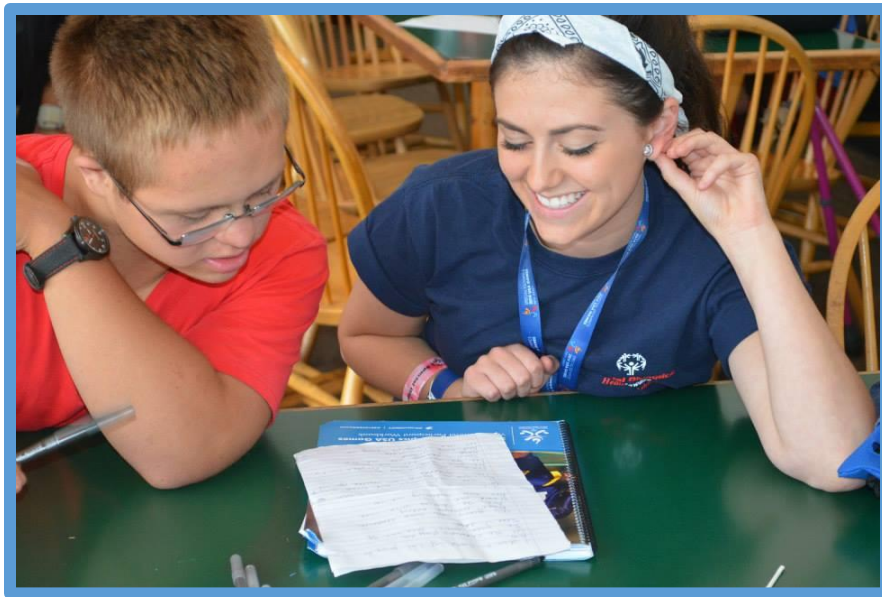
Schools frequently identify student leaders as those demonstrating leadership skills trusted by the adults in schools. This is usually implemented by the student council, Honor Society, advisory boards, school clubs and extra-curricular activities. Rarely, are these students truly engaged in the core of school life; rather, their work addresses modest student-oriented issues and activities such as school dances, community service and sporting events.

Unique contributions that Unified Champion Schools brings to inclusive schools are youth leadership on whole-school issues of respect, acceptance and engagement along with the integration of inclusive sports and corresponding social interactions. These inclusive sports activities facilitate student relationships, friendships and mutual appreciation that support academic, social-emotional and civic development and achievement.

## What Does Youth Leadership Look Like in a Unified Champion School?

### Youth with and without intellectual disabilities (ID):

- *Serve on inclusive leadership committees, Youth Activation Committees, and Partners Clubs.*
- *Collaborate as officers on student councils or clubs.*
- *Plan and facilitate youth summits, rallies, and school assemblies.*
- *Serve as team leaders on Unified Sports® teams.*
- *Plan events for Young Athletes™ and other sports events.*
- *Serve on Special Olympics state and local organizing committees.*
- *Serve as volunteers and leaders for Special Olympics.*

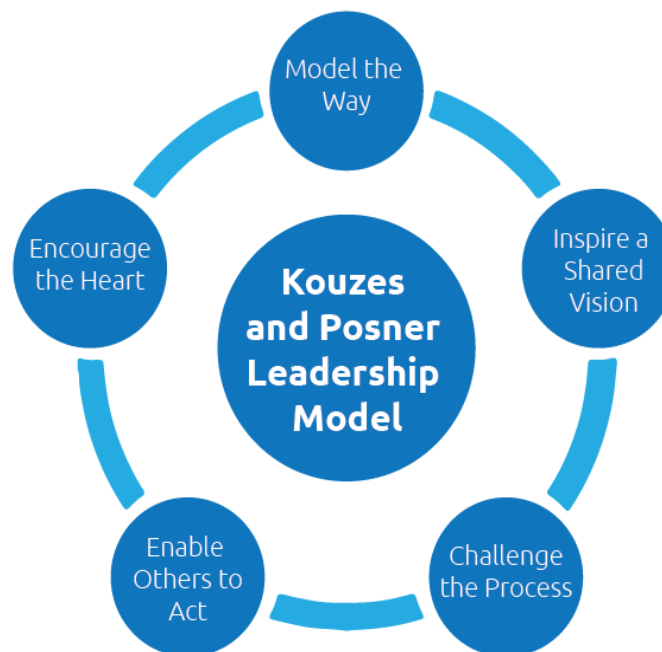


**Inclusive schools engage students from all backgrounds, experiences and competencies as leaders empowered with important school- related, decision-making responsibilities. Students are identified by the gifts and contributions they make to their schools and communities. They understand their responsibilities as leaders in the design and implementation of corresponding strategies; thus, contributing to the quality and character of the school community. Inclusive schools benefit all students by creating and sustaining equitable and engaging instructional strategies for each student.**

## The Kouzes and Posner Model and Inclusive Youth Leadership

This model describes leadership in terms of relationships essential for developing and supporting youth leadership. In this work, relationships are emphasized not only between young people of varying abilities and their peers, but also with adult allies who support their work. Moreover, this model shows how to create a climate in which people turn both individual and collective challenges into successes.

A school climate for nurturing and valuing youth leadership is supported by adult allies who believe in the power of youth and hold positive visions of the future. They support difficult conversations while ensuring a safe, judgment-free haven for this exploration to occur.



The components on the following pages include information for each of the above elements in relation to inclusive youth leadership and engagement:

- *Characteristics and descriptors of youth leaders.*
- *Indicators for adult allies who support and guide the youth.*
- *Examples of “Social Inclusion in Action” to identify how the leadership characteristics are realized in an inclusive situation.*
- *Examples at elementary, middle and high school levels.*
- *Reflections that provide questions to identify if your school is at the “Novice,” “Emerging,” “Accomplished” or “Highly Inclusive” level, allowing school stakeholders to identify the school’s level of implementation.*
- *Rubrics that provide a quick overview of each element of inclusive leadership.*

## Component 1: Model the Way

Leaders establish understanding and principles concerning the way people should be treated and the way goals should be pursued. They create high standards for themselves and then set an example for others to follow.

Kouzes and Posner posed the following question in their studies: “What historical leader would you willingly follow?” (45). Responses from many different people and countries included notable individuals such as Martin Luther King, Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela and Mother Theresa. Central characteristics of the individuals identified include a strong moral purpose, a courageous stance for an ideal and a commitment to a clear mission. They also recognized their roles as leaders and that they represented organizations and values—not simply their personal identities. The characteristics also included a willingness to model the way for others through their actions and ideals.

The first practice of effective leadership, “Model the Way”, is clearly reflected in the work of youth leaders in our schools and communities. It is essential to inclusive schools that support and encourage all students.

Three components youth leadership programs must adopt to “Model the Way” are:

### Component 1A:

Youth Leaders identify personal values that will guide their leadership.

### Component 1B:

Youth leaders understand who they are as leaders and identify how to use leadership skills.

### Component 1C:

Youth leaders model attitudes, skills, and efforts required for effective leadership.

It is important to identify **Adult Allies** in schools and the community who support youth in being good models.

These **Adult Allies**:

- Articulate and believe in the value of youth.
- Affirm their work with young people as an extension of their personal values.
- Understand their personal leadership styles as they work with youth to model the attitudes, skills and effort required for effective leadership.
- Create and provide opportunities to empower and engage youth based on individual abilities.
- Make a connection with youth that extends beyond the parameters of the school day or the school walls.

## Component 1A.

Youth leaders identify personal values that will guide their leadership.

### Youth Leaders:

- Identify their personal values and how those values connect to a civil society.
- Identify how their values support the needed of others as both individuals and groups.
- Connect their actions as leaders with their own values and identities.
- Help others connect leadership experience to personal values.

### Elementary School Example:

Ms. Simmons' class is all about "star students." She asks each of her students to write on note cards different ways that they like to be treated and kind words they like to hear. These cards are posted in the classroom and students are encouraged to "catch" their classmates demonstrating these behaviors and Ms. Simmons gives them star stickers for being "star students."

### Middle School Example:

On the first day of class, students in Mr. Jackson's classes are allowed to develop a list of rules or norms that will guide classroom processes and student interactions. Instead of independently determining classroom rules, he asks students to brainstorm what qualities or traits they personally find important in a working/ learning environment, and they are encouraged to identify ways they can contribute to implementing these qualities and traits in the classroom. These norms are written on poster board and displayed in the classroom for all to see.

### High School Example:

Students in Mr. Gonzales' social studies class, in order to learn and apply principles of democracy, select a service-learning project focused on the democratic value of equity. The students agree to co-design and co-lead the service-learning project with students who receive special education services. The students collaboratively implement a project addressing the lack of opportunities that special education students have to participate in physical education activities. As a result, the students create Unified Sports® activities that begin during lunch hour and are integrated into the school's physical education classes.

### [Social Inclusion in Action]

Ensure personal values support the rights of ALL students to be fully engaged in the school community.



### Component 1B:

Youth leaders understand who they are as leaders and identify how they use their skills for leadership.

#### Youth Leaders:

- Understand that everyone has both strengths and areas of needed growth as leaders.
- Express why leadership experiences are meaningful and important for growth.
- Identify and prioritize the leadership skills they possess and those they wish to develop.
- Identify the type of leader needed in each situation and the situations in which they can be most successful.

#### Elementary School Example:

Rosebank Elementary hosts a “Parents’ Night” every fall to welcome parents into the school and show them the students’ work. For this event, students work in inclusive pairs or triads of students with and without intellectual and physical disabilities. They serve as greeters, room hosts and tour guides, showing the parents their classrooms, hallway decorations and artwork. Students demonstrate inclusion through their interactive team work, and they are encouraged to share the impact of these experiences during Parents’ Night.

#### Middle School Example:

Building on community-based experiences from the previous year, a team of students in South Middle School’s eighth grade decided to work in a local senior citizens center as part of a “Making a Difference” unit. One of the projects was to make a book about the residents in the center. Jackie, a student with an intellectual disability, loves to take pictures with her new camera, and she is quite gifted in this area. Mr. Wilkins assigned Jackie as the leader of the photography group, which is responsible for taking pictures of each resident and different views of the center for the book.

#### High School Example:

Ms. Henderson routinely allows students to work in small groups on class projects that require a range of leadership skills. She assigns project leaders based on student strengths and the task at hand. She works to design projects that include elements of writing, speaking, creative or visual arts and organization and that require teamwork in order to be accomplished. A literature report in her class, for example, may include a presentation to the class, a skit or an artistic component to capture the theme without words, or it might expand to include a service-learning project.

#### [Social Inclusion in Action]

Identify the importance of all students in serving in leadership capacities in which they demonstrate their skills and are recognized for unique contributions.



## Component 1C.

Youth leaders model the attitudes, skills and effort required for effective leadership.

### Youth Leaders:

- Act with an understanding that others recognize and model their behavior.
- Ask questions to seek clarity before making judgments.
- Create opportunities that require a variety of attitudes, skills, knowledge and effort.
- Reflect, both individually and with others, on the attitudes, skills and effort required to achieve a goal.
- Act with integrity.

### Elementary School Example:

Each day, Mr. Garcia's class starts with a few minutes of physical activity. Some days this is yoga; other days it is hula hooping; and some days the students create an activity. But, each day a different student or pair of students leads the exercise to ensure the celebration of multiple abilities in an inclusive classroom.

### Middle School Example:

Siegel Middle School students host a "Breakfast Club" every morning before school to ensure students with and without intellectual disabilities connect and learn from each other. The conversation is generally casual but focuses on supporting each other through the challenges of the day. Sometimes there is a prompt ensuring that students discuss various topics and explore issues facing them and their school and community.

### High School Example:

Raven High School's student council truly represents all students and includes all abilities. Their teacher sponsor supports their daily work and provides training on inclusion and working in teams in a way that lifts up all abilities. The council has become the model of leadership in the school and even hosts inclusive conversations, meetings, sports activities and after-school events to expand their impact.

### [Social Inclusion in Action]

Recognize that students of all ability levels can serve as role models.

## Reflection Exercise: Where Do You Stand on Modeling?

Reflect on your learning environment and then select the options below that best represent modeling in your school.

**1. Think about the adults in your school. What type of leadership role models are they for the students?**

- A.  Adults take primary leadership in the school with very little thought to leadership style or enhancing leadership skills.
- B.  Adults throughout the school model the attitude, skills and effort required for effective leadership.
- C.  Adults throughout the school understand and model effective leadership skills.
- D.  Leadership skills are taught to students on a limited basis in select settings.

**2. Think about the adults in your school. How are personal values addressed with students?**

- A.  Personal values are not explicitly addressed in school-wide expectations or classroom discussions.
- B.  School-wide expectations exist for all students and staff to demonstrate personal values that contribute to a civic society.
- C.  Students value adult role models in the school and understand how their leadership connects with their personal values.
- D.  Adults value the input of students and treat most students equitably and with respect. Students are just beginning to see how their leadership connects with personal values.

**3. Think about the adults in your school. What type of relationship do they have with students?**

- A.  Very little personal connection exists between students and adults.
- B.  Strong, appropriately personal connections are regularly made between students and staff both inside and outside the school day.
- C.  Students and adults are connected, with relationships that sometimes go beyond classroom-related or co-curricular activities.
- D.  Students and adults are connected, but relationships are restricted to classroom-related or co-curricular activities.

**4. Think about the adults in your school. What type of leadership opportunities do they allow students?**

- A.  Students are not given leadership opportunities.
- B.  Adults nurture leadership skills in all students and provide leadership opportunities for all students in a variety of capacities. Youth are given power to make authentic decisions on issues that positively impact the school.
- C.  Students and adults recognize that everyone has strengths as leaders. Opportunities are provided for all students to reflect upon and enhance their leadership skills.
- D.  Leadership skills are taught on a limited basis in select settings. Students are not given many opportunities to enhance these skills.

## Results: Where Do You Stand on Modeling?

### If you chose Mostly A's....

Your school is at the **“Novice”** level of social inclusion implementation. Leaders may want to select one area to begin working toward the ultimate goal of inclusion. For example, starting with the leaders in the school, lay out a common goal and encourage them to strive to model the attitude, skills and effort required for effective leadership on a daily basis.

### If you chose Mostly B's....

Your school is at the **“Highly Inclusive”** level of social inclusion implementation. Congratulations on reaching such a high level of inclusion on “Modeling the Way!” Continue your work on establishing great relationships, providing leadership, and encouraging students to hold strong personal values and make smart decisions.

### If you chose Mostly C's....

Your school is at the **“Accomplished”** level of social inclusion implementation. Congratulations! Your implementation is well under way! You have almost reached your ultimate goal of inclusion. Continue to nurture the relationships that have been established between students and staff.

### If you chose Mostly D's....

Your school is at the **“Emerging”** level of social inclusion implementation. You are off to a good start! Make sure you have made your end goal of inclusion widely known to the staff. Encourage your leaders to build strong, appropriate connections with students. This will build the groundwork to give the youth the power to make effective decisions on issues that matter and positively impact the school.



## Stages of Implementation:

Throughout this document, stages of implementation rubrics provide a more detailed description of each element of the “Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidelines.” These rubrics offer many benefits to support the move from theory to actual practice. First, the rubrics contained in this document offer a clear view of the progression from novice to highly inclusive practice. Second, they provide a simple format to enable assessment of the progress your school has made toward a socially inclusive environment. The next steps and desired end result for each element are easily identified. Finally, by studying the column on the far right, we have a clear picture of what success looks like.

## Modeling Stages of Implementation

Novice	Emerging	Accomplished	Highly Inclusive
<p>Adults take primary leadership in the school with very little thought to leadership style or enhancing leadership skills.</p>	<p>Adults value the input of students and treat most students equitably and with respect.</p>	<p>Adults throughout the school understand and model effective leadership skills.</p>	<p>Adults throughout the school model the attitude, skills and effort required for effective leadership.</p>
<p>Personal values are not explicitly addressed in school-wide expectations or classroom discussions.</p>	<p>Leadership skills are taught to students on a limited basis in select settings.</p>	<p>Students value adult role models in the school and understand how their leadership connects with their personal values.</p>	<p>Adults nurture leadership skills in all students and provide opportunities for all students to take leadership in a variety of capacities.</p>
<p>Very little personal connection exists between students and adults.</p>	<p>Students and adults are connected, but relationships are restricted to classroom-related or co-curricular activities.</p>	<p>Students and staff recognize that everyone has strengths as leaders. Opportunities are provided for all students to reflect upon and enhance their leadership skills.</p>	<p>Youth are given power to make authentic decisions on issues that matter to them and positively impact the school.</p>
		<p>Staff members are encouraged to develop appropriate personal connections with students.</p>	<p>Strong appropriately personal connections are regularly made between students and staff both inside and outside the school day.</p>
			<p>School-wide expectations exist for all students and staff to demonstrate personal values that contribute to a civic society.</p>

## Component 2: Inspire a Shared Vision

Leaders passionately believe that they can make a difference. They are able to enlist others to act as co-creators of a better future.

Leaders envision a better future and inspire their colleagues to work toward shared goals. As Kouzes and Posner relate, leaders “envision exciting and ennobling possibilities” and are able to enlist others to transform the possibility into a reality. Within the realm of youth leadership, Unified Champion Schools identified three commitments that result in a collaboratively shared vision for the future.

Three components youth leadership programs must adopt to “Inspire a Shared Vision” are:

### Component 2A:

Youth leaders demonstrate the belief that youth can make a difference in their schools, communities and the broader society, leading to a better future.

### Component 2B:

Youth leaders demonstrate a belief in justice, equity and individual differences.

### Component 2C:

Youth leaders develop the skills to effectively communicate across ages and ability levels.

It is important to identify **Adult Allies** in schools and the community who help youth make a difference.

These **Adult Allies**:

- Believe in and support difficult conversations about equity and justice, ensuring a safe place for exploration of issues.
- Build meaningful relationships with others to advance accessibility, opportunity and empowerment for the youth community.
- Ask questions to seek clarity before making judgments.
- Understand how youth communicate and collaborate with each other.
- Help youth identify how authenticity, body language, tone and other elements play into effective communication.

## Component 2A.

Youth leaders demonstrate the belief that youth can make a difference in their schools, communities and the broader society, leading to a better future.

### Youth Leaders:

- Explain their work and leadership in a broader school, community and global context.
- Engage others in discussions in a way that motivates them to co-create and work toward a shared vision.
- Help others identify and support their own positive visions for the future.
- Feel a responsibility to help create schools and communities as safe, respectful places for learning and socializing.
- Reflect on the impact of their work on themselves, other students and the school.

### Elementary School Example:

Mrs. Smith's class spends the first few days of every school year talking about, planning, creating and decorating their classroom. Elements of Universal Design for Learning are used, ensuring that everyone has say; and each student makes a visible contribution to the décor of the room. This activity supports the needs of all learners and establishes ways for students to work together and gain respect for each other's talents and gifts. From time to time, the class has specific assignments or opportunities through which they can add or adapt their classroom decorations

### Middle School Example:

At Walker Middle School, 8th grade students with and without intellectual disabilities co-host focus groups with younger students as they transition into middle school. These 8th graders have been trained to understand and promote inclusion and to help prevent bullying. They proudly promote the Walker Middle School culture of inclusion.

### High School Example:

Spencer High School's student leadership group developed a student survey on school climate from their perspective. The group reported the findings of their survey to the school's executive/administration team along with their ideas to address obvious issues. Not only did the executive team listen to student feedback, but they also organized a follow-up session with district leaders to share the students' data and develop a plan of action that engages the student leadership group.

### [Social Inclusion in Action]

Recognize that the right of each individual to be part of the solution and to work for a better future.

## Component 2B.

Youth leaders demonstrate a belief in justice, equity and individual differences.

### Youth Leaders:

- Articulate their leadership as an extension of these values.
- Engage others in discussions of these key values in ways that motivate them to take action.

### Elementary Example:

In Ms. Swenson's class, all students create self-portraits and answer a few questions about their families, themselves and what they like or dislike. Each student shares his or her portrait, and they are all posted on a wall together and linked with pieces of yarn into a mosaic to show how they are all connected. Students are asked to identify the things that are similar among themselves and those that are different. Then, they discuss the importance of both similarities and differences.

### Middle Grades Example:

JFK Middle School has a cultural heritage month in which students explore their families and their racial, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. This exploration culminates in students making presentations about their heritages with time and space for other students to ask questions and seek understanding. At the end of the presentations, each class hosts a celebration of cultures and acknowledges all of the unique histories of the students.

### High School Example:

Students at Case High School want to get involved with something meaningful, but are not sure what to do. One of them shares a YouTube video that she has seen on the R-word Campaign. As the students begin to talk, they realize almost all of them have heard the R-word used in their school by teachers and students alike. Most admit they, too, have used it without realizing how hurtful it is. So, they organize a Spread the Word to End the Word® event at their school and engage students of all abilities in the planning and implementation, and they even garner support from the larger community.



### [Social Inclusion in Action]

Recognize the impact of each individual action no matter how small, in seeking justice and equity.

## Component 2C.

Youth leaders develop the skills to effectively communicate across ages and ability levels.

### Youth Leaders:

- Are cognizant of their audiences and adapt communication approaches to a variety of learning styles.
- Understand that leaders communicate through both public speaking and public action.
- Identify the motivations of others and engage them appropriately.

### Elementary Example:

Mr. Williams' class learns about foreign languages and that many of the families and members of their community speak languages other than English. With this in mind, the students are challenged to communicate a simple idea like giving directions to the store without using words. Alternatively, they are prompted to express abstract ideas (e.g., friendship) or work together to do a small project in the classroom without using words. As a reflection, they talk about the challenges faced when someone does not know a language, have the necessary verbal skills, or have a variety of ways to communicate with others.

### Middle Grades Example:

At Harper Middle School, 8th grade students spend part of their first semester studying local history. As part of this work, they reach out to older community members to solicit stories and insights to add to what they find in books and on the Internet. In turn, they pick an important point in local history and prepare an interactive lesson for 6th and 7th grade students. This both shares the knowledge of local history and excites the younger students about the project that they will execute when they are 8th graders.

During second semester, the 8th grade students create an indoor bocce court for "Unified Bocce" (teams composed of special and general education students). Each day after lunch the teams participate in bocce. At the end of the semester they put on a culminating bocce tournament and invite the older community members to come to the school to participate with them as teammates and cheerleaders.

### High School Example:

Franklin High School educators and students know how important the transition from middle to high school is and how difficult it can be. So, they started the Ambassadors Program that engages 9th grade special education students as ambassadors who visit with 8th grade students to talk about what they need to know to be successful ninth graders. Ambassadors speak in classrooms and at school assemblies and host visits of 8th graders to the high school.

### [Social Inclusion in Action]

Enhance that the messages communicated are at an appropriate level so that individuals of different ages and abilities can understand and take action.



## Where Do You Stand on Inspiring a Shared Vision?

Reflect on your learning environment and then select the options below that best represents how a **shared vision is inspired** in your school.

### 1. Think about the vision for your school. What role do the staff and students play in this vision?

- A.  Students are invited to co-create a shared vision that reflects their aspirations and contributions.
- B.  Students understand the current school's vision and are invited to contribute to it.
- C.  Adults create a vision for leadership and engagement in the school. This vision is shared with students.
- D.  Adults and youth work together to create a safe space for developing a shared vision for their school and community.

### 2. Think about the youth in your school. What role do they play?

- A.  Adults demonstrate the belief that youth can make a difference in their school, community and broader society by providing opportunities for students to take positive action.
- B.  Adults ensure school is a safe space for most students to learn and express their ideas.
- C.  Issues of justice, equity and individual differences are rarely addressed openly with youth.
- D.  Youth are engaged as co-creators to advance accessibility, opportunity and empowerment for the youth community.

### 3. Think about the students in your school. How are their communication skills?

- A.  Students are able to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences, using leadership skills to motivate and engage others.
- B.  Adults understand how youth communicate and collaborate with each other. Students learn effective communication skills to inform a variety of audiences on their vision for a successful inclusive school.
- C.  Students communicate ineffectively and often select inappropriate methods for the situation.
- D.  Students communicate as effective leaders to engage others in taking action on key issues of justice, equity and individual differences.

## Results: Where Do You Stand on an Inspired Shared Vision?

### If you chose Mostly A's....

Your school is at the **"Accomplished"** level of social inclusion implementation. Congratulations! Your implementation is well under way! You have almost reached your ultimate goal of inclusion. Continue allowing students to act as co-creators in the shared vision.

### If you chose Mostly B's....

Your school is at the **"Emerging"** level of social inclusion implementation. You are off to a good start! Make sure you have made your vision widely known to everyone. Encourage all involved to take part in developing and growing a shared vision for the community.

### If you chose Mostly C's....

Your school is at the **"Novice"** level of social inclusion implementation. Take another look at the vision in place and take the youth's input into consideration. Plan steps to make students more active participants in decision making.

### If you chose Mostly D's....

Your school is at the **"Highly Inclusive"** level of social inclusion implementation. Congratulations on reaching such a high level of inclusion on "Inspiring a Shared Vision!" Keep up the great vision, listening to your youth and practicing clear communication.



## Inspire a Shared Vision: Stages of Implementation

Novice	Emerging	Accomplished	Highly Inclusive
<p>Adults create a vision for leadership and engagement in the school. This vision is shared with students.</p>	<p>Students understand the current school's vision and are invited to contribute to it.</p>	<p>Students are invited to co-create a shared vision that reflects their aspirations and contributions.</p>	<p>Adults and youth work together to create a safe space for developing a shared vision for their school and community.</p>
<p>Issues of justice, equity and individual differences are rarely addressed openly.</p>	<p>Adults ensure school is a safe space for most students to learn and express their ideals.</p>	<p>Adults demonstrate the belief that youth can make a difference in their school, community and broader society by providing opportunities for students to take positive action.</p>	<p>Youth are engaged as co-creators to advance accessibility, opportunity and empowerment for the youth community.</p>
<p>Students communicate ineffectively and often select inappropriate methods for the situation.</p>	<p>Adults understand how youth communicate and collaborate with each other.</p>	<p>Students are able to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences, using leadership skills to motivate and engage others.</p>	<p>Students communicate as effective leaders to engage others in taking action on key issues of justice, equity and individual differences.</p>
<p>Students learn effective communication skills to inform a variety of audiences on their vision for a successful inclusive school.</p>			

## Component 3: Challenge the Process

Leaders search for opportunities to change the status quo. They look for innovative ways to improve their own lives and positively impact their communities. In doing so, they experiment and take risks. Leaders know that risk taking involves challenging experiences, and they accept them as learning opportunities.

In reference to their study, Kouzes and Posner comment, “Not one person claimed to have achieved a personal best by keeping things the same.” Leaders are willing and eager to enter unknown situations, to question ‘what is’, and to forge new solutions. Effective leaders embrace change as necessary and become change masters in bringing others through the process that for many may be uncertain or even risky. Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools has identified three characteristics of effective youth leaders that exemplify the code of challenging the process.

Three components youth leadership programs must adopt to “Challenge the Process” are:

### Component 3A:

Youth leaders embrace change as a natural part of growth.

### Component 3B:

Youth leaders develop the skills to advocate both individually and collaboratively.

### Component 3C:

Youth leaders support and guide others through adversity.

It is important to identify **Adult Allies** in schools and the community who encourage and support youth to make important changes.

These **Adult Allies**:

- Ask probing questions, rather than provide answers, that allow young people to explore their assumptions and generate their own ideas.
- Utilize a variety of group protocols for sharing power, holding equitable conversations and relationships, and modeling norms for how groups work together equitably.
- Understand how change happens and support others in creating and adapting to change.
- Recognize risk then support and guide others through adversity.
- Set the tone for pushing beyond perceived limits.

### Component 3A.

Youth leaders embrace change as a natural part of growth.

#### Youth Leaders:

- Look for examples of how change happens in daily experiences.
- Take the initiative to try new things, seek new opportunities, and reflect on how those experiences feel.
- Analyze the status quo and who benefits from keeping things the way they are.
- Identify the challenges in changing the status quo.
- Embrace change and help others adapt to change.
- Identify and evaluate the short- and long-term impact of the change.

#### **Elementary Example:**

Ms. Farmer's third grade students are asked to identify one community problem they would like to address or change. Using Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools framework and activities, the students identify a community problem and ways they can work as a team to contribute to a solution. They share their solutions with other classes within the school and community agencies.

#### **Middle Grades Example:**

Mr. Johnson knows that the transition to middle school is difficult and that many young adolescents already are looking ahead to high school. The class designs a Unified Sports® activity they can conduct with current ninth graders, so that while playing sports they can create friendships and better prepare for their transition to high school.

#### **High School Example:**

Harwell High School organized Unified Sports® after school for several years, and every year they became more and more popular. However, students were frustrated at the Annual Sports Banquet because no varsity letters were given to Unified Sports athletes, and they were not even acknowledged in the program. The banquet was a significant event at the school and involved faculty, parents and many supportive alumni and community business partners. The students organized their case and made formal presentations to each of these groups to successfully campaign for a change to varsity status for Unified Sports.

#### **[Social Inclusion in Action]**

People who have never felt empowered often fear change because they feel they have no control of the situation. Ensuring transparency around the changes and engaging students with the changes make transitions smoother.

### Component 3B.

Youth leaders develop the skills to advocate both individually and collaboratively.

#### Youth Leaders:

- Advocate for themselves and understand their own power.
- Distinguish between advocating and supporting others to advocate for themselves.
- Understand the unique challenges and opportunities presented by individual and group advocacy.
- Learn the different skills necessary to lead both one-on-one and group interactions.
- Seek out unique ways to engage those most reluctant to contribute.

#### Elementary Example:

Overbrook School has elections for the Mayor and Vice Mayor of their fourth-grade classrooms. Each student interested in running for office prepares a speech about why he/she should be the mayor of the classroom and delivers the speech in front of the class. The students vote, and the elected Mayor and Vice Mayor are delegated unique leadership opportunities by their teacher.

The rest of the students form a Citizens Council that meets once per month with the Mayor, Vice Mayor and teachers to reflect on how their classes are going, what might be improved, and what should be celebrated.

#### Middle School Example:

During Mrs. Hampton's instructional unit on the American Revolution, she divides her class into small teams, half representing England and half representing America. Each uses written, spoken and creative expressions (e.g., propaganda posters) to voice the perspective of their side of a specific event like the Boston Tea Party. The teams switch sides to argue the other country's perspective on another seminal event like the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

#### High School Example:

Varsity athletes at Cesar Chavez High School recognized the time Special Olympics athletes trained and the medals they were awarded at local, state and national competitions; as a result they believed the Special Olympics athletes deserved varsity letters. They created a petition and with many signatures from students, they presented it to the principal asking that Special Olympics athletes be awarded varsity letters that recognized their athletic abilities. The principal accompanied the group to the next school board meeting and presented the petition and request. At their next meeting the school board approved the petition.

#### [Social Inclusion in Action]

A first step for those who have never been empowered is knowing that someone else is advocating for them or alongside them for a particular cause. However the goal is for the individual to soon be able to advocate for themselves and then for others.

### Component 3C.

Youth leaders support and guide others through adversity.

#### Youth Leaders:

- Recognize situations that may feel risky to others.
- Are optimistic and have a supportive attitude.
- Know how to promote growth and empowerment.
- Enhance their skills to effectively mediate conflicts.
- Understand and utilize a variety of problem-solving skills.

#### Elementary School Example:

At the end of every school day, Ms. Turley spends a few minutes on a class reflection, and each day a different student co-leads the session with her. The simple process asks each student to identify how his/her day went and what he/she hopes the next day will bring. Then, the group talks about how they can help each other achieve their hopes for tomorrow.

#### Middle School Example:

After a conflict involving two students erupts on the sports field, a special education student engaged in a Unified Sports® activity recognizes the conflict and intervenes as a mediator. The student uses conflict resolution strategies learned earlier in class to engage the two students in an examination of the cause of the conflict and identify an appropriate resolution.

#### High School Example:

At Rio Grande High School, ninth grade students in their social studies classes shared their discomfort transitioning from middle school and how it could negatively impact a student's sense of self. As a result of classroom discussions, the students organized weekly Unified Sports® programs that engaged students with and without intellectual disabilities. Students learned how to promote growth in others and in themselves as well.

#### [Social Inclusion in Action]

People of all abilities are able to be challenged and handle risky situations if given the proper supports and understanding. Avoid overprotecting while knowing how to identify true fear.



## Where Do You Stand on Challenging the Process?

Reflect on your learning environment and then select the options below that best represents how processes are challenged in your school.

**1. Think about the youth in your school. Are they encouraged to be risk takers?**

- A.  *Students are encouraged to take risks, embracing these challenging experiences as rich opportunities to learn.*
- B.  *School staff nurtures an environment that is open to opportunities for change and taking risks.*
- C.  *Adults understand how change happens and support students in creating and adapting to change.*
- D.  *Maintaining the status quo is valued over taking risks and creating change.*

**2. Think about the youth in your school. Which of the following best fits your situation?**

- A.  *All students learn and are given opportunities to practice skills for individual and group advocacy.*
- B.  *Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves.*
- C.  *Students are encouraged to explore their own assumptions and generate their own ideas for change.*
- D.  *Adults understand student needs.*

**3. Think about the students in your school. How is conflict resolution taught?**

- A.  *Youth and adult leaders utilize a variety of group protocols for sharing power and holding equitable conversations and relationships. Norms for groups working together equitably are modeled. Youth and adult leaders model effective collaboration and conflict resolution skills.*
- B.  *Students are given opportunities to practice problem-solving skills.*
- C.  *Youth and adults are provided training in effective collaboration and conflict resolution skills.*
- D.  *Students are told how to solve problems.*

**4. Think about the students in your school. How are decisions made?**

- A.  *Students and adults co-create action research projects to measure impacts of change and make corrections as informed by the data and results.*
- B.  *Youth are asked to provide input about how the school environment can be improved.*
- C.  *Youth and adults brainstorm ways together that the school environment can be improved.*
- D.  *Adults control group process and decision-making.*



## Results: Where Do You Stand on Challenging a Process?

### If you chose **Mostly A's....**

Your school is at the **"Highly Inclusive"** level of social inclusion implementation. Congratulations on reaching such a high level of inclusion on "Challenging the Process!" Keep encouraging youth in risk-taking, self-advocacy, conflict resolution and decision-making!

### If you chose **Mostly B's....**

Your school is at the **"Emerging"** level of social inclusion implementation. You are off to a good start! Try to start including youth more actively in the decision-making process. The more input they have the more of an investment they will make!

### If you chose **Mostly C's....**

Your school is at the **"Accomplished"** level of social inclusion implementation. Congratulations! Your implementation is well under way! You have almost reached your ultimate goal of social inclusion. Encourage students to challenge the process.

### If you chose **Mostly D's....**

Your school is at the **"Novice"** level of social inclusion implementation. Take another look at the processes in place and take the youth's input into consideration. Plan steps to make students more active participants in decision making.



## Challenge the Process: Stages of Implementation

Novice	Emerging	Accomplished	Highly Inclusive
<p>Maintaining the status quo is valued over taking risks and creating change.</p>	<p>School staff nurtures an environment that is open to opportunities for change and taking risks.</p>	<p>Adults understand how change happens and support students in creating and adapting to change.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to take risks, embracing these challenging experiences as rich opportunities to learn.</p>
<p>Adults understand student needs.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to explore their own assumptions and generate their own ideas for change.</p>	<p>All students learn and are given opportunities to practice skills for individual and group advocacy.</p>
<p>Adults control group process and decision-making.</p>	<p>Youth are asked to provide input on how the school environment can be improved</p>	<p>Youth and adults are provided training in effective collaboration and conflict resolution skills.</p>	<p>Youth and adult leaders utilize a variety of group protocols for sharing power and holding equitable conversations and relationships. Norms for how groups work together equitably are modeled.</p>
	<p>Students are given opportunities to practice problem-solving skills.</p>		<p>Youth and adult leaders model effective collaboration and conflict resolution skills</p>
			<p>Students and adults co-create action research projects to measure impacts of change and make corrections as informed by the data and results.</p>

## Component 4: Enable Others to Act

Leaders foster collaboration and build motivated and strong teams. They actively involve others. Collaborative leaders understand that mutual respect is what sustains the extraordinary efforts required in leading positive change. They build trust and respect among the group and help strengthen others, ensuring each person feels capable and powerful.

Effective leaders do not view their role as separate and isolated acts to impact others. Effective leaders recognize that their success is dependent on bringing others along with them and even in becoming a follower and supporter at appropriate times throughout the process. Successful leaders build trust, harmony and a sense of self-efficacy across the team of individuals they are leading. Kouzes and Posner listened for the use of the pronoun, “we,” rather than the word, “I,” when judging the leadership qualities of those they studied. These qualities are certainly embodied in the characteristics of effective youth leadership. Specifically, Unified Champion Schools identified four such characteristics.

Four components youth leadership programs must adopt to “Enable Others to Act” are:

### Component 4A.

Youth leaders build and sustain strong, meaningful relationships.

### Component 4B.

Youth leaders value the leadership skills and development of others regardless of ability level.

### Component 4C.

Youth leaders recognize how and when to be a follower.

### Component 4D.

Youth leaders identify and demonstrate the value and impact of working as a team.

It is important to identify **Adult Allies** in schools and the community who encourage youth to support others.

These **Adult Allies**:

- Build and sustain strong relationships with adult peers and students based on trust and mutual respect.
- Identify and promote the gifts, skills and assets of each young person.
- Facilitate a sense of the collective in goal setting, skill-building and accountability that includes adult peers and youth of all abilities.
- Understand the value of patience and adjust time expectations to allow for students of all learning styles to fully engage.
- Become comfortable in the (sometimes) role of effective follower of both other adults and young people and help to develop those skills in youth.
- Understand the value and impact of being the member of a team with adult peers and/or with young people of all abilities.
- Ask/Invite other adults to participate and support young people.
- Assess their own professional development needs to be best prepared to encourage and support inclusive youth leadership.

## Component 4A.

Youth leaders build and sustain strong, meaningful relationships.

### Youth Leaders:

- Gain trust by acting with integrity and treating others with respect.
- Listen to others and share experiences to enhance relationships.
- Acknowledge that maintaining positive relationships within a team may sometimes be more important than actually solving a particular challenge.

### Elementary School Example:

Students in Mr. Gomez's fourth grade class expressed a concern that their grandparents and other elderly citizens were not familiar with using computers and wanted to assist them to learn how to use them. The students met with the executive director and staff at the local Senior Citizen Center and offered to provide classes to seniors to teach them how to effectively use computers. As a result, collaboration was established between the elementary school and the Senior Citizen Center, and the classes were held at both the Senior Citizen Center and the elementary school. This resulted in many strong relationships being formed between the students and seniors based on respect.

### Middle School Example:

During a research project, Eastside Middle School students discovered a Native American process called "Peacemaking Circles" that helps students, teachers, families or any group of participants have difficult or challenging conversations in an equitable way. The process includes a "talking piece" which is passed from person to person sitting in a circle. Only the person with the talking piece may speak which encourages others to actively listen. The process ensures every voice is heard and the participants' time is spent listening to others and not just reacting. This activity fosters an environment filled with respect and understanding.

### High School Example:

Jake, a young man with Down syndrome, is included as a member of the Honor Society at Westdale High School. His role is not merely to carry the flag at school assemblies; rather, he serves as a member of the school's advisory committee that helps identify the school assemblies held throughout the year. In this way, Jake helps determine the broader school conversation, awareness and learning.



### [Social Inclusion in Action]

Building trust and relationships requires that all students regardless of their relative success, feel respected for their gifts and not just included as tokens.

### Component 4B.

Youth leaders value the leadership skills and development of others regardless of ability level.

#### Youth Leaders:

- Be willing and able to support, encourage and share their skills with others.
- Identify the variety of skills, abilities and growth goals of others.

#### Elementary School Example:

Mr. Holland’s class starts the year talking about goals. Each student is asked to set three goals that he/she hopes to accomplish during the school year and to share those goals with their classmates. The goals are then posted on the walls of the classroom. Mr. Holland challenges his class to help each other by recognizing the talents and gifts of others, and he establishes “Goal Buddy Teams” to assist students to accomplish the goals. Each month the Goal Buddy Teams reflect on their progress and share with their classmates. If the class can help each other accomplish all of these goals, they will have a pizza party celebration on the last day of class.

#### Middle School Example:

Oliver Middle School has always had a year-end awards ceremony to celebrate all students who were successfully completing the school year. However, their specific awards always went to the most athletic or the smartest students in the school. Recently, in the spirit of true celebration of all student abilities, the school added formal recognition of students in the areas of the arts, school citizenship and community service. Unified Sports® was also included as an area of recognition for athletic awards.

#### High School Example:

Mr. Davenport’s class focuses a great deal on service-learning, but not just to advance his social studies curriculum. At the beginning of a project, each student identifies a particular skill he/she wants to develop and a skill that he/she does well. As the students break into small teams to develop their projects, they are asked to design them so they highlight the individual strengths of team members and help develop the skills each has identified as a need. Part of the “report out” and success of the project is based on the team’s ability to meet the individual outcomes as well as relevant outcomes of the larger project.

#### [Social Inclusion in Action]

It is important to put equal or similar value on all attributes brought to the group by individuals.

## Component 4C.

Youth leaders recognize how and when to be a follower.

### Youth Leaders:

- Articulate the value of being an effective follower and its complementary role to the leader.
- Use their skills to be a good follower and recognize appropriate times for this transition.
- Enhance their leadership skills as they gain additional experiences as leaders and as followers.

### Elementary School Example:

Mrs. Wright's students never get tired of playing "Simon Says." Part of the reason is that each student has a chance to be Simon for a couple of rounds every time they play. The students try to come up with new ideas for their turns and not to repeat others, and they take this quite seriously. On the other hand, the room is full of action, fun and laughter as each new idea is offered and the group follows suit, or doesn't, depending on what "Simon" says.

### Middle School Example:

Julie has played Unified Sports® at Jackson Middle School for almost three years now. She was approached by a coach from Bronson Middle School and asked to come speak at a student assembly to help inspire interest in Unified Sports the coach's school. Julie knew that she was not the only, or even best, voice to be heard about the power of Unified Sports. She agreed to the arrangement but asked one of her teammates with an intellectual disability to join her, and he did most of the talking. They were so convincing that the students at the Bronson Middle School asked for Unified Sports to become part of their athletic program.

### High School Example:

For years, Coach Anderson has been the staff support person for the student council, and he always felt he had to start over when his seniors graduated because they took the council knowledge and leadership with them. So, he began to emphasize that the senior year on student council was all about training and supporting the underclassmen to organize events, speak publicly about their work, and help lead the school in a positive way. Seniors needed to be "behind the scenes" to make sure their leadership and impact lasted even after they graduated.

### [Social Inclusion in Action]

Youth leaders can set an example by following individuals who are not normally in the lead but have a unique skill set in a specific area. The roles chosen for these new leaders should be equally important and affirming of their gifts.

#### Component 4D.

Youth leaders identify and demonstrate the value and impact of working as a team.

#### Youth Leaders:

- Recognize that an effective team is made up of a variety of abilities and talents.
- Facilitate relationship-building, trust and collaboration in both formal and informal ways.
- Work effectively in groups to include and leverage a variety of skills for collective success.
- Set high expectations and clear goals, while sharing success with the team.

#### Elementary School Example:

For their annual “Night of the Arts” at Butler Elementary School, students work in cross-grade teams to develop art expressions based on a theme of their choosing (e.g., friendship). This includes 1st and 5th graders working together on a short play and 2nd through 4th graders collaborating on sculpture, paintings and poetry that express their theme. Parents and community members are invited to experience the “Night of the Arts” with these students.

#### Middle School Example:

Oak Middle School’s students follow the weekly Unified Sports® training with a brief reflection led by different youth leaders each week. During their reflections, the group discusses the ways in which each individual player contributed to the success of the team. They also invite each student to share ideas about how they could get better.

#### High School Example:

Students in Mrs. Mitsui’s freshman social studies class joined with the VoTech horticulture class to work in teams to design and implement service-learning projects focused on improving the local environment. In six-member teams, students took on different aspects of the service-learning project (e.g., securing resources, working with local environmental groups, researching local policies, evaluating the project, and reporting the process and outcomes/impacts). At the end of the project, the students reflected on how the team worked together, what was successful, and what they would do differently next time.

#### [Social Inclusion in Action]

The concept of team is a familiar and powerful concept, easily conveyed, and exemplified to all learning styles in sports. This is why Unified Sports®; or integrated recreational sport activities are such great ways to convey and exemplify this concept in an accessible way.

## Where Do You Stand on Enabling Others to Act?

Reflect on your learning environment and then select the options below that best represents how others are enabled to act at your school.

**1. Think about the youth in your school. Are they encouraged to be risk takers?**

- A.  Adults recognize diverse leadership skills and abilities in some young people.
- B.  Youth and adults nurture the development of skills and abilities of all students in setting goals and taking collective action. Students enhance their abilities as leaders and as followers in appropriate contexts.
- C.  Adults support most young people in learning necessary skills to work as a team.
- D.  Youth and adults value the leadership skills and development of other regardless of ability.

**2. Think about the youth in your school. How do they perform in teams?**

- A.  Adults establish goals and timelines for some students to work within a team.
- B.  Youth are able to work effectively in a team to set high expectations and clear goals. Success in meeting these goals is shared with the team.
- C.  Students and adults seek to create an effective team through a variety of skills and abilities.
- D.  Youth and adults develop skills through collaboration and collective action.

**3. Which of the following is the best description of the students' role in your school?**

- A.  Adults control group process and decision-making.
- B.  Students contribute to the set of expected outcomes from their advocacy and determine how to measure their progress and successes.
- C.  Adults encourage some students to advocate for themselves.
- D.  Students share power and decision making with other students in the group.



## Results: Where Do You Stand on Enabling Others to Act?

### If you chose **Mostly A's....**

Your school is at the **"Novice"** level of social inclusion implementation. Take another look at the role the youth play in your environment. Plan steps to make students more active participants in decision making.

### If you chose **Mostly B's....**

Your school is at the **"Highly Inclusive"** level of social inclusion implementation. Congratulations on reaching such a high level of inclusion on "Enabling Others to Act!" Continue your work on establishing great relationships, providing leadership, and encouraging students to be strong leaders and active team members.

### If you chose **Mostly C's....**

Your school is at the **"Emerging"** level of social inclusion implementation. You are off to a good start! Try to start including youth more actively in the decision-making process. The more input they have the more enabled they will become!

### If you chose **Mostly D's....**

Your school is at the **"Accomplished"** level of social inclusion implementation. Congratulations! Your implementation is well under way! You have almost reached your ultimate goal of social inclusion. Keep enabling others to act!

## Enable Others to Act: Stages of Implementation

Novice	Emerging	Accomplished	Highly Inclusive
<p>Adults recognize diverse leadership skills and abilities in some young people.</p>	<p>Adults support most young people in learning necessary skills to work as a team.</p>	<p>Youth and adults value the leadership skills and development of other regardless of ability.</p>	<p>Youth and adults nurture the development of skills and abilities of all students in setting goals and taking collective action.</p>
<p>Adults establish goals and timelines for some students to work within a team.</p>	<p>Students and adults seek to create an effective team through including a variety of skills and abilities.</p>	<p>Youth and adults develop skills in collaboration and taking collective action.</p>	<p>Students enhance their abilities as leaders and as followers in appropriate contexts.</p>
<p>Adults control group process and decision making.</p>	<p>Adults encourage some students to advocate for themselves.</p>	<p>Students share power and decision making with other students in the group.</p>	<p>Youth are able to work effectively in a team to set high expectations and clear goals. Success in meeting these goals is shared with the team.</p>
			<p>Students contribute to the set of expected outcomes from their advocacy and determine how to measure their progress and successes.</p>

## Component 5: Encourage the Heart

Youth leaders build teams, develop one's own skills, and inspire others toward positive change. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders understand and openly recognize the breadth and variety of contributions that individuals make. Leaders share the rewards of group efforts and create opportunities for everyone to be celebrated. They promote the atmosphere in schools for positive, supportive growth in individual skills through team development.

Effective leaders recognize the importance of achieving a vision by recognizing those who are members of the team and celebrating each member's contribution in large and small ways. It is important to distinguish the acts of recognition and celebration not as "soft leadership" but as a critical link to high performance and completed objectives.

Two components youth leadership programs must adopt to "Encourage the Heart" are:

### Component 5A.

Youth leaders identify both short- and long-term victories in their individual and collective work.

### Component 5B.

Youth leaders develop the skills to reflect and celebrate both individually and collaboratively.

It is important to identify **Adult Allies** in schools and the community who encourage youth to support others.

- Support peer-to-peer acknowledgement and celebrations among all young people for individual and group milestones.
- Facilitate quality reflection, free of judgment and focused on learning in a safe environment.
- Create continuing and new opportunities for action and reflection.
- Take time to celebrate success in both meaningful and fun ways.

## Component 5A.

Youth leaders identify both short- and long-term victories in their individual and collective work.

### Youth Leaders:

- See their daily work in the context of a larger vision.
- Identify and celebrate incremental milestones for individuals and in collective work.
- Share the credit for success and recognize the contributions of others.

### Elementary School Example:

Palmer Lake Elementary has a school garden that is used as a metaphor and as a community-building tool for their students and the broader school community. From preparing the soil to planting, watering and harvesting, each class and student play a role. The school uses every stage of the process to celebrate the steps and the student/community involvement that will make the garden successful long before it actually produces fruits or vegetables. The garden as a metaphor and as a practical activity makes its way into lesson plans and the growth and development of each student.

### Middle School Example:

Jefferson Middle School elects “Kindness Coaches” in their 8th grade class. This is unofficially Jefferson’s highest student honor. The coaches form a team that is trained in partnership with adult sponsors to promote a positive school climate, nonviolent conflict resolution and anti-bullying strategies. The Kindness Coaches complete trainings for each class in the school and host several school-based celebrations/events to promote a positive school climate.

### High School Example:

In Mr. Williams’ class, students study the important social movements in American history. But, instead of just focusing on the iconic leaders and seminal moments of these movements, they focus on the unnamed masses and small actions of resistance that fundamentally built and carried the movements. They also focus on the generations of work that most movements were built upon but are often not studied. One student used this framework to examine Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s advocacy for individuals with intellectual disabilities and how it led to a social movement that today is supported by federal, state and local policies; sports and school activities.

### [Social Inclusion in Action]

Engaging all students in identifying group and individual achievements.

## Component 5B.

Youth leaders develop the skills to reflect and celebrate both individually and collaboratively.

### Youth Leaders:

- Acknowledge appreciation and recognition as important parts of group work.
- Facilitate reflections and appropriate protocols with groups of peers and adults.
- Ensure that all recognitions are positive reflections of the work achieved, no matter how small, and of the individuals involved.
- Take time to celebrate success in both meaningful and fun ways.

### Elementary School Example:

Each week at the beginning of the school year, Ms. Manning's class draws names, and students are paired with a buddy for that week. Many activities during the week include opportunities for the two students to get to know each other better and learn what kinds of things they like and dislike. On Fridays, they have a class celebration at which each partner shares something new and positive that they learned about the other person. These rotations happen until each class member has had the chance to pair with every other class member.

### Middle Grades Example:

Mrs. Taylor's class has a "Gotcha Box" where students are encouraged to catch their friends doing something positive. Each week, the submissions to the Gotcha Box are shared with all of the students. Those who were caught doing something good, and those who caught them, are celebrated in the class, and their parents are notified of their positive work.

### High School Example:

Kennedy High School had recently been reported in the news for having a serious bullying issue. A group of students were not happy about the event and were embarrassed by the media coverage. So, they organized a month-long campaign to capture and document all of the positive things happening in their school. They celebrated and promoted these within the school to build a climate more supportive of positive student action. They also shared a full report with the media that did a follow-up story on the positive student leadership at the school.

### [Social Inclusion in Action]

Ensure that all students are recognized for their accomplishments and contributions of any size and are part of the process of recognizing others.

## Where Do You Stand on Encouraging the Heart?

Reflect on your learning environment and then select the options below that best represents how others **encourage the heart** in your school.

### 1. Which of the following statements about reflection best describes your learning environment?

- A.  Adults help youth facilitate quality reflection which is free of judgment and focused on learning in a safe environment.
- B.  Group process proceeds from one task to another with little or no reflection.
- C.  Efforts of most successful group leaders are celebrated and recognized, with acknowledgement of support provided by others.
- D.  Reflection facilitates refinement in group process and guides future efforts.

### 2. Which of the following statements about goals best describes your learning environment?

- A.  Youth and adults measure and demonstrate outcomes on a variety of skills using multiple measures that represent the diverse abilities of all group members. Success is celebrated publicly, recognizing contributions of all group members to the success of the whole.
- B.  Group progress is celebrated with little evidence of outcomes or relationship to goals achieved.
- C.  Adults guide some students in assessing progress toward goals.
- D.  Progress toward goals on a variety of skills that represent the diverse abilities of group members is measured and celebrated, providing recognition for individual efforts that contributed to the whole.

## Results: Where Do You Stand on Encouraging the Heart?

### If you chose **Mostly A's....**

Your school is at the **"Highly Inclusive"** level of social inclusion implementation. Congratulations on reaching such a high level of inclusion on "Encouraging the Heart!" Continue your work on establishing great relationships, providing leadership, and encouraging students to always be reflective.

### If you chose **Mostly B's....**

Your school is at the **"Novice"** level of social inclusion implementation. Take another look at the role the youth play in your learning environment. Plan steps to make students more reflective.

### If you chose **Mostly C's....**

Your school is at the **"Emerging"** level of social inclusion implementation. You are off to a good start! Try to start including youth more actively in the decision-making process. The more reflective they are the more successful they will become!

### If you chose **Mostly D's....**

Your school is at the **"Accomplished"** level of social inclusion implementation. Congratulations! Your implementation is well under way! You have almost reached your ultimate goal of social inclusion. Keep encouraging the hearts of your students!

## Encourage the Heart: Stages of Implementation

Novice	Emerging	Accomplished	Highly Inclusive
<p>Group process proceeds from one task to another with little or no reflection.</p>	<p>Efforts of most successful group leaders are celebrated and recognized, with acknowledgement of support provided by others.</p>	<p>Reflection facilitates refinement in group process and guides future efforts.</p>	<p>Adults help youth facilitate quality reflection which is free of judgment and focused on learning in a safe environment.</p>
<p>Group progress is celebrated with little evidence of outcomes or relationship to goals achieved.</p>	<p>Adults guide some students in assessing progress toward goals.</p>	<p>Progress toward goals on a variety of skills that represent the diverse abilities of group members is measured and celebrated, providing recognition for individual efforts that contributed to the whole.</p>	<p>Youth and adults measure and demonstrate outcomes on a variety of skills using multiple measures that represent the diverse abilities of all group members. Success is celebrated publicly, recognizing contributions of all group members to the success of the whole.</p>

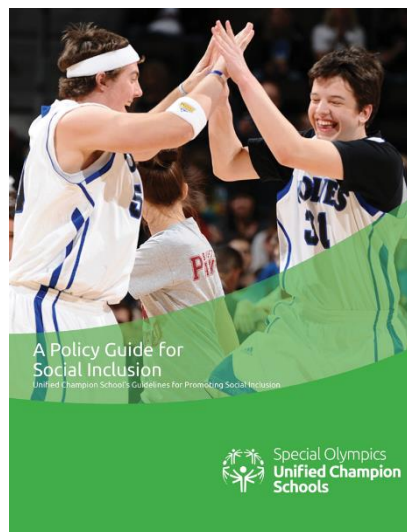
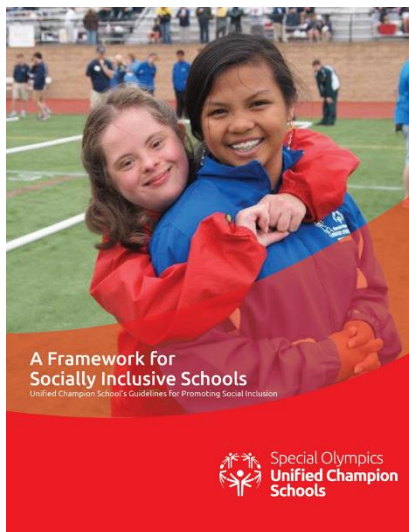


## Summary

**“Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidelines” provides information for educators, students, communities and advocates on important attributes of inclusive youth leadership within our schools. If we truly want to create inclusive schools, students must be at the heart of the school—not just as recipients of education, but rather as creators of opportunities for growth.**

**This document not only provides guidance on the characteristics and descriptors for youth leadership, but also provides insights into the support that must be provided by adult allies in the school. The school truly becomes a community as both youth and adults work to ensure that all students are actively engaged in learning and growth. Youth leadership and engagement become central to the school culture—a requirement, not an option for a socially inclusive school.**

## Related Documents and Resources



## Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools Student Engagement Resources

The following resources provide information on youth engagement strategies, tools, projects and organizations.

### Youth Engagement Strategies

*Meaningful Student Involvement Research Guide. (2004) Bothell, WA: HumanLinks Foundation.*

*Youth Leadership and Policy Institute Guide. (2010) Washington, DC: National PTA.*

*Youth Development Assertions and Outcomes. [www.fhi360.org](http://www.fhi360.org)*

### Youth Engagement Tools

*15 Points to Successful Youth Involvement in Decision-Making. (2006) Boston: Youth On Board.*

*Building Youth Councils a Policy Guide to Engaging Youth in Policymaking.*  
<http://www.forumfyi.org/node/127>

*Firestarter Participant Guidebook. (2000) Washington, DC: Points of Light Foundation.*  
*Get Loud! Youth Engagement Workshop Guide. (2010) Olympia, WA: Freechild Project.*

*Meaningful Student Involvement: Guide to Students as Partners in School Change, Second Edition. (2005) Bothell, WA: HumanLinks Foundation.*

*Meaningful Student Involvement Resource Guide. (2004) Bothell, WA: HumanLinks Foundation.*

*Unified Champion Schools*

[http://www.specialolympics.org/Sections/What\\_We\\_Do/Project\\_Unify/Unified\\_Schools.aspx](http://www.specialolympics.org/Sections/What_We_Do/Project_Unify/Unified_Schools.aspx)

*Tips for Meaningful Mentor Relationships, Oasis Center,*  
<http://www.specialolympics.org/hsplaybook-resources>

*Types and Sources of Power, Oasis Center,*  
<http://www.specialolympics.org/hsplaybook-resources>

*Youth Adult Tip Sheet, Oasis Center,*  
<http://www.specialolympics.org/hsplaybook-resources>

### Youth Engagement Projects

*Guide to Cooperative Games for Social Change. 2nd Edition. (2006) Olympia: CommonAction.*

*Meaningful Student Involvement Idea Guide for Schools. (2001) Olympia: Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.*

*Stories of Meaningful Student Involvement. (2004) Bothell, WA: HumanLinks Foundation.*

## **Youth Engagement Organizations**

*American Youth Policy Forum*  
<http://www.aypf.org/pubs.htm>

*Oasis Center*  
<http://www.oasiscenter.org/>

*Students for Education Reform*  
<http://www.studentsforedreform.org/>

*The Center for Youth as Resources*  
<http://www.youthasresources.org/>

*The Forum for Youth Investment*  
<http://www.forumfyi.org>

*Youth on Board*  
[www.youthonboard.org](http://www.youthonboard.org)

*Youth Organizing for Education Change*  
<http://www.forumfyi.org/content/youth-organizing-educa>

## **Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidelines Acknowledgements**

This document would not be possible without the insights and input of the following individuals. Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools is grateful for the contributions made by each person to promote social inclusion in our schools.

Andrea Cahn, Project Director  
Betty Edwards, Project Coordinator  
Frances Stetson/Stetson & Associates, Inc., Online Product Development

### **Developers**

Bill Hughes, Greendale School District, Facilitator  
Wyatt Avery, Project UNIFY Youth Activation Committee (2014-2015)  
Teri Dary, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
Meredith DiMaria, Lansing School District, Michigan  
Charles Haynes, Freedom Forum  
Terry Jackson, U.S. Department of Education  
Laurie Kash, Rainier School District, Oregon  
Molly McCluskey, ASCD  
Ted McConnell, Civic Mission of Schools  
Samantha McLeod, Project UNIFY Youth Activation Committee (2014-2015)  
Jenni Newbury, Project UNIFY (2014-2015)  
Jordan Schubert, Project UNIFY Youth Activation Committee (2014-2015)  
Kaitlyn Smith, Project UNIFY Youth Activation Committee (2014-2015)

### **Reviewers**

Rich Cardello, National School Climate Center  
Ginevra Courtade, University of Louisville  
Kim P. Dockery, Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia  
Keith Fishburne, Special Olympics North Carolina  
Anne Goudie, Special Olympics Michigan  
Jill Hertel, Forest Grove School District, Oregon  
Irene Meier, Fairfax County Public Schools, Virginia  
Barbara Oswald, Special Olympics South Carolina  
Terry Pickeral, Cascade Educational Consultants  
Nancy Polisenio, Association for Middle Level Education  
Brian Quinn, Special Olympics Arizona  
Melissa Shindel, Clarksville Middle School, Howard County Public School System, Maryland  
Frances Stetson, Stetson and Associates, Inclusive Schools Network  
Jennifer Ross Stewart, University of Massachusetts, Boston  
Mindy Watrous, Special Olympics Colorado

## **Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidelines Acknowledgements Continued**

### **Michigan Roundtable Review**

Germun Allen, Student, Detroit Public Schools  
Marty Alwardt, Special Education Teacher, Lansing School District  
Lois Arnold, President & CEO, Special Olympics Michigan  
Shelley Barlow, Principal, Lansing School District  
James Barnes, Teacher, Detroit Public Schools  
Linda Brown, Special Education Teacher, Detroit Public Schools  
Todd Burlingham, MASSP Coordinator of Student Leadership Services, MASC/MAHS  
Robin Bush, Special Education Teacher, Detroit Public Schools  
Martha Cleveland, Teacher, Lansing School District  
Christine Conley-Sowels, Professor, Ferris State University  
Chris Crammer, Counselor, Waterford School District  
David Cuff, Special Olympics Michigan Intern  
Mary Dama, Special Education Teacher, Lansing School District  
Meredith Dimaria, Sports & Program Director, Area 8, Michigan  
Jennifer Egan, St. Clair RESA & MAHPERD  
Nicole Funderbunks, Parent, Area 8, Michigan  
Anne Goudie, Area Director, Michigan  
Ann Guzdial, Special Olympics Michigan  
Lisa Hagel, Superintendent, Genesee Intermediate School District  
Kathy Hayes, Michigan Association of School Boards  
Bob Howe, Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association  
Lisa Ing, Ferris State University, Michigan  
Keith Johnson, Detroit Federation of Teachers  
Len Krichko, Boys and Girls Clubs, Michigan  
Jean Lambert, Special Olympics Michigan  
Jeff LaRoux, Michigan Association of Middle School Educators, Association for Middle Level Schools  
Belinda Laughlin, Special Olympics Michigan  
Kim Lockwitz, Teacher, Lansing School District  
Lois Lofton-Dopniver, AFT Michigan  
Nick Metzger, State Farm  
Amanda Price, State Representative, Michigan  
Kimberly Purdy, Special Olympics Michigan  
Lore Resch, Special Education Teacher, Lansing School District  
Victory Richardson, Student, Detroit Public Schools  
Gardner Umbarger, Saginaw Valley State University  
Elizabeth Viele, Special Olympics Michigan  
Kamala Waryas, Special Olympics Michigan  
Edie Wirtshafter, Special Olympics Michigan  
Beth Wisner-Aigeltinger, Special Olympics Michigan  
Sandra York, Michigan PTSA

## **Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidelines Acknowledgements Continued**

### **Texas Roundtable Review**

**Carolyn Baker, Houston YMCA**  
**Cindy Benzon, United States Tennis Association**  
**Raul Bernal, Student, Bonnette Jr. High School, Deer Park Independent School District**  
**Jim Burton, Student, Dueitt Middle School, Spring Independent School District**  
**Rebecca Carkhuff, Student, Dueitt Middle School, Spring Independent School District**  
**Mary Jane Carvel, MiM Facilitator, Dueitt Middle School, Spring Independent School District**  
**Christian Cisneros, Student, Dueitt Middle School, Spring Independent School District**  
**Jeremiah Cribley, Student, Bonnette Jr. High School, Deer Park Independent School District**  
**Jazmyn Crooms, Student, Bonnette Jr. High School, Deer Park Independent School District**  
**Martha Dorow, Project UNIFY MiM Coordinator, Special Olympics Texas**  
**Cindy Ferguson, Vice President of Programs, Houston YMCA**  
**Cecil Floyd, Executive Director, Texas Middle School Association**  
**Sue Ford, Para-Professional, Bonnette Jr. High School, Deer Park Independent School District**  
**Ginger Gates, Director of Special Services, Bonnette Jr. High School, Deer Park Independent School District**  
**Christopher Gereke, MiM Facilitator, Spring High School, Spring Independent School District**  
**Scott Harrell, Teacher, Bonnette Jr. High School, Deer Park Independent School District**  
**Kiana Jones, Student, Bonnette Jr. High School, Deer Park Independent School District**  
**Paul LeBlanc, Principal, Dueitt Middle School, Spring Independent School District**  
**Kevin Lee, MiM Facilitator, Bonnette Jr. High School, Deer Park Independent School District**  
**Gene Lenz, Deputy Associate Commissioner for Special Programs, Texas Education Association**  
**Cyndi Patterson, MiM Facilitator, Bonnette Jr. High School, Deer Park Independent School District**  
**Kandise Ponce, Student, Spring High School, Spring Independent School District**  
**Dante Ricardo, MiM Facilitator, Spring High School, Spring Independent School District**  
**Pat Rosenberg, Chair, SEARCH**  
**Ashlee Speers, Student, Dueitt Middle School, Spring Independent School District**  
**Mike Sullivan, Director, Families and Outreach, Special Olympics Texas**  
**Delores Whiteside, Pasadena Independent School District**  
**Hillary Woest, Special Education Program Specialist, Pasadena Independent School District**