Designing and Facilitating Inclusive UCS Leadership Team Meetings

UCS Family Engagement Toolkit

Designed For

Program leads and Special Olympics liaisons.

Time Estimate

10-15 minutes for planning and an additional 10 minutes for self-reflection.

Build Equitable Schoolwide and Community Engagement

When should I use this tool?

Program leads and Special Olympics liaisons can use this resource while planning and facilitating UCS Leadership Team meetings.

This resource provides strategies you can use before, during, and after holding a UCS Leadership Team meeting.

You may also connect the UCS Leadership Team meeting with the **Community Asset Mapping** resource, **Family Engagement Short Survey**, and the **Reflection Tool for Family Engagement in UCS Activities.** You can also use the **Technology Tools** resource if you need to translate an agenda or other meeting materials.

Family Engagement Toolkit Resources

You may access **Community Asset Mapping** here.
You may access the **Family Engagement Short Survey** here.
You may access the **Reflection Tool for Family Engagement in UCS Activities** here.
You may access **Technology Tools for Communicating with Linguistically Diverse Families** here.

Why would I use this tool?

When you plan UCS Leadership Team meetings, it is important to ensure that family members feel a sense of belonging. It is also important for family members to feel like they are an equal partner with the school-based UCS team.

You can use the strategies and questions in this resource to increase opportunities for families to have a voice in the decision-making process. With time, family members may begin to volunteer their ideas and contributions without prompting.

This resource can help you to:

- make planning easier;
- increase the participation of parents from all communities;
- gain a better understanding of how parents would like to participate;
- build trust between school personnel and parents; and
- foster bi-directional collaboration.

How to use this tool?

This resource will guide you through the phases needed to design and implement an inclusive team meeting. Each phase of the tool provides examples of ways to improve inclusion and collaborative decision-making with staff and family members. You can use all the questions or modify the questions to better fit your school context. This resource also includes agenda templates for an introductory Leadership Team meeting and for a general Leadership Team meeting.

Tips for Planning, Implementing, and Reflecting on Inclusive UCS Leadership Team Meetings

Planning Phase: Applying Actions that Build Trust

- Identify the purpose of the meeting and the desired outcomes. The outcomes are the goals or objectives of the meeting (i.e., What do I want to know or understand from this meeting? What do I want others to know or understand from this meeting?) Include this information on the agenda.

- Involve staff and parents in the planning process to identify and agree on goals and expectations of the meeting outcomes.

- Share the agenda ahead of time. This helps set expectations and is an opportunity for team members to think about and prepare for agenda items. Include the date, time, and location. If needed, include information for participants to join virtually.

- Be sure to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the meeting.

- Provide any accommodations to meet the ability and language needs of all parents and staff members.

- Encourage everyone to participate and speak their truth — that is make sure that everyone has time to share their perspectives, ideas, and inspirations.

Facilitation Phase: Basic Tips and Implementing Questions to Increase Engagement During UCS Leadership Team Meetings

An effective facilitator is a prepared and organized facilitator. This includes setting the purpose of the meeting, managing time, and identifying roles and responsibilities and next steps. Effective facilitation also includes creating a safe environment, listening, guiding discussions, and encouraging participation. Below are steps to take to strengthen your facilitation skills for team meetings.

- Review the agenda and the purpose of the meeting.

- Guide members through the content and decision-making process.

- Ensure equal participation.

- Synthesize information.

- Reach consensus on next steps and who is responsible for what.

- If needed, decide on the purpose, date, and time of the next meeting.

Increasing Engagement During UCS Leadership Team Meetings

The sample questions below are designed to help you encourage family members to contribute their ideas during your UCS Leadership Meetings and feel included in the decision-making process. Remember, creating a safe environment where all participants are comfortable and encouraged to participate is part of being an effective facilitator!

You can modify an existing team meeting to ensure that the relevant questions below are included in the agenda, and you will want to keep notes as parents respond.

You can provide the following instructions to parents before asking any of the questions.

INSTRUCTIONS TO ENGAGE FAMILY MEMBERS: Please share your thoughts and feelings. There are no right or wrong answers. The information you share will help us improve family engagement in UCS programs.

Questions to Enhance Belonging

1. Do you feel that the teachers and staff at our school value you as a partner in your child's social and emotional development? Please explain or give an example.

2. What kinds of things help you feel confident that your child's teacher wants the best for your child?

3. Can you share a time that you felt really good about your child's participation in UCS? Tell me more.

Questions to Increase Engagement in UCS Event Planning

1. What do you see as the first priority to promote UCS at our school?

2. How would you like to be included in UCS activities for your child?

3. If you were in charge of communications for UCS at our school, what would be your first priority? What would you change? How would you improve communication with other family members?

Questions to Increase Effective Communication with Family Members

1. Do you believe that you receive adequate information about UCS programs?

2. How comfortable are you in reaching out to the UCS program at our school and sharing your ideas or comments or feedback?

3. In what ways do you contribute your ideas, concerns, and insights?

4. How do school personnel/your child's teacher respond when you share ideas or concerns?

5. What are the best ways for the school to share information with you (e.g., email, take-home forms, website, meetings, other)?

Reflection Phase: Reflection Questions to Improve Inclusion During UCS Leadership Team Meetings

Increasing family engagement requires planning and thoughtful implementation during meetings. Use the template below to determine your success at implementing an inclusive UCS Leadership Team Meeting.

	If yes, describe how you did this?	If not, what could you try next time to make this better?
Did you create opportunities for everyone to share ideas and contribute to the discussion?		
Did you allow others to volunteer for roles, duties, or tasks?		
Did you clarify points of misunderstanding in the meeting or ask for help for clarification?		
Were you mindful of the use of time in the meeting (staying on task, bringing others back on task, ensuring that no one person monopolizes the meeting)?		
Did you affirm team members' contributions? Did you use praise or paraphrase other team members' contributions?		
Did you ask team members' opinions?		
Did you use humor to either relieve tension or energize the team?		
Did you have meeting materials in other languages for those who needed them?		

KICK-OFF MEETING AGENDA TEMPLATE

COPY & PASTE

[INSERT STATE SOUCS AND SCHOOL LOGO HERE]

UCS Leadership Team Kick-off Meeting

[insert date / time / location]

Meeting Objectives:
- To set the tone for UCS Leadership Team meetings
- To establish the purpose of the UCS Leadership Team and member roles and responsibilities
- To discuss the frequency of UCS Leadership Team meetings

Agenda [50-minutes]

I.   Welcome and Introductions (7 minutes)
   a. In addition to introductions, consider an ice breaker activity if parents, students, and/or community members are involved.

II.   Walk Through Agenda and Meeting Objectives (2 minutes)

III. Introduction to Unified Champion Schools (UCS) Programming (10 minutes)
   a. Explain what UCS is and how it looks at your school.
      i.   What programs are active, who is engaged, etc.
   b. Consider discussing challenges and how the UCS Leadership Team could help solve those challenges.

IV.   Establish the Purpose of the UCS Leadership Team (15 minutes)
   a. Discuss the purpose behind the UCS Leadership Team generally.
   b. Discuss the specific role of the UCS Leadership Team in your state, district, or school and/or what the needs are in your state, district, or school.
   c. Reminder that athletes, partners, and families drive the work of UCS.
      To accomplish collaborative goals, it is important to include representatives from general education, the community, and family members.

V.   UCS Leadership Team Roles (5 minutes)
   a. Ask participants to volunteer for a particular role during the meeting. You may need a facilitator, timekeeper, and note taker. Or you may assign the roles prior to the meeting.

VI.   Time for Questions (5 minutes)
   a. Allow time for leadership team members to ask questions or get clarification.
   b. Encourage leadership team members to share what they liked about the meeting.

VII. Identify purpose, date, time, and location for the next meeting (3 minutes)

VIII. Wrap Up: Summarize Main Points and Action Items (3 minutes)
   a. Thank everyone for coming to the UCS Leadership Team meeting kick-off

GENERAL MEETING AGENDA TEMPLATE

[INSERT STATE SOUCS AND SCHOOL LOGO HERE]

UCS Leadership Team Meeting

[insert date / time / location]

Meeting Goal / Objectives:
- [insert meeting objective]
- [insert meeting objective]

Agenda

I.   Welcome and Introductions [X minutes]
   a. Recap of previous meeting
   b. Walk through agenda and meeting objectives

II. Updates [X minutes]
   a. Status of action items from previous meeting

III. Topic [X minutes]

IV. Action Items and Next Steps [X minutes]
   a. Summarize main points of meeting
   b. Summarize tasks and responsibilities as agreed
   c. Confirm deadlines for completion
   d. Identify date, time, and location for the next meeting

V.   Questions [X minutes]
   a. Leadership team members may have questions that allow for clarification.
   b. If there aren't any questions, this is a good place to encourage leadership team members to share what they liked about the meeting.

VI. Wrap-Up
   a. Thank everyone for coming to the UCS Leadership Team meeting.

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®

Family Engagement Toolkit

For questions or comments about the Toolkit, please contact:

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