

Establishing a Leadership Team



Getting
Ready



Establishing a
Leadership Team



Whole School
Engagement



Inclusive Youth
Leadership



Inclusive Sports
and Fitness



Special Olympics
Resources

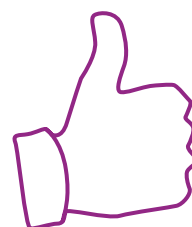


Why Is a Leadership Team Important?

The first step to becoming a Unified Champion School is to bring together a team to lead the work. The team will be responsible for establishing the vision and overarching goals for the school, coordinating early stages of implementation, and working with leaders of specific events. The team will also monitor the success of the program, with an eye toward continuous improvement.

When a leadership team guides implementation of a Unified Champion Schools program, there are several significant positive effects.

- Schools that have a leadership team implement **more robust programming** than those without a leadership team.
- Schools with a leadership team report **more involvement of community members**, an outcome for which all schools strive.
- Leadership teams increase opportunities for general and special education teachers to **work together**.
- The Unified Champion Schools program is more likely to be **sustained** from year to year in schools that have a leadership team.



Elementary schools with a Unified Champion Schools leadership team

- 74% use resources from Special Olympics and other sources to implement the UCS program.
- 65% are more likely to implement all three components of the Unified Champion Schools program—Inclusive Youth Leadership, Whole School Engagement, and Inclusive Sports.
- 57% receive funding.
- 44% collaborate with other groups in the school.
- 37% work with other schools.



Who Should Be on the Leadership Team?

Teams vary in size and composition from school to school. The strongest teams include teachers from all grade levels, other school staff members, an administrator, parents, and students of different ages and abilities.

Aren't students too young to have leadership roles?

Not at all. Different generations bring unique perspectives and skills to the team. Creating a sustainable, socially inclusive school environment is a goal that adults cannot achieve on their own. Involving students in decisions promotes ownership and develops students' investment in social inclusion. It also provides adults with insight on how to best engage the larger student body. It's especially important to include students with intellectual disabilities to help the team understand the school experience from multiple perspectives, not just the viewpoint of students who are typical school leaders.

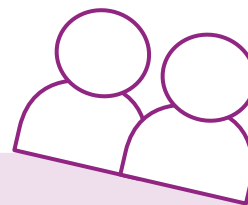
How do students participate on the leadership team?

It varies, but the common characteristic is that students with and without intellectual disabilities have a voice. In some schools, several students attend leadership meetings and offer ideas and feedback. In other schools, because of scheduling issues it's not feasible for students to attend meetings regularly. An adult liaison meets with students at a time that works better with the school schedule. For example, the liaison invites younger students' ideas, seeks their input, and gathers feedback after socially inclusive events, while older students who are more independent or have more flexible schedules attend meetings. The goal is for students to be fully involved in the process.

Recruiting team members

Strive to include diverse members, including

- students with and without intellectual disabilities.
- students from different social and academic groups.
- students who are not typically thought of as leaders.
- teachers (both general and special education).
- school guidance counselor.
- parents of students with and without intellectual disabilities.
- a school administrator.



Words of wisdom often shared by older youth leaders involved in Special Olympics: "Nothing about us without us."



How to Start a Leadership Team

Setting clear goals and deciding how the team will work together are critical first steps in building a strong team. Once that groundwork is achieved, it's easier to move forward with specific plans. Use the overview below and the agendas on page 31–39 to shape your plans throughout the year. Be sure to check out the tips on page 58, too.

1. Recruit team members.

Consider recruiting a teacher from each grade level or a teacher who represents grades K–2 and a teacher who represents grades 3–5. Other staff members such as special education teachers, guidance counselors, and PE teachers also bring different and valued perspectives to the team. Ideally, the team would include an administrator, parents, and students too.

The team's meeting schedule might influence who will be able to join. Some parents might not be able to attend meetings during the school day, for example, but would love to be involved. Nothing can replace the impact of having parents at the meeting, so explore various meeting times and locations. If there's no way to work it out, email, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, and virtual whiteboards might be avenues for adults who have schedule conflicts to contribute ideas and offer input.

2. Clarify the team's role and establish meeting procedures.

Make sure all team members understand why the team was created, why it is diverse and includes both students and adults, and what each member can contribute. Set agreed-upon rules and procedures to ensure that the team models the kind of inclusion that it is promoting throughout the school.

3. Find your starting point.

Before the team can plan how to implement the Unified Champion Schools program, it is important to consider how socially inclusive the school is currently. This will not only help the team prioritize goals and first steps, but will also serve as a baseline for measuring progress. Gathering relevant data is important for all school initiatives. An easy-to-use assessment is provided starting on page 40. This assessment is based on the Characteristics of Socially Inclusive Schools study, developed in collaboration with the National School Climate Center.

4. Set goals. Create a plan and take action.

Use the results of the assessment in setting realistic short- and long-term goals. Consider how the three components of Unified Champion Schools (Whole School Engagement, Youth Leadership, and Inclusive Sports) will help the school work toward the goals. Keep in mind that students get the most out of the program when they are involved in multiple ways. Develop action plans to carry out activities designed to meet the team's goals.

5. Monitor progress.

At the end of the school year, complete the same assessment that the team completed earlier and compare the results. Make notes about changes to make, new things to try, and ways to grow the program the next year.



The leadership teams of most Unified Champion Schools meet **at least once a month**.

See the next page for suggested **monthly meeting agendas**. Customize these to fit your team's needs.



September Agenda

Leadership Team

The topics below are suggestions. Tailor the agenda to fit your team's needs, or divide the agenda and hold several meetings throughout the month.

- ☐ Make any needed introductions among team members.
- ☐ Designate a notetaker.
- ☐ Discuss the purpose of the team.
- ☐ Discuss the value of having a diverse team that includes students and adults. Use questions such as these to guide discussion.
 - How will students' perspectives help us achieve our goals?
 - How will promoting leadership skills among students affect our work? How will it affect students?
- ☐ Designate an adult team member as a liaison with students if students are not able to attend a particular meeting.
- ☐ Establish meeting rules and procedures. Consider even small details such as whether there will be snacks at the meetings.
- ☐ Set a meeting schedule.
- ☐ Request an update from the team member who is the liaison with the state Special Olympics office. Encourage him or her to connect with an office representative regularly to determine Unified Champion Schools paperwork that needs to be completed, resources that are available, and events the school can be involved in.
- ☐ Consider incorporating messages that promote acceptance and social inclusion into morning announcements. (See pages 66–70 for weekly messages.) The messages can be used right away and get the team off to a strong start in working toward its goals.
- ☐ Complete the assessment form starting on page 40 to gather baseline data on the school in regard to social inclusion. Discuss the results and revisit the assessment throughout the year.
- ☐ Look ahead to the yearlong calendar and start to pencil in special events such as National Bullying Prevention Month (October), World Kindness Day (November 13), Inclusive Schools Week (first full week in December), Spread the Word to End the Word Day (March), and the next state, national, and world games. The day celebrating Special Olympics founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver is on July 20, but year-round schools can mark the event.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Student Leader Tasks

- To gauge awareness in the school, ask students to poll their classmates to find out whether they have heard of Special Olympics. Have the students report their findings during the next meeting.
- Arrange for students to help give morning announcements that include the messages of acceptance and inclusion on pages 66–70.



October Agenda

Leadership Team

The topics below are suggestions. Tailor the agenda to fit your team's needs, or divide the agenda and hold several meetings throughout the month.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review the notes from the last meeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> Identify any special whole school activities that are scheduled for November, such as a Thanksgiving Day play. Discuss ways to make the activities socially inclusive if they are not already. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wrap up any further discussion of the school assessment. Ask student team members to report on the results of the poll they conducted on Special Olympics. | <input type="checkbox"/> Plan a small whole school engagement activity for November, such as a hallway display that all students contribute to or a Mix-It-Up Day. See page 71 for details and additional ideas. Fully involve students in discussions and decisions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set measurable and practical goals for the year. (See the goal-setting form on page 57.) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ask the team's Special Olympics state office liaison to provide updates on programming, training, and deadlines. | <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss inclusive sports options. Designate a chairperson to lead the school's inclusive sports efforts. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Determine whether the school or district has Special Olympics athletes. If so, plan to connect with the coach(es) to find dates and times for upcoming events that the school can support. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Student Leader Tasks

- Ask students to survey classmates to find out what inclusive sports options are most popular. Have a committee member or classroom teacher show them how to create a bar graph to report the results.





November Agenda

Leadership Team

The topics below are suggestions. Tailor the agenda to fit your team's needs, or divide the agenda and hold several meetings throughout the month.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review the notes from the last meeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss starting a Unified Club, such as a Friend Club or a Respect Club, that brings students with and without intellectual disabilities together. If the team is interested, designate an adult club leader. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the whole-school engagement activity planned for this month. Work out any last-minute details. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get updates from the Special Olympics state office liaison and the inclusive sports chairperson. Create or revise action plans as needed. | <input type="checkbox"/> Identify current whole-school clubs such as the school safety patrol and whole-school activities such as skate night. Discuss ways to make them more socially inclusive. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Identify any special whole-school activities that are scheduled before winter break, such as a Winter Concert. Discuss ways to make them socially inclusive if they are not already. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Student Leader Tasks

- If plans for a Unified Club are made, have students make posters promoting the club and display them around the school.
- Encourage each student to invite at least one other student to join the Unified Club.
- After the whole school engagement activity is held, have students survey their peers to get feedback on the activity. Designate time to share the findings with the leadership team.





December Agenda

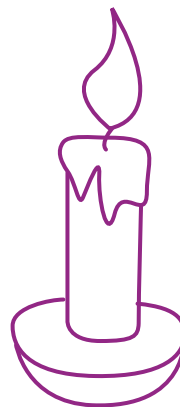
Leadership Team

The topics below are suggestions. Tailor the agenda to fit your team's needs, or divide the agenda and hold several meetings throughout the month.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review the notes from the last meeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss progress on making current clubs and schoolwide activities more socially inclusive. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss last month's whole school engagement activity. What went well? What changes are recommended? | <input type="checkbox"/> Get updates from the Special Olympics state office liaison and the inclusive sports chairperson. Create or revise action plans as needed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Revisit the goals that were set at the beginning of the year. Is the team on track? Are any changes needed? What is working well? Where are more resources needed? | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss any state Special Olympics programs with winter fundraisers, such as the Polar Plunge® event. See what opportunities are available. If the group is interested, develop an action plan. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Student Leader Tasks

- Ask students to share the feedback they received from peers about November's whole school engagement activity.
- If students are involved in a Unified Club, have them update the Leadership Team.





January Agenda

Leadership Team

The topics below are suggestions. Tailor the agenda to fit your team's needs, or divide the agenda and hold several meetings throughout the month.

- ☐ Review the notes from the last meeting.
- ☐ Get updates from the Special Olympics state office liaison and the inclusive sports chairperson. Create or revise action plans as needed.
- ☐ Start planning a Respect Campaign. Many schools plan a campaign to coincide with the Spread the Word annual day of awareness (held yearly the first Wednesday in March). Consider making it a week-long campaign and include a Special Needs Awareness Day. See the ideas and checklist on pages 72–74.
 - If the team decides not to include a Special Needs Awareness Day or the play “Looking for Leaders,” consider scheduling them for other months since they can be stand-alone events.
 - Designate one or more adult leaders to head up the planning.
 - Contact the state Special Olympics office for resources.
- ☐ Discuss ways to promote student leadership in the classroom and during specials such as PE and art. See the ideas on page 71. Determine how to share the suggestions with other staff members. Explore funding options for adding books that promote leadership qualities to the school library. Possibilities to consider include the parent-teacher organization and fundraising. Use the Goal-Setting Form on page 57 to develop an action plan.
- ☐ Pause at this midpoint in the year. Think back to why your Leadership Team was formed in the first place. Celebrate your progress and share stories of students whose actions have changed or who are more included in school events. Share any feedback from parents and faculty and reaffirm your commitment to an inclusive environment.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Student Leader Tasks

- Invite students to tell the group which inclusive activities held so far this year were especially enjoyable for them and why.
- If the Respect Campaign will include theme days, give students a list of possible themes and have them survey their class to determine the most popular themes. Or have students meet with their classes to brainstorm possible themes.
- Once the team works out the main details of the Respect Campaign, have students create posters and display them throughout the school.



February Agenda

Leadership Team

The topics below are suggestions. Tailor the agenda to fit your team's needs, or divide the agenda and hold several meetings throughout the month.

- ☐ Review the notes from the last meeting.
- ☐ Get updates from the Special Olympics state office liaison and the inclusive sports chairperson. Create or revise action plans as needed.
- ☐ Review plans for next month's Respect Campaign. Update plans and seek additional resources as needed. Fully involve students in discussions and decisions.
- ☐ Review plans for any schoolwide events for Valentine's Day or Heart Month. Discuss ways to make them socially inclusive if they are not already.
- ☐ Make a plan to share the mini lessons on pages 104–124 with classroom teachers. Encourage them to use the lessons prior to the Respect Campaign to build students' understanding of individual differences, respect and acceptance, and friendships.
- ☐ Ask the school liaison with the state Special Olympics office to find out whether there any local elementary competitions planned for the spring. If there are, consider having students support the athletes by being Fans in the Stands. See pages 75–76 for additional information.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Student Leader Tasks

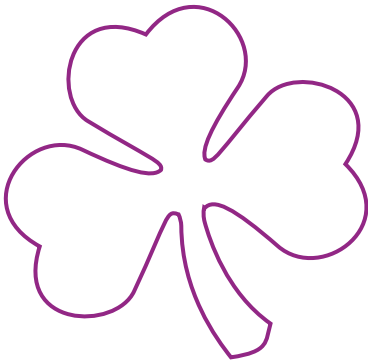
- Have students brainstorm aspects of the upcoming Respect Campaign that are important to include on a flyer to send home to all students' families. What key terms will encourage students and families to participate? Invite students to design the flyer.
- Ask each student to report to his or her class by briefly telling students what they can look forward to during the Respect Campaign. If desired, assign students to visit and update classes that do not have representatives on the team.



March Agenda

Leadership Team

The topics below are suggestions. Tailor the agenda to fit your team's needs, or divide the agenda and hold several meetings throughout the month.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review the notes from the last meeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss starting an inclusive outdoor club for spring, such as a Unified Walking Club, and create an action plan. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get updates from the Special Olympics state office liaison and the inclusive sports chairperson. Create or revise action plans as needed. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review plans for the Respect Campaign. Update plans and seek additional resources as needed. Fully involve students in discussions and decisions. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Start planning a year-end whole school engagement activity, such as a Unified Sports Day. Designate a chairperson and create an action plan. (See the form on page 147.) If your school typically holds a year-end Field Day, discuss how Unified Sports Day could complement or replace this event. Also, discuss ways to make the event socially inclusive if it is not already. Fully involve students in discussions and decisions. |  |

Student Leader Tasks

- Ask students to poll classmates to gauge their interest in different outdoor club options. Designate time at the next meeting to report results and ideas.
- Invite students to share what they think worked well during previous year-end sports days and what they'd like to change.



April Agenda

Leadership Team

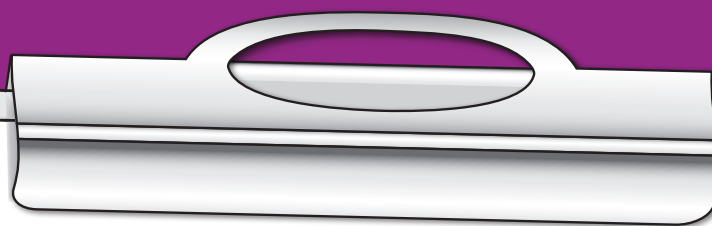
The topics below are suggestions. Tailor the agenda to fit your team's needs, or divide the agenda and hold several meetings throughout the month.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review the notes from the last meeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> Follow up on planning for the Unified Sports Day and/or Field Day. Revise the action plan as needed. Fully involve students in discussions and decisions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get updates from the Special Olympics state office liaison and the inclusive sports chairperson. Create or revise action plans as needed. | <input type="checkbox"/> Identify any special whole-school activities that are scheduled for the end of the year, such as grade-level picnics or field trips. Discuss ways to make them socially inclusive if they are not already. Fully involve students in discussions and decisions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss feedback on the Respect Campaign. For future reference, note things that worked well and ideas for improvement. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ask the school liaison with the state Special Olympics office to share the highlights of the Respect Campaign with the state office. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Student Leader Tasks

- Have students survey their classmates and find out what they liked most about the Respect Campaign. Have students compile suggestions to implement next year and share these with the leadership team.
- Ask each student to report to his or her class by briefly telling students about the upcoming whole school engagement activity for May. If desired, assign students to visit and update classes that do not have representatives on the team.





May Agenda

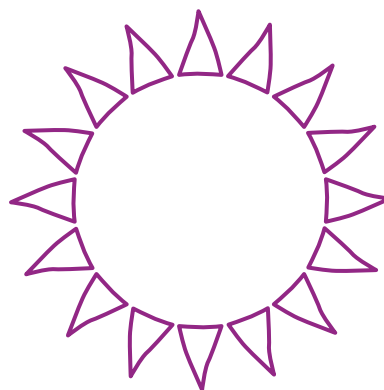
Leadership Team

The topics below are suggestions. Tailor the agenda to fit your team's needs, or divide the agenda and hold several meetings throughout the month.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review the notes from the last meeting. | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete the assessment starting on page 40 to gather year-end data on the school in regard to social inclusion. Compare the results with the assessment completed at the beginning of the year. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Get updates from the Special Olympics state office liaison and the inclusive sports chairperson. Create or revise action plans as needed. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss feedback on the Unified Sports Day. To help with next year's planning, note what worked well and ideas for improvement. | <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the school's progress toward social inclusion. Celebrate the successes. Set goals for the next school year. Plan your beginning-of-the-year agenda now, while everything is fresh in your mind. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ask the school liaison to the state Special Olympics office to share success stories from the Unified Sports Day. | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Student Leader Tasks

- Invite students to tell the team what they most enjoyed on Unified Sports Day and why. Then, ask them what they would do differently next year.
- Ask each student to identify his or her favorite whole school engagement activity from the year and explain why it was a hit.





Putting Your School on the Path to Becoming More Socially Inclusive

Gauge how socially inclusive your school is with this helpful Social Inclusion Assessment. Here's what to do:

- ☐ Have **each member** of your leadership team complete the assessment on their own. Put checkmarks in the boxes to indicate which students have impact on the topics listed and where you see evidence of a unified approach. If a category is not applicable to your school (for example, your school does not have a student council), skip it.
- ☐ Get the perspective of **student members** of your leadership team; you may find that your school looks different to students, and this perspective can be very informative. Using the student version of the assessment on pages 51–55, read and discuss each question and possible answers with students or give them a copy of the assessment to fill out. As appropriate, consider having students complete one or two sections at a time.
- ☐ To determine the **total score** for each section, count the number of checkmarks, recognizing that not every category or criteria will be applicable to every school. **The score isn't a grade; it's a way to gauge where your school is and what your school can achieve.**
- ☐ **Review the assessment** at a team meeting early in the year. Look at the boxes that have checkmarks and the ones that don't. Use the discussion questions on page 56 to guide you.
- ☐ As you review the assessment, take a moment to **congratulate** yourselves on what you're doing well, **determine** what changes you can make immediately to do even better, and **discuss** improvements you can make in the future. Set a **target date** for those improvements and include those dates on a master calendar and on the agenda for future team meetings. Use the Goal-Setting Form on page 57.



Name: _____

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

1. Which students influence our school's actions and decisions? Check the boxes that apply and make notes about how students are involved. Skip categories that aren't applicable.

	General Education	Special Education	Notes
Communications (school newspaper, announcements, bulletin boards, posters, etc.)			
Membership on student council/ student government			
Class discussions			
Selecting or leading events/ assemblies/special events			
Clubs			
Other (specify)			
Total for each column			



2. Many schools teach social-emotional skills. If the topics below are being taught, do you see evidence of changes in students' behavior and attitude? Check the boxes that apply and make notes about your concerns and observations. Skip topics that aren't applicable.

	General Education		Special Education		Notes
	Taught	Evidence of change	Taught	Evidence of change	
Decision making					
Conflict resolution					
Communication					
Emotional regulation/ self-management					
Empathy					
Self-awareness					
Social awareness					
Other (specify)					
Total for each column					

Total Score for Youth Leadership	
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CREATING AND SUSTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

3. Where do general education and special education students have the opportunity to interact with each other? Check the boxes that apply and make notes about your concerns and observations. Skip categories that aren't applicable.

		Notes
	Hallways	
	Cafeteria	
	Library/media center	
	Enrichment classes/specials (physical education, art, music, etc.)	
	Core academic classes	
	Recess	
	Sports teams	
	Extracurricular clubs/service learning opportunities	
	Other (specify)	
	Total	



4. Which members of the school community are represented on this leadership committee or on other committees or groups working to include special education students in school programs or activities? Check the boxes that apply and make notes about your concerns and observations. Skip categories that aren't applicable.

		Notes
	Special education teachers	
	General education teachers	
	Administrators, support staff and other school personnel	
	Special education students	
	General education students	
	Parents	
	PTA members, parent representatives on a school-based leadership team	
	Community members	
	Other (specify)	
	Total	

Total Score for Creating and Sustaining Relationships	
--	--



CELEBRATING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

5. For which clubs and sports does our school celebrate accomplishments? (Celebrations might include announcements, photos in newsletters and on the website, recognition at assemblies and awards programs, etc.) Check the boxes that apply and make notes about your concerns and observations. Skip categories that aren't applicable.

		Notes
	Traditional sports teams	
	Inclusive Sports (Young Athletes, Unified Sports teams)	
	Academic clubs	
	Service clubs	
	Fitness clubs	
	Social/fun clubs	
	Other (specify)	
	Total	

6. Does our school have a student recognition program similar to Student of the Week? Who is eligible? Who is recognized? Check the boxes that apply and make notes about your concerns and observations. (Skip this question if your school does not have these programs.)

	Eligible	Recognized	Notes
Special education students			
General education students			
Total			

Total Score for Celebrating Accomplishments	
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COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

7. Which community organizations collaborate with our school on inclusive events and activities? Check the boxes that apply and make notes about your results and observations. Skip categories that are not applicable.

		Notes
	Sports organizations (community recreational department lends equipment for school teams; members of local sports teams help coach Young Athletes; etc.)	
	Social service organizations (social workers teach students conflict resolution; service organizations invite students to help create a community-wide health campaign; etc.)	
	Media organizations (journalists work with students on the school newspaper; local newspaper features school events or accomplishments; etc.)	
	Public safety organizations (police or firefighters make a presentation about safety during a school assembly, etc.)	
	Health services organizations (nutritionist gives a presentation about healthy eating; doctor or nurse presents sessions on health, wellness, and movement; etc.)	
	Local business leaders (business leaders donate time, funding, or materials to support inclusive school projects; local grocery store participates in healthy eating project; etc.)	
	Religious organizations (church/synagogue/mosque help organize school canned food drive for a food pantry, etc.)	
	Other (specify)	
	Total	

Total Score for Community Collaboration



COMMUNICATION

8. Do educators discuss the importance of using inclusive language? (For example, avoiding us/them language, not verbally grouping others by special needs such as “those special ed kids,” not using hurtful terms, etc.) Check the boxes that apply and make notes about your results and observations. Skip categories that are not applicable.

		Notes
	Yes, in school-wide events and posters	
	Yes, in the curriculum	
	Yes, as part of classroom discussion	
	Yes, with parents	
	Yes, with the broader community	
	Total	



9. Who at our school stops others from using language that is hurtful toward special education students (e.g., terms such as: retard[ed], "those kids," slow class)? Check the boxes that apply and make notes about your results and observations. Skip categories that are not applicable.

		Notes
	Administrators	
	Teachers	
	School staff	
	Other school personnel who are not on site (school bus drivers, etc.)	
	Students	
	Parents	
	Community members	
	Total	

Total Score for Communication	
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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

10. Does our school offer professional development about addressing the needs of the special education student population and the use of inclusive teaching strategies? Who receives this information? Check the boxes that apply and make notes about your results and observations. Skip categories that are not applicable.

		Notes
	Special education teachers	
	General education teachers	
	Administrators, support staff, and other school personnel	
	Parents	
	PTA members, parent representatives on a school-based leadership team	
	Community	
	Total	

11. When do special education and general education teachers have opportunities to collaborate? Check the boxes that apply and make notes about your results and observations. Skip categories that are not applicable.

		Notes
	Informal discussions	
	Professional development sessions	
	Regular planning time	
	Team teaching	
	Faculty meetings	
	School-wide events	
	Other	
	Total	



Total Score for Professional Development	
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You may want to discuss each section of the assessment separately to allow the team to capture the most ideas. Fully involve students in the discussion.
Use the Discussion Questions on page 56.



Name: _____

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

1. Which students influence our school's actions and decisions? If you think that a group of students has influence, check the box under that heading. Add notes about what you've noticed or experienced. Skip categories that don't apply.

	General Education	Special Education	Notes	
			Noticed	Experienced
Communications (school newspaper, announcements, bulletin boards, posters, etc.)				
Membership on student council/ student government				
Class discussions				
Selecting or leading events/ assemblies/special events				
Clubs				
Other (specify)				
Total for each column				

Total Score for Youth Leadership	
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Note: Adult Leadership Team members complete one additional question in this section.



CREATING AND SUSTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

2. Where do general education and special education students have the opportunity to interact with each other? Check the boxes on the left that apply and make notes in the space on the right about what you've noticed or experienced. Skip categories that don't apply.

		Notes	
		Noticed	Experienced
	Hallways		
	Cafeteria		
	Library/media center		
	Enrichment classes/specials (physical education, art, music, etc.)		
	Core academic classes		
	Recess		
	Sports teams		
	Extracurricular clubs/service learning opportunities		
	Other (specify)		
	Total		

Total Score for Creating and Sustaining Relationships	
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Note: Adult Leadership Team members complete one additional question in this section.



CELEBRATING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

3. For which clubs and sports does our school celebrate accomplishments? (Celebrations might include announcements, photos in newsletters and on the website, recognition at assemblies and awards programs, etc.) Check the boxes on the left that apply and make notes in the space on the right about what you've noticed or experienced. Skip categories that don't apply.

		<u>Notes</u>	
		Noticed	Experienced
	Traditional sports teams		
	Inclusive Sports (Young Athletes, Unified Sports teams)		
	Academic clubs		
	Service clubs		
	Fitness clubs		
	Social/fun clubs		
	Other (specify)		
	Total		

Total Score for Celebrating Accomplishments	
--	--

Note: Adult Leadership Team members complete one additional question in this section.



COMMUNICATION

4. Do teachers and school staff discuss the importance of not using hurtful terms, not using special needs to group or describe students, and not talking about groups of students in terms of “us” and “them”? Check the boxes on the left that apply and make notes in the space on the right about what you’ve noticed or experienced. Skip categories that don’t apply.

		<u>Notes</u>	
		Noticed	Experienced
	Yes, in school-wide events and posters		
	Yes, in the curriculum		
	Yes, as part of classroom discussion		
	Total		



5. Who at our school stops others from using language that is hurtful to specific groups of students? Check the boxes on the left that apply and make notes in the space on the right about what you've noticed or experienced. Skip categories that don't apply.

		<u>Notes</u>	
		Noticed	Experienced
	Administrators		
	Teachers		
	School staff		
	Other school personnel who are not on site (school bus drivers, etc.)		
	Students		
	Parents		
	Community members		
	Total		

Total Score for Communication	
--------------------------------------	--

Note: Adult Leadership Team members complete one additional category and two additional questions in this section.

Be sure to offer your input as the Leadership Team reviews the Discussion Questions on page 56.

Unified Champion Schools

Social Inclusion Assessment: Discussion Questions

Questions	Notes
<p><input type="checkbox"/> What is your school doing well? Challenge yourself to consider if the changes, attitudes, and actions are substantive or just on the surface. Are all students truly included? Is your team in agreement? Compare perspectives.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> What improvements are you able to make right away? What resources will you need to do so?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> What improvements will you make in the future? What resources will you need?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> What will be your first step? What is a feasible date for taking additional steps? Include those dates on a master calendar and on the agenda for future team meetings.</p>	

SMART goals are
S—Specific
M—Measurable
A—Action-oriented
R—Realistic
T—Time-bound

Goal-Setting Form

Leadership Team

Goal	Major Tasks	Date of Completion	People Responsible
	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		



Establishing a Leadership Team: Tips for Success

- **Recruit students in various ways:**
 - Seek out students who may not usually be in leadership roles to ensure that the team has different perspectives.
 - Ask teachers to recommend students for the team.
 - Work with para-educators and assistants to reach prospective students. These staff members often have an especially close relationship with their students and can have a strong influence on them.
- **Be creative with the schedule:** Make every effort to schedule meetings so students can attend. If it's not possible to work out a meeting time that fits with students' schedules, have an adult team member meet with them at a different time. The adult team member can then relay their input and feedback to the larger team.
- **Share the work:** Designate a chairperson for inclusive sports activities and a different chairperson for nonsports activities. It's also helpful to designate one person to be the main contact with the state Special Olympics office.
- **Get support from the school's administration:** Gaining support from the school principal and other administrators increases the likelihood that inclusive activities will continue from year to year.
- **Keep an eye toward growth:** Don't be discouraged if the team is small at first. Once the school has an inclusive event or two, interest is sure to grow. A Respect Campaign (see pages 72–74) is especially motivating.
- **Connect with other local UCS schools:** Unified Champion Schools in the same district can draw from each other as resources. Having local schools involved in the same Unified Sports is especially helpful when planning interscholastic competitions.
- **Plan multiple events:** Schools in which there are several socially inclusive activities are more likely to increase and maintain awareness than schools that have just a one-time event.
- **Maintain the team:** If a team member leaves at the end of the year, be proactive in recruiting a new member. Otherwise, the team might dwindle over time.
- **Be sure to celebrate:** Launching a Unified Champion Schools program is rewarding—but be sure to celebrate along the way. Sharing a special snack and viewing a slide show of photos taken during UCS events goes a long way toward teamwork and camaraderie.





**Informational
handout—copy
and share**

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools Program

The Unified Champion Schools program is about unifying all students—with and without disabilities—using sports as a catalyst for social inclusion and attitude and behavioral change. Through a variety of inclusive sport, classroom, and school experiences, Unified Champion Schools promote a school climate that

- is free from bullying and exclusion
- combats stereotypes and negative attitudes
- eliminates hurtful language
- promotes healthy activity and interactions
- is welcoming and values the engagement of all students.

Three main components

Inclusive Sports provide opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities to participate in a variety of fitness and sports activities alongside one another.

Inclusive Youth Leadership encourages students with and without intellectual disabilities to take on leadership roles as they work with adults in the school to create a socially inclusive environment through sports and other activities.

Whole School Engagement experiences are awareness and education activities that promote respect and social inclusion and reach the majority of students and school staff members.

Enhancement of school initiatives

The Unified Champion Schools program supports goals that many schools already have in place:

- Advance the social-emotional development of all students.
- Provide a positive school climate free of bullying.
- Promote a culture of high engagement.
- Maximize academic achievement and develop 21st century skills.
- Support the physical health of all students.
- Cultivate partnerships with parents and the community.

Proven results

Unified Champion Schools report the following:

- 95% observed increased opportunities for students with and without disabilities to **work together**.
- 92% observed an increase of students with intellectual disabilities **participating** in school activities.
- 91% observed a more **socially inclusive environment** as a result of the program.
- 88% observed **reduced bullying**, teasing, and offensive language.

Become a Unified Champion School. Find more information at
<https://resources.specialolympics.org/unified-champion-schools-resources/>



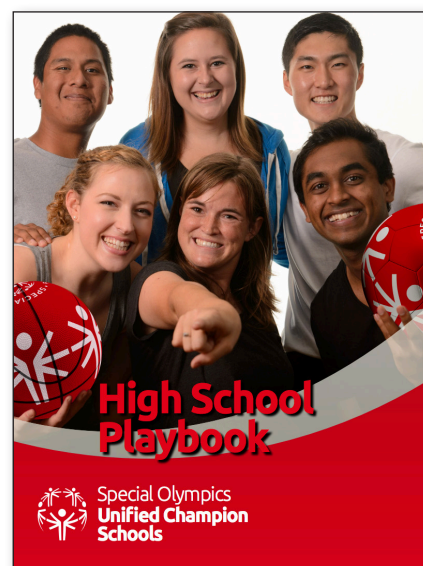
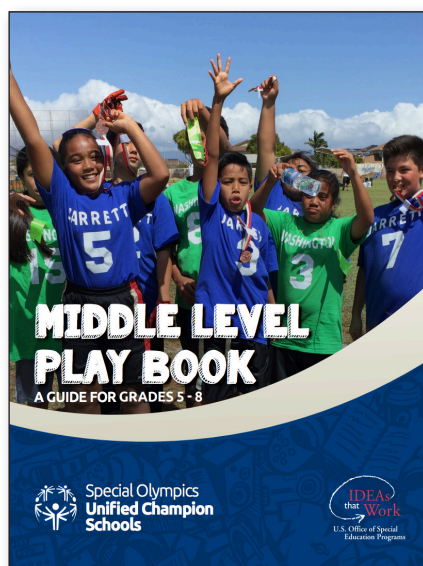
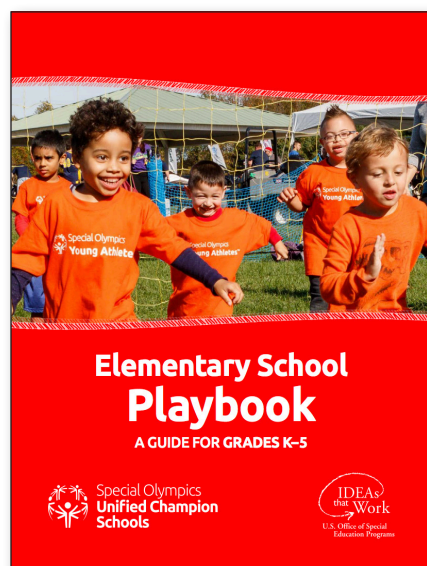
The Playbook Series as a Resource

The Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools Playbook series consists of **three resources**: the Elementary School Playbook, the Middle Level Playbook, and the High School Playbook. These Playbooks are intended for educators and students at the **elementary, middle, and high school** levels, as well as Special Olympics Programs, to assist in the process of becoming and maintaining a Special Olympics Unified Champion School.

Each Playbook devotes sections to

- introducing the need for socially inclusive programming.
- assessing the current level of school social inclusion.
- implementing Unified programming.
- adhering to the three pillars of Unified Champion Schools—whole school engagement, inclusive youth leadership, and Unified Sports.

Key Topics: What is the Unified Champion Schools Program?, Getting Started, Leadership Teams, Assessing Social Inclusion, Whole School Engagement, Inclusive Youth Leadership, Unified Sports, Resources



Find all of the Playbooks at <https://resources.specialolympics.org/playbook-series/>.