



Whole School Engagement Implementation Guide



Whole School Engagement is a unique and important component because it:



- ✔ Engages the entire staff and student body in building awareness and understanding of the benefits to all when the assets and contributions of each individual are recognized, honored and supported.
- ✔ Expands ownership of the efforts beyond a passionate few, creating a ripple effect from their actions and advocacy.
- ✔ Recognizes that the engagement and contributions of all abilities, perceptions and attitudes benefits both youth and adults.
- ✔ Nurtures engaging environments where students, teachers, administrators, parents and community members feel connected, safe and successful.
- ✔ Creates schools that are communities of acceptance where students with disabilities feel welcome and valued as meaningful participants in school activities, classroom learning and leadership opportunities.
- ✔ Positively impacts acceptance of all types of differences and teaches students and staff to embrace diversity among all students.

GOALS OF WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT.

- Students with and without intellectual disabilities will interact socially and develop mutually beneficial friendships.
- Students with and without disabilities will hold more positive attitudes toward, and demonstrate a greater understanding and acceptance of, each other.
- Schools will become communities of acceptance where students with and without intellectual disabilities feel welcome and contribute meaningfully to all school activities, opportunities and functions.
- The school climate will be enhanced by nurturing development, learning and achievement through engaging environments where students, teachers, administrators, parents and community members feel connected, safe and successful.

An important feature of creating a socially inclusive school climate is engaging the entire school community in the process. Whole School Engagement activities that advance social inclusion knowledge, skills and dispositions in students, teachers, staff, administrators and others positively impact the school climate. An inclusive school climate that fosters understanding and respect for all can influence how students think and act both within and beyond the school.

School-wide opportunities focused on social inclusion raise awareness and create an educational environment where respect and acceptance are the norm and all students feel included and engaged. This welcoming community cultivates a positive school climate and enhances other school-wide efforts such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Whole school activities also offer a platform to demonstrate the power of young people to positively impact their school community by promoting social inclusion. Using tools such as Spread the Word Inclusion Campaigns; Fans in the Stands; Unified Sports Field Days and the play, It's Our School, Too!, provide opportunities to integrate Unified Sports and inclusive youth leadership efforts into activities that spread social inclusion throughout the school.



Helpful Resources

Be sure to check out the series of mini-lessons that can be used school-wide within a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework:

- **Tolerance and Acceptance**
- **Understanding Disabilities**

found at

www.specialolympics.org/hsplaybook-resources

What is the Principle of Meaningful Involvement in Whole School Engagement?

The principle of meaningful involvement provides an important foundation for students with and without intellectual disabilities to be engaged as valued members of the school community. A socially inclusive school ensures every student is given an opportunity to contribute to the success of his or her school because of the unique skills and qualities they bring to the work.

Indicators of Meaningful Involvement

- All students have the ability and opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the success and well-being of the school community.
- Students with and without intellectual disabilities are intentionally engaged in whole school activities in formal and informal settings.
- Young people and adults work collaboratively to expect, nurture and support acceptance and respectful behavior in fostering a socially inclusive school climate.

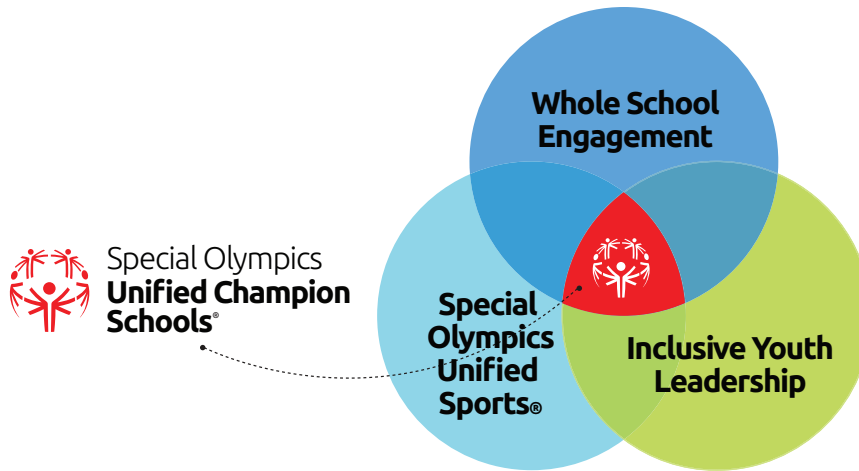
Implementing Whole School Engagement

The first step to engaging your whole school in advancing social inclusion is typically to have a planning meeting with your school's Unified Leadership Team. As you work to become a Unified Champion School, be sure students are engaged as co-leaders throughout the process. Remember to always be on the lookout for opportunities to hand over decision-making and leadership to young people. The roles that each of you play will vary from school to school. The questions and checklists found below will be answered and completed by youth, youth and adults working together, or adults as appropriate for your particular school environment.

Topics to discuss with the Unified Champion School Leadership Team

- What types of whole school activities does our school need/want to incorporate?
- Where do we already have formal and informal opportunities for students to understand and begin to incorporate social inclusion?
- What types of whole school activities (e.g., pep rallies, assemblies, speakers, contests) do we already do in our school? Can/do any of these activities already support social inclusion? If not, how can they be revised to support the social inclusion of all students?
- What types of whole school activities are valued by students with and without intellectual disabilities at the school?
- Are there any existing clubs, teams, classes or school groups that might be interested in planning and leading a whole school activity?
- How does the Principle of Meaningful Involvement impact the type of whole school activities that are implemented and how they are presented?
- Who will be the adult advisor/coordinator for various activities?

Examples of Whole School Engagement Activities in Unified Champion Schools



Unified Sports

- A campaign to engage the whole school as Fans in the Stands is initiated at the start of the Unified Basketball season.
- The Unified PE class hosts a Unified Sports Festival to promote wellness and the importance of physical activity for all students.
- The intramural and interscholastic Unified Sports teams provide demonstrations during half-time of the varsity sports throughout the year.
- Pep rallies are held for all interscholastic sports teams, including Unified Sports and varsity teams.

Inclusive Youth Leadership

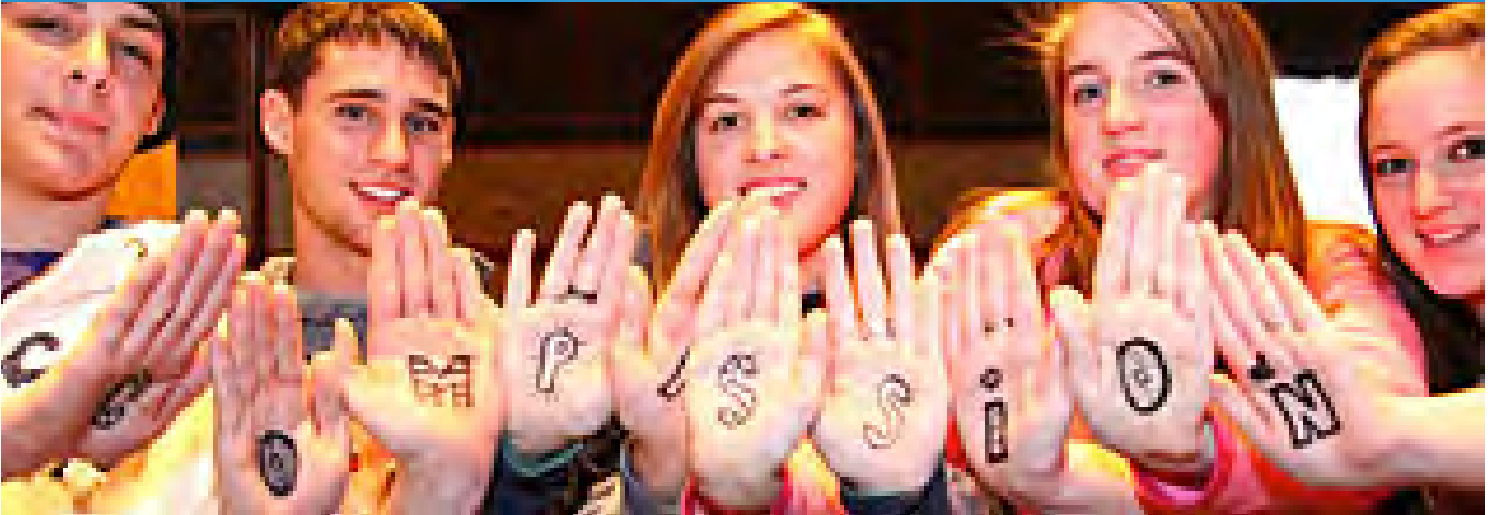
- The National Honor Society, which includes students with and without disabilities, hosts a series of assemblies once a month to increase awareness of social inclusion and foster respect among all students.
- The junior prom committee seeks nominations for diverse students to be on the prom court and engages students with and without intellectual disabilities in planning and decorating for the prom.
- The Unified Club works with the school PBIS leadership committee to incorporate social inclusion as part of the school-wide expectations for student behavior.

Whole School Engagement

- The required civics class incorporates lessons on social inclusion into the unit on social justice to ensure all students increase their knowledge and skills.
- The Student Council coordinates a Spread the Word campaign to raise consciousness of the school and community about the dehumanizing and hurtful effects of derogatory language and instead pledge tangible acts of inclusion.
- The Art Department holds a poster contest inviting students to design posters for the school halls, advocating for social inclusion and creating a welcoming school climate.



Enhancing Whole School Engagement Experiences



- Include school administration early in the process. Engage administrators in concrete, visible and active ways at both school and district levels.
- Be intentional about incorporating social inclusion into curriculum development, school-wide PBIS efforts, school climate improvement and wellness activities.
- Share the goals of whole school engagement (e.g., raise awareness about inclusion and create a socially inclusive school climate; recruit more participants in Unified Sports or inclusive school clubs).
- Start from where you are and start small. Select and plan an initial activity that is manageable, energizing and appeals to the whole school.
- Build on current activities that are already being offered with an intentional focus on having it become a socially inclusive activity.
- Develop a process for engaging all students in social inclusion efforts, ensuring the development of socially inclusive attitudes, values, knowledge, skills and actions.
- When building awareness, nurturing inclusive relationships and building expectations for inclusive behavior provide opportunities in both structured and unstructured settings.
- Provide consistent opportunities to engage a broad range of stakeholders throughout the school and wider community in developing, implementing and sustaining a wide range of inclusive activities.
- Connect with your state Special Olympics program for support and sharing successes.
- Share photos, videos and stories of social inclusion activities and events using the school's website or social media.



Helpful Resources

More information on how adults can effectively nurture inclusive youth leadership can be found in the **Inclusive Youth Leadership Guidelines** at www.specialolympics.org/hsplaybook-resources

Checklist for Getting Started

There are a plethora of ways the whole school can be engaged in learning about and creating a socially inclusive school. The tips and checklists that follow offer some ideas to get started with a few different activities that can be customized and expanded upon to best address your identified needs and fit into the structure of your school.



Getting Started Checklist for School Assemblies

School assemblies can be effective for sharing information with the entire student body, creating energy and excitement or orientating the school community to a new opportunity.

___ 1. Schedule a meeting with the Unified Champion School Leadership Team to discuss ways to engage the entire school in activities to increase social inclusion. Develop a timeline for recruiting, organizing and preparing for the assembly.

___ 2. Dedicate a club, class or group meeting to identifying an issue of concern students would like to address during an assembly and brainstorm ideas for the structure for the activity, such as a guest speaker, pep rally, activity day or student presentation.

___ 3. Research the issue(s), understand who it affects and what changes are needed.

___ 4. Meet with the principal to discuss plans for the activity and ensure administrative support and approval. Make sure the presentation is well thought out and organized.

___ 5. Develop a plan.

- Set the date and time for the assembly.
- Create a plan for each task that needs to be completed, including deadlines and a list of who is responsible for carrying out each step.
- Make sure the date, time and location are all cleared with the necessary school personnel before releasing the information to others.
- Consider joining efforts with another group in the school or community to broaden the group of stakeholders.

___ 6. Invite guest speakers, develop a presentation and prepare any necessary materials.

- Make sure the assembly is relevant to your community. Try to personalize parts of the assembly to your local community and/or school.
- Get the audience involved, ensuring the event is fun, memorable and engaging.
- Incorporate a speech, skit or other presentation to inform attendees about the topic.
- Consider using videos, visuals or other multimedia to maintain participants' interest.
- Identify and utilize people who can lead part of the assembly and will educate, motivate and activate participants.

___ 7. Communicate with school staff about the date, purpose of the assembly and why this is important to your school. Consider asking staff to assist with communication through announcements, the school website, letters sent home, school newspaper and local news media.

___ 8. Publicize the assembly around the school.

___ 9. After the assembly, be sure to thank all of those involved with the successful event. Send a special thank you note to any guest speakers.



Getting Started Checklist for “It’s Our School, Too!” Play

This play is written for a cast of 10-20 students with and without intellectual disabilities. The script addresses a variety of vignettes from real schools designed to raise awareness of the school experience through the eyes of students with intellectual disabilities.

___ 1. Schedule a meeting with the Unified Champion School Leadership Team to discuss performing the play, It’s Our School, Too! in your school. Develop a timeline for recruiting, organizing and preparing for the performance.

___ 2. Access the script for the play in the Educator Resources section found at: www.specialolympics.org/hsplaybook-resources

___ 3. Share the script with students in your drama class, club or other interested group. Discuss student interest in performing the play and identify the areas of concern students have about inclusion in their school.

___ 4. Develop a plan.

- Assign roles and schedule rehearsals.
- Set the date, time and location for the performance.
- Create a plan for each task that needs to be completed, including deadlines, and a list of who is responsible for carrying out each step.
- Make sure the date, time and location are all cleared with the necessary school personnel before releasing the information to others.

___ 5. Communicate with school staff about the date, purpose of the play, and why it is important to your school. Consider asking staff to assist with communication through announcements, the school website, letters sent home, school newspaper and local news media.

___ 6. Publicize the assembly around the school and community.

___ 7. Conduct performance(s) for the school and/or community.

___ 8. Facilitate a forum after the play to discuss what the audience experienced and identify any relevant issues that exist in the local school and/or community.

___ 9. After the performance, be sure to thank all of those involved with the successful event. Send a special thank you note to any donors or sponsors.

___ 10. Work with the student council, Unified Club, school advisory committee or other interested group to analyze the issues and develop a plan to implement changes to create a more socially inclusive school.



Getting Started Checklist for Spread the Word Inclusion Campaign

In 2019, Spread the Word to End the Word became Spread the Word (STW), with a focus not just on the elimination of a word but on the creation of a new reality: inclusion for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The global engagement campaign remains committed to empowering grassroots leaders to change their communities, schools, and workplaces, now through a call to their peers to take action for inclusion. Learn more here: <https://www.spreadtheword.global/>

___ 1. Schedule a meeting with the Unified Champion School Leadership Team to discuss holding a Spread the Word Campaign in your school. Develop a timeline for recruiting, organizing and preparing for the campaign.

___ 2. Work with students in the Unified Club, class or other group in the school to organize activities to raise awareness about inclusion and positive acts.

___ 3. Meet with the principal to discuss plans for the campaign and ensure administrative support and approval.

___ 4. Decide what activities the campaign will include, such as:

- Hold a small rally or school assembly. Have students give speeches about the campaign and distribute information to students.
- Set up a pledge station where all students will sign the pledge and commit to spreading acts of inclusion.
- Sell t-shirts with a slogan about Spread the Word.
- If school policies allow, encourage students to share information about the campaign via social media or the school website. They might also consider writing a blog, developing a podcast or including information in the school newspaper.

___ 5. Develop a plan.

* Schedule the campaign activities.

- Create a plan for each task that needs to be completed, including deadlines and a list of who is responsible for carrying out each step.
- Make sure the scheduled activities are all cleared with the necessary school personnel before releasing the information to others.
- Hold a meeting with everyone who will be working a pledge station and provide them with talking points and discussion topics.

___ 6. Communicate with school staff about the dates, purpose of the campaign and why this campaign is important to your school. Consider asking staff to assist with communication through announcements, the school website, letters sent home, the school newsletter and local news media.

___ 7. Check with your state Special Olympics office for STW stickers, posters, banners and other items to use at the pledge station. Check the resources available here: <https://www.spreadtheword.global/>

___ 8. Publicize the Spread the Word Campaign around the school and community.

___ 9. Be sure to track your statistics such as the number of pledges signed, number of people involved and highlights of success stories. Consider asking the local newspaper to share this information with the community.



Getting Started Check list for Fans in the Stands™

Fans in the Stands commit to ensuring that every student or team has supporting fans who cheer at every game, rain or shine, win or lose. Be a Fan™ is a fully integrated marketing campaign designed to send a powerful message that taps into core values and attributes: unity, acceptance, empowerment, respect, inclusion, dignity, courage, strength, pride, confidence and fun.

- ___ 1. Schedule a meeting with the Unified Champion School Leadership Team to discuss getting Fans in the Stands implemented in your school. Develop a timeline for recruiting, organizing and preparing for the activities.
- ___ 2. Organize groups of students who may be interested in being fans in the stands. This effort may be organized by the Unified Club, Pep Club, Cheerleading Squad or other group at the school.
- ___ 3. Develop a calendar of all interscholastic, Special Olympics and Unified Sports events that will take place during each semester.
- ___ 4. Publicize Fans in the Stands. Communicate with school staff about the dates of events. Ask staff to attend, if possible, and to assist with communication through announcements, the school website and the school newsletter.
- ___ 5. Identify students who will take responsibility for ensuring cheering fans are present at each event.
- ___ 6. Prior to each event, create items such as posters and t-shirts to encourage the team



Getting Started Checklist for Unified Sports Day or Unified Sports Festival

Host a Unified Sports Day or Unified Sports Festival at the school with students organizing a day of inclusive sports activities for the student body.

___1. Schedule a meeting with the Unified Champion School Leadership Team to discuss hosting a Unified Sports Day at your school. Develop a timeline for recruiting, organizing and preparing for the activity.

___2. Meet with the principal to get approval and administrative support. Share the goals and possible activities. Be sure to stress the positive impact it can have on creating a socially inclusive school climate.

___3. Consider collaborating with the physical education department or Unified Sports coach/team members to organize activities and make accommodations to ensure all activities are accessible to all students.

___4. Develop a plan.

- Set the date and time for the day's activities.
- Decide on the activities to be included, whether the day will have a theme or focus on a specific sport, and identify how all students will have equitable opportunities to participate.
- Create a plan for each task that needs to be completed, including deadlines and a list of who is responsible for carrying out each step.
- Make sure the date, time and location are all cleared with the necessary school personnel before releasing the information to others.

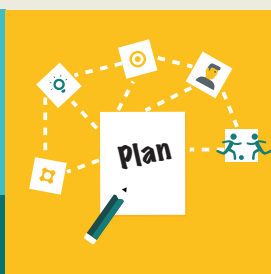
___5. Communicate with school staff about the dates, purpose of the event and why this is important to your school.

___6. Publicize the Unified Sports Day to your school and community. Reach out to the local newspaper and radio station. Include information about the event on the local access television station.

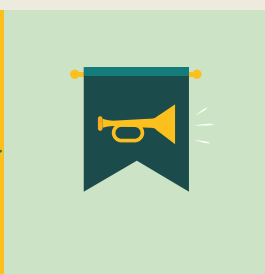
___7. After the event, be sure to thank all of those involved with making it successful. Send a special thank you note to any sponsors or donors.



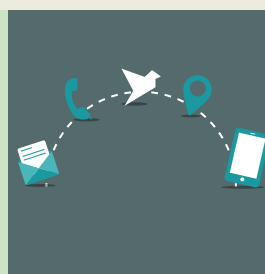
Meet with the Team



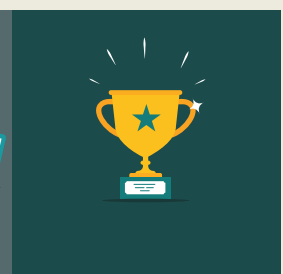
**Develop a plan
Set date & time**



Publicize the event



Amplify the event through social media



Thank everyone involved after the success

Whole School Engagement Action Plan

STRATEGY / ACTIVITY	TASKS	When will each task be completed?	Who will facilitate the completion of this goal?	Who Else can help?
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.		1.	1.	
		2.	2.	
		3.	3.	
		4.	4.	
		5.	5.	
		6.	6.	
		7.	7.	
		8.	8.	
This strategy/activity also connects with: <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusive Youth Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Unified Sports		1.	1.	
2.		2.		
3.		3.		
4.		4.		
5.		5.		
6.		6.		
7.		7.		
8.		8.		
This strategy/activity also connects with: <input type="checkbox"/> Inclusive Youth Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Unified Sports		1.	1.	
2.		2.		
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5.		5.		
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7.		7.		
8.		8.		