



Getting Started with Inclusive Youth Leadership in the Curriculum

Integral to Unified Champion Schools programming is the opportunity for youth with and without intellectual disabilities to lead together, as they make their schools more inclusive places. There are many ways to encourage students to actively promote acceptance, respect, and social inclusion. One way of doing this is by integrating social inclusion and leadership skills into your curriculum so that students have the opportunity to practice what they are learning through their Unified Champion Schools activities in many different settings and contexts.

- 1. [The Unified Young Readers Club](#):** books and study guides are a tool for elementary teachers to use as they address such topics as inclusion, awareness, friendship, bullying, and acceptance to students with and without intellectual disabilities. Each book has a theme that relates to multiple state academic standards and aligns with positive school climate initiatives like PBIS and Leader in Me. School counselors can use these resources to help them as students work on ways to make and keep friends and identify feelings.
- 2. Writing:** Have students write invitations to Unified Champion Schools events, such as Unified Sports Day, or design flyers to send home. After an inclusive event, have each student write about it in a journal. Encourage students to include how they felt during the event, how they grew as a result of the experience, and how the event contributed to a positive school environment.
- 3. Math:** Have students keep track of scores during a Unified Sports event. Another option is to have students use their math skills to help plan the event. For example, they might determine how many cases of bottled water are needed for the athletes or how much space is needed for the bocce exhibition.
- 4. Language:** Have groups of students research quotes that promote leadership, respect, and acceptance. Invite students to discuss what the quotes mean to them. Then, have students create banners to showcase the quotes throughout the school. These are great choices:
“Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.” – Dalai Lama
“Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.” – William James
- 5. Research and technology:** Divide students into small groups and have each group research a different aspect of Special Olympics, such as how it started, how it has changed over the years, and what countries participate. Have students use a presentation program such as PowerPoint, Google Slides, or Prezi to share what they learned during a Unified Champion Schools event.