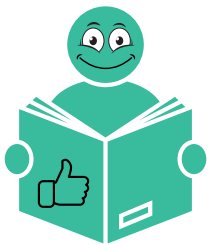




Addressing Schools to Watch® domains of developmental responsiveness and social equity in middle grades through Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®

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Special Olympics
Unified Champion
Schools®



GLOSSARY



ASSOCIATION FOR MIDDLE LEVEL EDUCATION (AMLE)

A group of educators from around the world who work together to create great middle grades schools that support young adolescents.

They have 5 attributes for a successful middle school:

- Responsive
- Challenging
- Empowering
- Equitable
- Engaging



THE NATIONAL FORUM TO ACCELERATE MIDDLE-GRADES REFORM'S SCHOOLS TO WATCH PROGRAM®

The STW program is made up of middle schools in 17 states that have met a set of social, emotional, and academic criteria the National Forum uses to identify successful middle schools.



DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSIVENESS

Schools can do things that help students grow, or develop.

These things include:

- being supportive of students.
- showing respect to students.
- giving supports that help students grow.
- giving chances for students to think on their own.
- asking students to think back on their work.
- asking students to work together.



GLOSSARY CONTINUED



SOCIAL EQUITY

Schools can make sure all students have access to the same opportunities. To do this they should:

- recognize students' cultures.
- give supports so students aren't limited by how they look, think, or act



SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS®(UCS)

A school program that promotes inclusion of students with and without intellectual disabilities (ID). Inclusion means making everyone feel welcome in a place or in an activity. There are 3 ways that UCS supports inclusion.



1. SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED SPORTS®

Activities that bring students with and without ID together for sport activities. Examples are:

- PE classes
- Unified Sports teams
- fitness clubs



2. INCLUSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Activities that bring students with and without ID together for sport activities. Examples are:

- Unified clubs
- leadership classes
- conferences
- summits



3. WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

All students in the school join together in activities to celebrate inclusion. Examples are:

- Unified clubs
- campaigning for respect
- cheering on a Unified Sports teams
- pep rallies



INTRODUCTION

This study shows how Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® (UCS) can increase developmental responsiveness and social equity in middle schools. This can be done through the inclusion of middle school students with ID.

How does UCS do that?

1. UCS creates positive school experiences for all students.
2. UCS connects with AMLE's 5 essential attributes of education for middle school students.
3. UCS meets the developmental and social needs and interests of middle school students of all abilities.
4. UCS meets STW Program criteria for high-performing schools.



How is this document organized?

This document is split into 2 STW benchmarks:

- Benchmark #1: developmental responsiveness
- Benchmark #2: social equity



In this document you will learn:

- 5 ways UCS supports developmental responsiveness
- 3 ways UCS supports social equity
- how UCS helps middle schools meet the 2 STW Program benchmarks
- about data collected from students and teachers between 2017-2019





BENCHMARK #1: DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSIVENESS

STW Program Criteria - Personalized Environment



What it is: A classroom or school that supports each student's intellectual, social, and physical growth.



UCS connection: Special Olympics Unified Sports®



How it works: It provides physical activity and social connection for all students.



Data from teachers:

- **77%** of UCS middle schools had Unified Sports programming.
- **73%** had Unified Sports
- **76%** had Unified PE
- **87%** of teams met weekly for 60-90 minutes.



Data from students:

- **1 in 5** students participated in Unified Sports.





BENCHMARK #1: DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSIVENESS

STW Program Criteria Relevant, socially significant curriculum



What it is: Lessons that connect to the interests of middle school students.



UCS connection: Inclusive youth leadership activities, like Unified Clubs.



How it works: It gives students a chance to speak up with ideas to improve the school. It gives a chance for all students to have a leadership role.



Data from teachers:

- **58%** of UCS middle schools had inclusive youth leadership activities.



Data from students:

- **1 in 6** students were in a Unified Club.
 - **42%** joined because they wanted to make a difference in their school.
 - **86%** felt they got better at learning from people with different ideas.
 - **74%** felt they got better at working with others.
 - **20%** of students without ID and 32% with ID had a leadership position.





BENCHMARK #1: DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSIVENESS

STW Program Criteria - Student voice at school



What it is: Students' questions and ideas are heard by adults in the school. Students help make decisions in the school.



UCS connection: Inclusive youth leadership activities



How it works: It gives students a chance to speak up with ideas to improve the school. It gives a chance for all students to have a leadership role.



Data from teachers:

- **1 in 3** UCS middle schools had a Leadership Team with students as members. This is a team with students and school staff. They work together to put on events that include all students. They try to make their school more welcoming.
 - **66%** included students with ID
 - **77%** included students without ID



Data from students:

- **65%** of students without ID said that their school celebrated the accomplishments of all students.
- **41%** of students said there were opportunities for all students to be a part of school decisions.





BENCHMARK #1: DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSIVENESS

STW Program Criteria - Developing citizenship skills



What it is: Students use skills to help make their community a better place.



UCS connection: Whole school engagement



How it works: Students work together on projects that make their school and community better because everyone is included.



Data from teachers:

- **73%** of UCS middle schools had whole school engagement activities.
- **50%** of UCS middle schools did activities out in the community.
- **1 in 5** middle school Unified Clubs did a community service activity.



Data from students:

- **7 in 10** students participated in at least 1 whole school engagement activity.





BENCHMARK #1: DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSIVENESS

STW Program Criteria - Developing interests beyond the classroom



What it is: Students can join sports, leadership or service activities in and out of school.



UCS connection: Unified Sports, inclusive youth leadership, whole school engagement



How it works: Students can join sports, leadership, or service activities inside or outside of school. They can develop friendships with students who are different from themselves.



Data from teachers:

- More than **50%** of middle school teachers in UCS schools felt it helped increase student participation.
- More than **75%** of Unified Sports® coaches and Unified club advisors felt those activities helped students learn important social-emotional skills.



Data from students:

- **41%** of students without ID who were a part of UCS became friends with students with ID.
- **58%** of students without ID who were a part of a team or club became friends with students with ID.





BENCHMARK #2: SOCIAL EQUITY

STW Program Criteria - Equal access to knowledge



What it is: All students get to learn in classes and activities. No one is left behind or left out.



UCS connection: Unified Sports, inclusive youth leadership, whole school engagement.



How it works: Students can choose to join a lot of activities that happen in different places and at different times. More choices means more students can be involved. Many activities are offered throughout the day.



Data from teachers:

- In most UCS middle schools, students have many activity options to choose from:
 - **66%** included students with ID
 - **77%** had Unified Sports
 - **57%** have inclusive youth leadership
 - **73%** had whole school engagement





BENCHMARK #2: SOCIAL EQUITY

STW Program Criteria - Familiar, personal school community



What it is: School staff know the students well, respect them, and do not talk badly about them.



UCS connection: Unified Sports, inclusive youth leadership, whole school engagement.



How it works: There are many chances for students to work together to teach others about inclusion and create a positive school community.



Data from teachers:

- **78%** of UCS middle school teachers believe there was an increase in students with and without ID working together.
- **75%** of UCS middle school teachers believe UCS helped create a more socially inclusive school.
- **55%** of UCS middle school teachers believe UCS helped lower bullying behavior.



Data from students:

- **60%** of students who participated in UCS believe UCS had a “big impact” in making their school feel more inclusive.
- **65%** of students who participated in UCS believe their school celebrated the accomplishments of all students.
- **56%** of students who participated in UCS believe UCS lowered bullying.





BENCHMARK #2: SOCIAL EQUITY

STW Program Criteria - Rewarding diversity, service, and citizenship



What it is: The efforts of all students are recognized and rewarded. This is not limited to sports and academics.



UCS connection: Unified Sports, inclusive youth leadership, whole school engagement.



How it works: Students are recognized for their participation and success with social inclusion. UCS activities show that anyone can be a leader. UCS can support social-emotional skills.



Data from students:

- **65%** of students felt that their school celebrated the work of all students.
- **59%** of students felt students with and without ID could be leaders.
- **53%** of students felt that their school provided chances to volunteer or do community service.

