
INTERSCHOLASTIC SUSTAINABILITY SNAPSHOT

Arizona

The primary financial sustainability platform is the Arizona Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) "Make That Change" fundraising program. This is coordinated through the Student Resource Officer (SRO) at each school in collaboration with their local law enforcement agency, and is supported by the Arizona SRO Association. The first district to implement this raised over \$25,000. An NFL player from Arizona is a significant program donor with a continuous 5 year donation of \$20,000. The Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS) has granted \$440,000 over four years, which supports Project UNIFY through coach stipends, equipment and health initiatives. Schools are expected to be self-sustained after 3 years of receiving start-up funding from SOAZ.

The Special Olympics Unified Triathlon has helped raise more than \$250,000 as well as raise awareness of more than 1,000 Triathlon participants about the need of Special Olympics Arizona Athletes. This unique race consists of one Special Olympics tri-athlete competing with two non-Special Olympics tri-athletes (partners) on a team, in a modified distance (50 meter swim; 2.5 mile bike; .5 mile run). The event has been a tremendous success financially but, more importantly, to showcase the skills of Special Olympics athletes, foster inclusion and acceptance and bring the community together.

Connecticut

Multiple corporations specifically sponsor the Interscholastic Unified Sports program annually and get dual benefits from SOCT and CT Assoc. of Schools/CT Interscholastic Athletic Conf. (CAS/CIAC). State Department of Disability Services is an annual donor. We have secured additional state grant from the Dept of Education and federal funding from Project UNIFY.

Sponsors are listed on CAS/CIAC and SOCT websites, newsletters, tournaments, volunteer shirts, etc. Sponsors send out volunteers to various tournaments for team building and increasing morale in the workforce. Sponsors are aware this program is for multiple audiences: students with and without intellectual disabilities and their families. SOCT staff and CAS/CIAC staff work together to pitch new sponsors and to steward existing ones.

One successful strategy for Connecticut has been bringing potential donors and sponsors to interscholastic events to sell them on the program (giving them roles at events such as presenting awards to athletes).

All schools that participate in Unified Sports are encouraged to take part in one of the many Penguin Plunges where they collect pledges for plunging and can keep 50% for their school program with the other 50% going to SOCT.

Maryland

Project UNIFY sustainability was achieved with the creation and dramatic expansion of Cool Schools, which is a program that involves students raising money on behalf of SOMD through their participation in the Polar Bear Plunge's Frigid Friday. To date, SOMD has raised close to \$1 million through Cool Schools in the first four years. Funds raised support the Interscholastic Unified Sports programs and school partnerships. The 2012 Cool Schools Frigid Friday Plunge saw over 3,000 students from 65 schools raise over \$300,000. SOMD is on pace to hit similar goals in 2013. School partnerships take work but overall they are very positive.

"The Cool Schools program is seen by our students as an extension of the community service curriculum being taught in our schools" said Anne Arundel County Public Schools Supervisor of Athletics Greg LeGrand. "Our students, teachers and administrators have seen the positive effects the high school corollary program and our partnership with Special Olympics on the school culture. It has helped foster lasting friendships and life-long compassion and understanding while having a lot of fun. Our school system views the Cool Schools Plunge as a way to help support this positive program and partnership. This event allows our students a chance to have a good time while supporting not only their fellow students, but others in their community."

The approach with this program is to provide a level of engagement and education with participation in a fun event. To solve traditional challenges to problems like transportation, SOMD provides funding to cover costs once schools raise a minimum amount of pledges. Educators have further embraced the fun event since the successful addition of disability awareness, anti-bullying messaging and most importantly a connection to the unified sports programs in participating schools. The funding philosophy is predicated mostly on relationship management. The ultimate goal is to raise as much money as possible and manage each relationship on its merits. SOMD has relationships with 19 of the 24 County School Systems in the state and no two are the same—from their demographics to their individual budgets and human resources. It is the responsibility of SOMD to manage resources and figure out how to best work with each individual school system to reach the desired outcome.



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New Hampshire

The NHIAA has a State Student Leadership Committee made up of adult liaisons and 14 student reps (next year at least one of those student reps will have an intellectual disability). This group has taken on the Penguin Plunge as one of their annual fundraising events. The committee meets quarterly and at the first two quarterly meetings, the HS Plunge is a large part of their agenda.

70+ High Schools in NH (of the 89 NHIAA member schools) have their own Student/Athlete Leadership Groups. Each month, those 70 schools inform the NHIAA on which activities they have been doing. From October through January, much of the work done at the school is focused around the High School Plunge benefitting Special Olympics. SONH invests approximately 20 staff days in marketing the plunge with high schools.

The 2013 plunge had 474 students participating from 55 high schools. This resulted in over \$135,000 being raised, or an average of \$284 per student plunger.

SONH has communicated with the schools that they will only fund Unified Sports teams for the initial three years, by the fourth year it is expected that schools absorb the costs.

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island Interscholastic League are both Program donors. Schools will be responsible for transporting their own athletes from schools to games which will represent a savings of approximately \$1,000 per school each year. Uniforms are reused year after year. Schools are encouraged to participate in the Law Enforcement Polar Plunge fundraiser.