

# Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®

## Components Guide

### KENTUCKY



Office of Special Education Programs  
U.S. Department of Education

This guide is designed as a supplemental resource to our Unified Champion Schools Playbooks. It is intended for quick reference and Kentucky specific content. If you are interested in the full Playbook, please reach out to Special Olympics Kentucky (SOKY). Printable versions of the Playbooks are also available on our SOKY website under the UCS tab Resources.

➡ [www.soky.org](http://www.soky.org)

The three components of a Unified Champion School (UCS) are Whole School Engagement, Inclusive Youth Leadership, and Unified Sports. With sports as the foundation, the three-component model offers a unique combination of effective activities that equip young people with tools and training to create climates of acceptance in classrooms, on sport teams and school-wide. The goal is more socially inclusive school communities.

- ❖ **Whole School Engagement** activities are those which target awareness and education promoting inclusion and reach the majority of the school population.
- ❖ **Inclusive Youth Leadership** is essential to the UCS program as students with and without intellectual disabilities (ID) will lead, plan and organize activities such as the ones outlined in this guide.
- ❖ **Unified Sports** include an array of inclusive sports activities from Interscholastic and KHSAA sanctioned sports to Unified PE or developmental sports skills that all students can meaningfully contribute to no matter skill or ability.

After over a decade of research and evaluation, the UCS program has proven successful in creating a socially inclusive school environment, while reducing bullying, teasing and offensive language. Increasing students' positive perceptions of their school climate can impact students to be more empathic and compassionate. **This guide provides examples and guidelines for activities that fulfill each component and hopefully achieve these successes in your own school.**

While using this guide it could be helpful to remember that for a successful UCS program, we recommend offering at least two whole school engagement activities, forming a Unified Club meeting once per month, and offering one Unified Sports opportunity or season.

Beyond general participation in the inclusive strategies encouraged by the UCS program, if you are interested in the **National Banner Recognition Program**, please contact us for information.



Kentucky National Banner Schools:

**Bullitt East High School**

**Calloway County High School**

**East Carter High School**



Special Olympics  
**Unified Champion  
Schools**

# Index of Activities

## Whole School Engagement:

- Poster contest to promote Inclusion Campaign
- Spread the Word/Respect/R-word Campaign
- Fans in the Stands
- Unified P.E. Curriculum
- SOKY Polar Plunges / Truck & Plane Pulls
- Unified Sports Exhibition Game / Field Day
- Respect or Awareness Week
- It's Our School Too! – educational play
- Respect Rally or Unified Sports Rally
- Fundraiser for Unified Activities



## Inclusive Youth Leadership:

- Unified Youth Leadership Club
- Unified Student Council
- UCS Youth Leadership Summit
- Best Buddies Club
- Inclusion Tiles



## Unified Sports:

- KHSAA sponsored sports
- SOKY offered sports
- Independent Interscholastic sports
- Unified P.E. Curriculum
- Unified Sports Exhibition Game / Field Day
- Fitness Programming
- Young Athletes



## Virtual Engagement Resources

- Spread the Word Inclusion Campaign
- Club Meetings
- SOKY Virtual Youth Leadership Training
- SOKY Polar Plunges
- Inclusion Tiles
- Unified Fitness Club
- Back to School & Unified Classroom



Special Olympics  
**Unified Champion  
Schools**

## Whole School Engagement

Whole School Engagement activities are meant to connect your school population as a majority. This is best accomplished in large group settings such as assemblies, lunchrooms, hallways or using your leadership team to target classrooms throughout the school during homeroom or free periods.

### Poster contest to promote Inclusion Campaign

Materials: Cardstock, poster board, construction paper, markers, color pencils, crayons.

Use your creativity and make posters before your week or day of inclusion.

### Spread the Word/Respect/Inclusion/R-word Campaign

Materials: Signature banner and wristbands (contact us for supplies), promotion fliers, sharpies.

Spread the Word–Inclusion by asking your fellow students to pledge to include. Each student that makes the pledge will receive a wristband.



### Fans in the Stands

Materials: Make posters or bring pom-poms as well as your school spirit.

Choose the game and wear your school pride as you cheer on your favorite team or Unified game as a student body. You can also form a group to attend Special Olympics events to cheer on the athletes!

### Unified P.E. Curriculum

Materials: Unified PE Resource Guide (found on our website or hard copies provided).

Unified P.E. should allow for intentional learning with meaningful participation from students with and without ID. All students work to master course content and receive a grade. Course content should be based on state/national physical education standards. Unified P.E. should be distinguishable from “inclusive or adapted” P.E. Additional information found here:

[https://www.shapeamerica.org/ResourcesPublications/Unified\\_PE/default.aspx](https://www.shapeamerica.org/ResourcesPublications/Unified_PE/default.aspx)

### SOKY Polar Plunge (usually in February/March)

Materials: Contact us to register and receive materials to promote your team.

You'll be “Freezin’ for a Reason.” Polar Plunges are the COOLEST fundraiser around that support over 11,000 athletes across Kentucky! School teams can also qualify for *Share the Proceeds* and raise funds for your Unified program! Challenge a favorite Principal, coach or teacher to take the Plunge if a certain amount is raised.

### **SOKY Truck/Plane Pull** (usually in August/September)

Materials: Contact us to register and receive materials to promote your team.

Round up a team because here's your chance to pull a semi-truck or a 757 airplane! Support SOKY athletes with another chance to *Share the Proceeds* and raise funds for your Unified program. Challenge a varsity sports team to show off their strength and pull the truck or plane.

### **Unified Sports Exhibition Game / Field Day**

Materials: Contact us for equipment needs and/or pop-up signage.

A great way to showcase a Unified Sport or activity to the greater school population! These can include "skills" showcases or the showcase of team play during a shortened or full game. Engage the student population by encouraging "Fans in the Stands" and/or the opportunity for anyone to participate! Challenge a rival school to participate with you. Organize the exhibition to take place on the same day as a rival game or at halftime of any varsity game.

### **Respect or Awareness Week**

Materials: Contact us for promotional materials such as banners and fliers.

A whole week of fun and inclusion! Get an Inclusion pledge banner from us or make your own to collect signatures as a pledge for Inclusion. Consider picking awareness topics for each day. Ideas: Wear school gear, pick a color per day, or bring your favorite puzzle to PE for autism awareness!

### **"It's Our School Too!" - educational play**

Materials: Design a set and use props/costumes or perform on a blank canvas simply requiring the audience to have a good imagination with you! Find the full script under the UCS tab "Resources" on our SOKY website. A sample performance is also available on YouTube.

Put on a skit or play for your student body that displays the ideals of inclusion. Use this unique opportunity to display everyone's creativity and planning skills.

### **Respect Rally or Unified Sports Rally**

Turn your PEP Rally into a RESPECT Rally or just add it as a theme. Showcase your Unified Teams at a Unified Sports Rally to get ready for a big game or just show school spirit. You can even include all sports teams, the more the merrier!

### **Fundraiser for Unified Activities**

Looking for extra club funds? Host your own fundraiser! This is a great way make your club sustainable. We have all kinds of ideas we can share. Contact us!



Special Olympics  
**Unified Champion  
Schools**

## Inclusive Youth Leadership

Inclusive Youth Leadership is commonly seen as an official club or committee; however, it can be in various forms. We encourage students to decide how it best fits in each school. All leadership teams must include contributions from students with and without intellectual disabilities.

### Unified Champion School Outreach Letters

Interested in starting a UCS program at your school but need help? [Use these letter templates found at soky.org > Unified Champion Schools > Resources](#); to engage with your Teachers and Administration.

### Unified Youth Leadership Club

Using leadership both in Unified pairs and groups, create a club to help plan and execute Unified activities where each student feels valued and can meaningfully participate. Clubs should ideally meet once a month and be officially recognized in the same fashion as any other club on campus.

### Unified Student Council

Convert an existing student council to include students with and without ID! A more diverse council will ensure the voice of all students is represented.

### UCS Youth Leadership Summit

Students learn from other youth leaders and hone their own leadership skills by attending a one-day Youth Leadership Summit. Contact us for more information.



### Best Buddies Club

Have an existing Best Buddies club? This is a great place to foster inclusive student leaders. Did you know? – Best Buddies was founded by the same family as Special Olympics! The two programs work hand in hand.



### Inclusion Tiles

Inclusion tiles are an interactive way to learn and teach about the process and ideals of social inclusion and the process in which Unified Champion Schools can influence school climate. Contact SOKY for more information about a guidebook and physical cards.

Use the online version found here: <https://www.generationunified.org/games/inclusion-game-page-1/>

## Special Olympics Unified Sports®

Unified Sports can be presented both straightforward through the play of Unified Sports or found in other modes of physical activity and skills development. This component is not just for existing athletes, either varsity or Special Olympics, but any student wishing to meaningfully contribute in a Unified pair (1 athlete & 1 partner) or a team format.

**KHSAA Sponsored Sports:** students compete in regionals and may qualify for state competition.

- ❖ **Bowling:** Students compete in Unified Pairs and take turns bowling frame by frame.
- ❖ **Track & Field:** all events are structured for students to achieve a result by a combined effort of the athlete and partner.

Events offered:

- 4 x 100 Relay
- 2 x 50 Relay
- 2 x 200 Relay
- Shot Put
- Long Jump



**SOKY Sports:** unified formats are offered in the following sports. Fellow classmates, friends or family members can serve as a partner to an athlete.

- ❖ **Bocce**
- ❖ **Bowling**
- ❖ **Cheer**
- ❖ **Golf**
- ❖ **Swimming**
- ❖ **Track & Field (4x100 Relay)**

### Independent Interscholastic Sports

Explore a Unified format in any sport of your choice from basketball to soccer. We would love to support any sport of interest and help you create options within your school or with those nearby.

### Unified P.E. Curriculum

Use our Unified P.E. Resource to craft a curriculum for general P.E. or extra-curricular credit. See additional information under the previous Whole School Engagement section.

### Unified Sports Exhibition Game / Field Day

See description under the Whole School Engagement section.



Special Olympics  
**Unified Champion  
Schools**

## **Fitness Programming**

Encourage physical health with any of the fitness programs created by Special Olympics or our Official Partners. All can be done utilizing a Unified format.

### **Fit 5** (contact us for Free resources)

- 5 days of exercise, 5 bottles of water a day, 5 fruits and vegetables a day
- Using the Fit 5 chart, as well as, exercise and education resources, start a new fitness club or use your existing Unified Club. Be healthier together!

### **SOfit** (contact us for Free resources)

- An eight-week wellness class in which unified pairs (one person with and one person without ID) learn to live a healthy lifestyle through educational topics and fitness activities.

### **WWE School of Strength**

- Introducing a whole new way to exercise, featuring WWE Superstar Becky Lynch. Work out with these videos five times a week to help you stay fit and reach your athletic goals. Progress through the videos as you master the levels. Click here: [WWE School of Strength](#)

Fitness resources are in development from the following official Special Olympics partnerships:

**SHAPE America**

**BOKS – Building or Kids Success**

**Hip Hop Public Health**

### **Young Athletes®**

Children ages 2 to 7 develop fundamental gross motor skills as well as social and cognitive skills in this inclusive sports play program. Training, equipment and resources are available from SOKY.

**Be sure to visit our UCS national website for additional resources:**

[www.generationunified.org](http://www.generationunified.org)

**Stay up to date with the Unified Generation by subscribing to the YouTube Channel**

[Generation Unified YouTube Channel](#)

**Follow Special Olympics Kentucky!**

**Facebook & Twitter: @sokentucky**

**Instagram: so\_kentucky**



Special Olympics  
**Unified Champion  
Schools**

## Virtual Engagement Options

Check out these options for a virtual way to participate within the three components of Unified Champion Schools this year.

### Spread the Word Inclusion Campaign

Use this online signature platform and “Pledge to Include” with your fellow schoolmates. Share through social media and email to encourage others to sign the petition and join the Unified Generation even when you’re apart. Visit [www.spreadtheword.global](http://www.spreadtheword.global) for everything you will need!

### Club Meetings

Club meetings can be virtual too! Have your advisor set up a Google Meets or Zoom for your club to meet and plan your activities for the year. Make sure to have fun together too; use an inclusive coloring page or read a book and discuss your thoughts to mix it up! Start a discussion using the online [Inclusion Tile Activity](#).

### Participate in the Virtual SOKY Youth Leadership Training

Contact SOKY for more information to participate in the online pre-recorded training sessions in Youth Leadership. The session topics include Exploring Leadership, Leader in Me, Co-Leadership and Leading as a Team. Your club or student population can participate in Unified Pairs too!

### SOKY Polar Plunges

Each year SOKY offers a virtual participation option for the Polar Plunge. Sign up as a team and even consider challenging your friends to do the plunge at home! You may be eligible for Share the Proceeds. Contact SOKY for more information.

### Inclusion Tiles

Use the online Inclusion Tiles and discussion questions during a virtual meeting. [Inclusion Tile Activity](#)

### Unified Fitness Club

It’s important to stay active. Use Special Olympics Fitness programs like Fit5, SOfit or [WWE School of Strength](#) to start a virtual fitness club or challenge. Have weekly check-ins and share how healthy you’re feeling.

### Back to School & NEW Unified Classroom Resources

Developed by Special Olympics North America during 2020-2021, resources and turn-key lessons within the Unified Classroom are focused on virtual or distance-learning environments. Links to these resources can be found on our website here: [Distance Learning & Unified Classroom](#).

