



# **2017-2018**

## **MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOLS GUIDE**

**Special  
Olympics**  
Minnesota



**Unified Schools**

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# ● WHAT IS SPECIAL OLYMPICS?

## Special Olympics International

Special Olympics was founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver. Through her efforts, Special Olympics has become a global movement of people creating a new world of inclusion and community, a world in which every single person is accepted and welcomed regardless of ability or disability. We are helping to make the world a better, healthier and more joyful place — one athlete, one volunteer, one family member at a time.

Special Olympics Minnesota offers children and adults with intellectual disabilities year-round sports training and competition. Through Special Olympics' athletic, health and leadership programs, people with intellectual disabilities transform themselves, their communities and the world.

### By The Numbers:

- 180 countries
- 4.5 million athletes participating
- 850,000 Unified Partners participating
- 67% of athletes are school age
- 95,000 competitions a year
- 258 games happening every day

## Special Olympics Minnesota

Special Olympics Minnesota (**SOMN**) was founded in 1973 and hosts trainings and competitions year round. Currently Special Olympics Minnesota offers 17 Olympic-style sports.

Through SOMN's athletic, health, and leadership programs, people with intellectual disabilities transform themselves, their communities and the world. Special Olympics Minnesota serves more than 8,000 athletes, 1,000 Unified Partners and more than 8,000

- Area, Regional, and State Competitions
- Athlete Leadership Programs
- Healthy Athletes Program
- Young Athletes Program
- Unified Juniors Program





# WHAT ARE UNIFIED SCHOOLS?

Special Olympics Unified Schools is an education and sports based strategy powered by an engaged student community that increases athletic and leadership opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities.

It is a strategy to **activate** youth, **engage** educators, and **promote** school communities of acceptance and inclusion where **all young people are agents of change**.

The three components of Unified Schools include Inclusive Youth Leadership, Unified Sports, and Whole School Engagement. All three areas are crucial to shift the culture of a school towards inclusion.

**1. Inclusive Youth Leadership:** An opportunity for youth voices to be heard through engaging together with meaningful relationships.

**2. Unified Sports:** A combination of special education students and general education students that participate in inclusive sporting opportunities.

**3. Whole School Engagement:** Bullying prevention and inclusive promotion initiatives that reach entire school populations through engaging, inspiring and optimistic events.

## UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOL

INCLUSIVE YOUTH  
LEADERSHIP

UNIFIED SPORTS

WHOLE SCHOOL  
ENGAGEMENT



# WHY BECOME A UNIFIED SCHOOL?

- Unified Schools aim to create authentic inclusion in schools that change how students interact with one another on a daily basis
- Unified Schools aim to be an ally in targeting intolerance, hate speech and bullying
- Data shows that those youth who were more involved in a Unified School held more positive attitudes toward their peers with intellectual disabilities
- Unified Schools is the tipping point for school culture and climate as all young people collaborate with school and classroom leaders as architects of their community values and norms

## Terms You Should Know

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Athlete</b>	An individual receiving special education services participating in Special Olympic Minnesota programs, including Unified Schools
<b>Intellectual Disability</b>	A term used to describe a person with certain limitations in cognitive functioning and other skills, including communication and self-care. These limitations cause a child to develop and learn more slowly or differently. Intellectual disability is the most common developmental disability.
<b>School Liason</b>	An adult school representative who is the main contact with SOMN for Unified Schools. This representative can be a staff member, general education teacher, special education teacher, administrator, or anyone else passionate for students and inclusion opportunities.
<b>Unified</b>	A social movement that joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. By training together and playing together all involved have a path towards friendship and understanding.
<b>Unified Partner</b>	An individual receiving general education services who pairs up with an athlete to form a partnership while participating in SOMN programs, including Unified Schools.
<b>Inclusion</b>	The belief that all students can belong and participate. No child sits on the side-lines.

**75% of students participating in the Unified Schools Program said it was a positive turning point in their lives.**



# BENEFITS OF THE UNIFIED SCHOOLS PROGRAM

## Your School

- Assistance in:
  - Meeting the Minnesota content and performance standards
  - Providing increased opportunities for students of all ability levels
  - Transition planning for students
  - Developing strategies for family involvement in the program
  - Facilitating inclusive opportunities within the school environment
- Opportunities include:
  - Learning about community service, diversity and inclusion
  - Fostering positive character development

## Your General Education Students

- Promotion of sports, lifelong fitness and recreation skills
- Assistance to students in developing positive relationships
- Support to students when transitioning from school to community programs
- Assistance with providing services identified in the Individual Education Plan
- Building confidence through success and positive interactions with peers

## Your Special Education Students

- Opportunities to gain lifelong skills, physical fitness, acceptance and inclusion
- Learning and practicing life, communication and community living skills
- Having access to Physical Education programs
- Supplementary aids and services – relationships with peers may transfer into assistance in the classroom on academics and behavior
- Introduce students without intellectual disabilities (Unified Partners) to the gifts and talents of students with intellectual disabilities

**“ There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more. ”**

**-Robert M. Hansel**

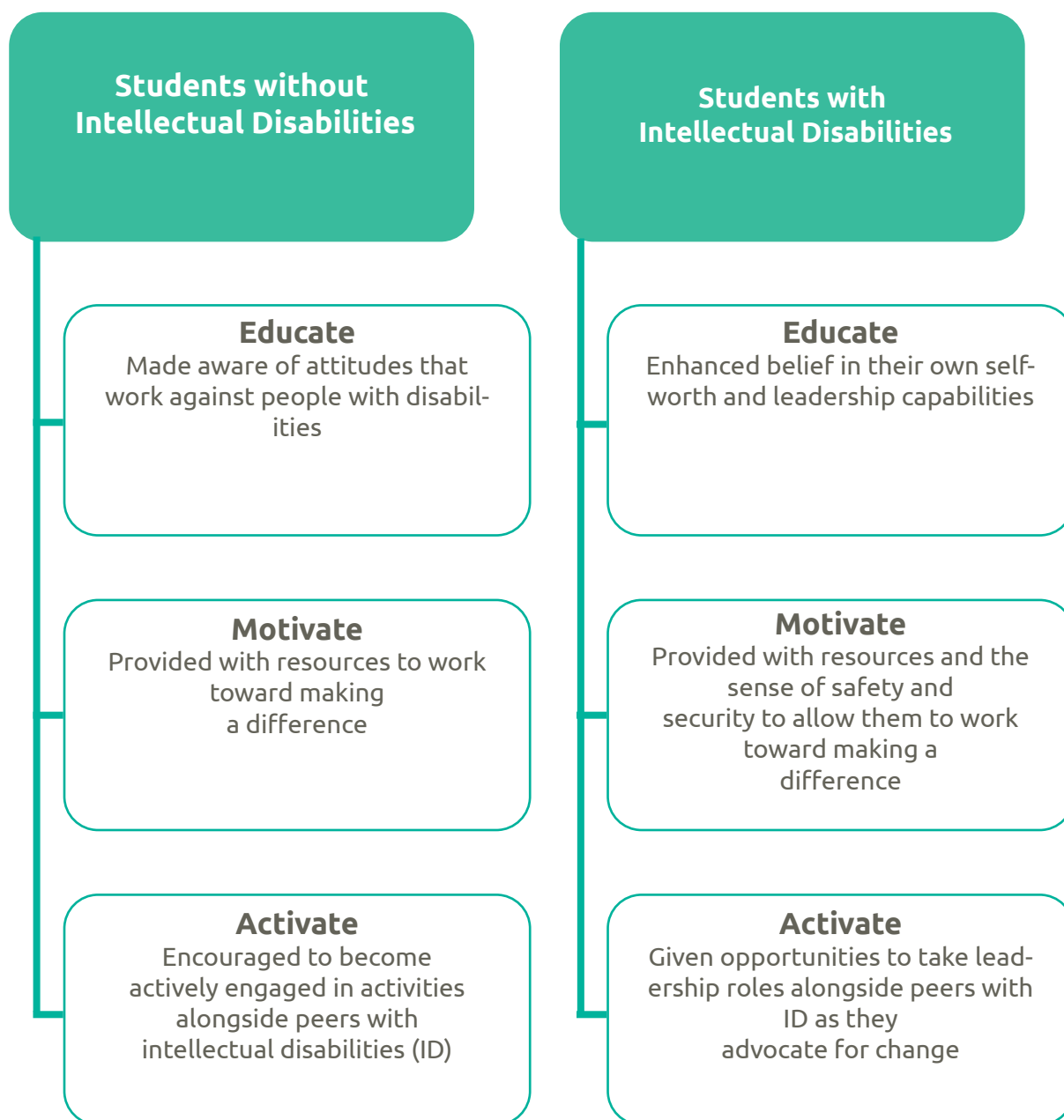
# INCLUSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP

The Unified Schools Program does not merely allow young people to take leadership roles in promoting acceptance and inclusion in their schools and communities, it insists that they do so. For youth both with and without intellectual disabilities, these are leadership lessons that last a lifetime, and youth are recognized as the pioneers of an inclusive environment.

Unified Clubs

Youth Summit

Student Board  
of Directors





# UNIFIED CLUBS

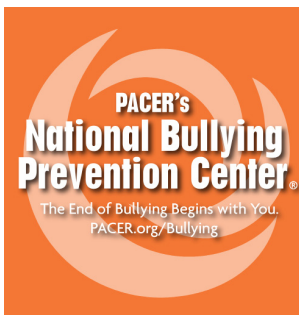
A Unified Club is an exciting program which combines students with and without intellectual disabilities to develop meaningful relationships, help spread acceptance and ensure everyone feels included and welcome in their school.

## Who can Participate?

Any student who is interested in an inclusive school setting may participate. Teachers, school coaches, faculty, family members or individuals from the community can support the club as well.

## What do Unified Clubs do?

Unified Clubs are unique school-based clubs designed around empowering youth with and without intellectual disabilities to promote social justice through a variety of athletic, social, and recreational projects and activities. Your club is encouraged to design your own projects involving Unified Sports, Spread the Word to End the Word activities, Be a Fan campaigns, Fans in the Stands, volunteering, Polar Plunge teams, Special Olympics sports events in schools, etc.



Founded in 2006, PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center actively leads social change, so that bullying is no longer considered an accepted childhood rite of passage. PACER provides innovative resources for students, parents, educators, and others, and recognizes bullying as a serious community issue that impacts education, physical and emotional health, and the safety and well-being of students.

**Every year, SOMN will send you a club kit of fun ideas, activities and resources to further the Unified movement!**



# YOUTH SUMMIT

**Youth Summits are for ALL students and are planned by students. Each Youth Summit will be centered on the topics of inclusive student leadership and the unified generation.**

Potential topics for breakout sessions include, but are not limited to, Person First Language, bullying prevention campaigns, advocacy training, Spread the Word campaigns, Unified Clubs, Unified Sports, etc. Food, snacks, drinks, t-shirts and more goodies are provided to youth that attend.

Online registration will begin two months prior to the summit.

## *What is Inclusive Youth Leadership?*

Inclusive youth leadership is when young people of all abilities are given opportunities to be leaders in their schools and communities. These leadership activities help students find their voices and teach them to become change agents in their communities by promoting equity and acceptance. Social inclusion is best fostered when activities within the classroom, school, and community are designed and implemented by a diverse group of students within a school.

**There are many different ways to nurture youth leadership in the school setting. Ensuring that various leadership roles are inclusive to all students who have ranging skillsets, abilities, and perspectives will greatly enhance efforts to create and sustain change within the school and the community.**

## Example of the Youth Summit Schedule

### Location

University of St. Thomas  
2115 Summit Ave, St Paul, MN

### Schedule

9:00 a.m.	Registration
9:30 a.m.	Welcome
10:00 a.m.	Inclusive Leadership 101
11:30 a.m.	Breakout Session 1
Noon	Lunch
12:30 p.m.	Keynote Speaker:
1:00 p.m.	Breakout Session 2
1:30 p.m.	Breakout Session 3
2:00 p.m.	Dismiss/Optional tour of Unified Sports games





# SOfit - Unified Wellness

## What is SOfit?

SOfit is a Unified Wellness opportunity through Special Olympics Minnesota (SOMN). The program pairs wellness education and practice together with exercise to build and reinforce healthy habits.

Groups pick topics (can be social, nutritional, physical or emotional in nature) to talk about each gathering and pair them with fun, playful, physical activity for comprehensive health and wellness!

## What are the benefits for the students and school?

- Great leadership opportunity
- Improved health and wellness for student body
- Opportunity for a culture of wellness in school
- Physical activity improves academic performance

## Sound good? Let's go!

1. Have a desire to become healthier and learn how to help others in your school.
2. Contact Ben Swarts at the SOMN State office to ask questions and talk about the details.

Work with Ben to decide the next steps, from administrator approval to training and resources to run the program!



# STUDENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Special Olympics Minnesota staff members will work with this group of students focusing on innovative strategies for inclusive student programming. Youth with and without intellectual disabilities, together not only lead in the design and facilitation of the committee, but also are enabled to co-create solutions to the social justice and school climate challenges. Youth will gain leadership, organization, and networking skills, along with building confidence in themselves.

## Who is on the Committee?

There shall be ten to eighteen members in the Student Board of Directors composed of Special Olympics Minnesota athletes and unified partners. Each member must be between ages fourteen and twenty-one upon the start of his or her first term. The goal is to have a 50/50 ratio of athletes and partners. Each individual school can have a maximum of four sitting members on the Board.

## What is the Time Commitment?

The committee will meet once a month in a centralized location.

## What is the Purpose?

The purpose of this group is to educate, motivate, and activate students in Minnesota, with an emphasis on school communities, in an effort to develop a society where all people are agents of change – fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for and with people with intellectual disabilities.

## Where to Apply?

To apply please visit

<http://specialolympicsminnesota.org/unified-movement/unified-schools/unified-board/>

Applications close April 1st & individuals who apply will be notified in mid-April

## What is the Application Criteria for Students?

- Students with and without intellectual disabilities are encouraged to apply
- Students must commit to participate in meetings every month
- Students will commit to being a leader within their school and community for inclusion and acceptance

**“The Youth Activation Committee is youth empowering other youth to encourage the next generation to be inclusive of all people with and without intellectual disabilities.”**

**-Danielle L.**





# ● UNIFIED SPORTS

The foundation of Unified Sports is *meaningful involvement*. This is the most important concept of Unified Sports that the coach and all of the players must understand and implement. Fundamentally, the principle of meaningful involvement ensures that every player is given an opportunity to contribute to the success of his or her team through their unique skills and qualities. Unified Sports is a combination of special education students and general education students that participate in inclusive sporting opportunities.

Young Athletes

Unified Juniors

Unified P.E.

Unified Sports  
Teams





Young Athletes is an innovative sports play program that introduces children ages two to seven years old, with and without intellectual disabilities to the world of sports. The Young Athletes program is a place for children to have the chance to develop better social skills, to play with their peers and to boost their confidence.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How can I Start This Program at My School?

Fit this program into school day activities or after-school programming by using our easy-to-follow, one hour, weekly curriculum.

### Cost?

The program is completely free of charge. You simply need a place to run the program (gym, large classroom, outdoor field, etc.) and a staff member passionate about sports and inclusion to serve as a coach!

### What Supplies do We use?

A kit full of fun sports equipment and training materials.

### Who can Lead the Class?

A group of students who want to spread the unified movement ages 15 and up. We recommend at least 2:1 ratio for athletes to volunteers.

### What is the Benefit to Our School and Students?

Building a school community of acceptance and welcoming of people of all abilities improves the life and experience of all students. This program helps unite students with and without intellectual disabilities as they find a common ground in the joy of sports and play.

### What Skills will my Students Develop?

Curriculum focuses include:

Foundational skills	Striking & kicking
Balance & jumping	Throwing
Trapping & catching	Advanced skills





# UNIFIED JUNIORS

Unified Juniors is an extension of the Young Athletes program that focuses on a variety of sports specific skills that children can use in future sports team participation. Unified Juniors is for children ages 8-12 years old with and without intellectual disabilities.

## HOST A UNIFIED JUNIORS CLASS!

### How can I Start This Program at My School?

Fit this program into school day activities or after-school programming by using our easy-to-follow, one hour, weekly curriculum.

### Cost?

The program is completely free of charge. You simply need a place to run the program (gym, large classroom, outdoor field, etc.) and a staff member passionate about sports and inclusion to serve as a coach!

### What Supplies do We use?

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### What is the Benefit to Our School and Students?

Building a school community of acceptance and welcoming of people of all abilities improves the life and experience of all students. This program helps unite students with and without intellectual disabilities as they find a common ground in the joy of sports and play.

### What Skills will my Students Develop?

Unified Juniors focuses on the following sports:

Poly Hockey  
Soccer  
Softball  
Tennis  
Volleyball

Athletics (Track & Field)  
Aquatics  
Basketball  
Flag Football





# UNIFIED PHYSICAL EDUCATION

## Why Unified Physical Education?

Unified Physical Education provides a unique opportunity for students with and without disabilities to come together through ongoing educational and physical activities, using the power of Special Olympics. The Unified Physical Education course is structured around the national physical education standards and grade-level outcomes.

## Educational benefits for students and the school

- School climate improvement through acceptance, friendship, and social inclusion
- Hands-on leadership development
- Social-emotional learning through student interactions and activities
- Genuine inclusion and sports experiences for students of diverse ability levels
- Students empowered to educate and impact the entire school community

## How do I get started?

- 1- Contact the Special Olympics MN State Office
  - a. We will help support you throughout this journey of inclusion in your school
- 2- Connect with General Education and Special Education Teachers in your school about the class
- 3- Gain Administrative Approval

## This is not your typical physical education course!

Unified Physical Education is a unique opportunity for students of varying ability levels and backgrounds to come together on equal terms through ongoing fitness, sports, leadership and wellness activities. This course focuses on the **physical, intellectual and social growth** of all participants.

## #UnifiedPE



Proud supporters of Unified Physical Education



**SHAPE**  
America  
SOCIETY  
OF HEALTH  
AND PHYSICAL  
EDUCATORS®

# START A UNIFIED TEAM

Through SOMN programming, more than 8,000 people with intellectual disabilities showcase their skills to their peers, their communities and the world. In braving their attempts, they gain new experiences and become confident and empowered by their accomplishments. They also create lifelong bonds with fellow athletes, volunteers and people in their communities.

## What is a Unified Team?

A Unified Team combines students with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. By participating on a Unified team, you will have the chance to break down barriers and stigmas associated with disabilities and build life-long relationships! Let's **#ChangeTheGame** and use sports as the catalyst for social change empowering students to foster inclusion and acceptance.

## How do I Start a Team?

With over 17 different sports offered year-round, there is an opportunity for all schools and students to get involved! Starting a team is a great opportunity to bring students together to work on teamwork, self-esteem, and sport specific skills. The state office is here to help! Contact us today and we will walk you through the process of starting a team in your school.

## Where Does My Team Play?

Special Olympics Minnesota currently offers three options on where your team can play.

**1. Unified Competitions:** students are able to compete against other schools for individual awards (gold, silver, bronze) in a Unified format. Students are required to turn in medical forms, and coaches are required to go through online coach's trainings in order to participate. School teams are eligible to compete in State, National and World Games.

**2. Unified Invitationals:** students are able to play against other schools in a recreational setting. We require a signed waiver form to participate in these events. This option is all about the social aspect of what Unified means.

**3. School Sports:** students can play Unified Sports in their school in whichever way they want. Some examples include but not limited to Unified Kickball, soccer, ballroom dancing, roller blading and basketball.

Ready to get started?



# ● WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

Whole School Engagement supports the development of the student as an individual through bullying prevention and inclusive promotion initiatives that reach entire school populations through engaging and inspiring events. When an entire school accepts and includes students and others with intellectual disabilities, it is a powerful community of change.

**Spread the Word  
Campaign**

**Cool School  
Plunge**

**Unified Dance  
Marathon**

**Respect  
Curriculum**

**Volunteering  
Opportunities**

**“Today’s Classrooms are  
Tomorrow’s Communities”**



# SPREAD THE WORD TO END THE WORD™

Spread the Word to End the Word is an ongoing effort by Special Olympics and our supporters to raise the consciousness of society about dehumanizing and hurtful effects of the r-word and encourage people to pledge to stop using it. The campaign, created by youth, is intended to engage schools organizations and communities to rally and pledge their support at [r-word.org](http://r-word.org) and to promote the inclusion and acceptance of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## Why Pledge?

The R-word is the word 'retard(ed)'. **Why does it hurt?** The R-word hurts because it's exclusive. It's offensive. It's derogatory. The campaign asks people to pledge to stop saying the R-word as a starting point toward creating more accepting attitudes and communities for all people. Language affects attitudes and attitudes affect actions. Pledge today to use respectful, people-first language.

## Why "Intellectual Disability" is Replacing "Mental Retardation"

The R-word, "retard" is slang for the term mental retardation. Mental retardation was what doctors, psychologists, and other professionals used to describe people with significant intellectual impairment. Today the r-word has become a common word used by society as an insult. When used in this way, the r-word can apply to anyone or anything, and is not specific to someone with a disability. But, even when the r-word is not said to harm someone with a disability, it is hurtful. Because of this, Special Olympics, Best Buddies and the greater disability community prefers to focus on people and their gifts and accomplishments, and to dispel negative attitudes and stereotypes. As language has evolved, Special Olympics and Best Buddies have updated their official terminology to use standard, people-first language that is more acceptable to constituents.

## How do I Raise Awareness With This Campaign?

Contact the SOMN State Office!

**More than 20,000 faculty, teachers and students were reached in Minnesota in 2015 through the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign!**



# COOL SCHOOL PLUNGE

Be cool with your school! Take the Cool School Plunge to support Special Olympics Minnesota! Create a team for your school and challenge other schools to see which school is the coolest in town! So what's the challenge? You and your team of classmates will brave the cold and icy waters of Lake Calhoun when you jump on March 2. If that doesn't sound like the best icy cold fun around, get this - you can bring your teachers and your family members along for the Cool School Plunge!

Cool School Plunge\* teams can also take part in our Give Back, Get Unified Fundraiser \*\* to benefit their school.

## The Cool School Plunge takes place March 2, 2018.

There will be fun-filled activities from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., including:

- Free lunch
- Appearance from KDWB DJs
- Costume contest
- Awards for top fundraiser and best spirit
- Unified Sports Expo
- Games, vendors and food
- Face painting and Plunge tattoos
- Pictures with the Plunge mascot, Snowflake
- And so much more!

## Register today!

Register for the Cool School Plunge at **PlungeMN.org** and be sure to select the "Cool School Plunge" in the event drop down menu during the registration process. For students under 18 years old, parents/guardians must fill out the electronic waiver.



**Cool School Plungers raised more than \$98,000 in 2017!**





101.3 KDWB Presents

— UNIFIED —  
**DANCE**  
*Marathon*  
for  
**SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
MINNESOTA**

Looking for a fun group event? Interested in supporting an awesome cause? Come be a part of the third annual Unified Dance Marathon (UDM)! UDM is back and more action-packed than ever, with six hours of non-stop entertainment! Not only do you get to boogie on the dance floor with your friends, but you'll also have the opportunity to raise money for Special Olympics Minnesota!

**WHAT:** Unified Dance Marathon

**WHEN:** Saturday, November 18, 2017 from 2 pm. - 8 pm.

**WHERE:** Mall of America Rotunda, Bloomington, MN

**HOW:** Participants will register online and fundraise a minimum of \$50 to participate.  
The more money you raise, the cooler swag you'll receive!

Speakers, celebrities, musical performances, food and beverage will be available on-site throughout the entire day. A morale committee will keep dancers energized through the day! There will also be a fun dance-related activity that will happen throughout each hour of the Unified Dance Marathon.

**QUESTIONS?**

Contact Maureen Gruys at [maureen.gruys@somn.org](mailto:maureen.gruys@somn.org) or 763.270.7146

**UDMSOMN.ORG**

— UNIFIED —  
**DANCE**  
*Marathon*  
for  
SPECIAL OLYMPICS  
MINNESOTA



# RESPECT CURRICULUM

This **FREE** interactive resource is designed to provide education and engagement tools for teachers and students to educate about compassion, bullying, diversity, service learning and respect as exemplified by Special Olympics movement and athletes.

## Through Respect Curriculum We Can:

**Educate:** Provide youth with school and community-based opportunities and strategies to help them understand their potential and ways to serve as active agents for change in their local, national and global communities.

**Motivate:** Energize youth to unleash their creative leadership potential to respect and advocate with and for persons with disabilities.

**Activate:** Transform communities by inspiring youth to open their minds, accept and include people with intellectual disabilities and, thereby, anyone who is perceived as different.

For more information about the Respect Curriculum visit [getintoit.specialolympics.org/](http://getintoit.specialolympics.org/)

## Activity Ideas:

**Movies that Move:** This is a project designed to reach students in a new, multi-dimensional way, using popular films and TV shows to spark meaningful discussion in the classroom.

***"It's Our School, Too":*** If you're interested in producing a Unified Theater Performance, SOMN has a pre-written script for a cast of 10-20 actors with and without intellectual disabilities to act out together.

**Reading Buddies! Get Into It:** Provides great books with inclusive messages. Have students read to each other or ask for older students to work on reading with younger students.



# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**Volunteers are the backbone of SOMN. There are over 14,000 volunteers annually that serve our athletes! If you are seeking a volunteer opportunity that can make a difference in your life and the lives of others, we want YOU!**

## What Volunteer Opportunities are There?

**Coach:** Coaches are certified by Special Olympics Minnesota and train athletes in a variety of sports. Each sport season is approximately eight weeks long and athletes typically train for one-two hours per week during the course of each season. We are adding new athletes to the program every day, and as we continue to grow, we need additional coaches.

**Unified Partner:** Unified Partners compete alongside Special Olympics athletes. Unified Sports was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.

**Trainer/Clinician:** All coaches within SOMN need to become certified. If you have the experience in a sport to help conduct sport-specific training clinics for coaches, please let us know.

**Official:** Officiating opportunities are available for competitions in many sports, including basketball, poly hockey, softball, volleyball and gymnastics. If you are a certified official or experienced athlete in any of these sports, please contact us to learn how to become an official at an event.

**Competition/Special Event Management:** As we add new events and seek to improve the programs and events we currently offer, we are looking for volunteers who would like to assist in planning and executing competitions and special events for the state, as well as area events in many regions throughout the state.

**Professional Sports Photographers:** Having professional photographs of the athletes as well as activities during the course of an event is very important. We are looking for individuals who have a talent in sports photography and would like to donate their time to take pictures for SOMN.

**Day-of Event Volunteer:** Thousands of volunteers are needed to assist in many aspects of competitions and special events. These duties include score-keeping, timing, officiating, escorting, staging of athletes, score runners, awards assistants and presenters, etc. The time commitment is about 4-6 hours, but the memories last forever. If you have a limited amount of time, but would still like to volunteer, please come out to event near you. It's a rewarding experience!

**“ It was a wonderful experience! I smiled so much the day I volunteered and I am so thankful for my experience. I strongly suggest others volunteer at one of Special Minnesota’s events! ”**

**-Rick S.**



# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES CONTINUED

## Can a Group Volunteer Together?

**Yes!** We love when groups come out to volunteer with us. We accept all school clubs, sports teams, service organizations, and groups of friends/family that are passionate about our athletes. No sports knowledge is necessary, just a heart to serve.

## Are There any Restrictions to Volunteering?

**Under 12 years old:** Events are free, so come out and cheer on our athletes during competitions. We always love fans in the stands!

**Ages 12-14:** Can volunteer alongside a parent (please notify the SOMN State Office before registering).

**Ages 15+:** Can volunteer as an individual.

## How do I get Started?

1. Visit [somn.org/volunteer](http://somn.org/volunteer) for all current volunteering opportunities!
2. Register with our user-friendly system entitled 'CERVIS'
3. Show up to the event and be ready to smile!

**"You make a living by what you get.  
You make a life by what you give."  
-Winston Churchill**

*Live Unified.*





# Sustainability

## Why Fundraise?

School sustainability is a crucial component to SOMN and for the Unified Schools movement. It is SOMN's goal not only to provide resources to Champion Schools, but to help them thrive for years to come. Unified School's vision is to change school climate's towards acceptance and inclusion, and ultimately that will change society as a whole. Special Olympics Minnesota is there to support that cause, but it is truly schools that make it happen.

Fundraising is an important part of growing and sustaining the Unified Schools program. Through the Give Back, Get Unified program, schools are able to fundraise to support their programs through SOMN fundraising events. When individuals/teams participate in the fundraising event a portion of those funds raised go back to the school programs to help with the inclusion and acceptance initiative.

**Give Back, Get Unified:** This program offers two excellent events in which students, staff, administration, teachers, parents and community members can partake in. The Polar Plunge and Unified Dance Marathon are both offered during the school year to enhance Unified Schools programs within the schools.

Also with the Give Back, Get Unified fundraising program, schools can also choose to fundraise within their community:

- Work concessions in your school
- Bake sales at school events such as conferences, back to school night, etc.
- Popcorn sales
- Car washes
- Bowl-a-thon, Walk-a-thon, etc.
- Valentine balloon sales
- Host a fundraising night- some examples include:
  - Ice cream socials
  - Breakfast for dinner night
  - Spaghetti dinner
  - Luau themed event
  - Pancake breakfast, etc.
- Contact local restaurants and see if any would be interested in hosting a fundraising night
- Bag groceries at a local grocery store for tips
- Change buckets- distribute small buckets for change at local businesses
- Host a drive-in movie at a park or your school parking lot

**“ Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only things that ever has. ”**

**-Margaret Mead**

# SCHOOL LIAISONS

The School Liaison is a crucial role for the Unified Schools Program to not only succeed, but thrive. The school liaison will be knowledgeable in Unified Schools initiatives, including the many different ways schools can get involved and grow.

## Who Should be Our School Liaison?

A teacher, para professional, coach, or anyone who works in your school and is passionate about working with special needs students and is supportive of everything Unified Schools embodies.

## Time Commitment and Stipend?

The time commitment will vary, depending on programming needs. There is a stipend available for the School Liaison position. One stipend will be awarded per school. The amount of the stipend might change due to funds available. The stipend will be distributed at the end of the school year, once all reporting from the school is turned in and the school is in good standing with SOMN.

## What are the School Liaison's Responsibilities?

- Complete all necessary paperwork to sign up school
- Report monthly participation numbers to Special Olympics Minnesota for federal grant purposes
- Fill out an annual report and submitting it to Special Olympics Minnesota
- The primary contact with SOMN Staff related to all Unified Schools initiatives. Each Unified School must appoint a School Liaison to work with SOMN staff members. This person will be responsible for communicating with SOMN Staff about inclusive initiatives taking place in your school

## How do I Report Participation Numbers?

You must go to [somn.org/unifiedschools](http://somn.org/unifiedschools) and report the necessary participation information for federal grant reporting purposes. This information is due the last day of each month.





# SOLUTIONS TO COMMON ROADBLOCKS

## **Lack of Funding:**

Special Olympics Minnesota has a School Sustainability Plan that by year three of involvement with the Unified Schools Program each school will be able to run independently and successfully on their own through a unique fundraising strategy.

## **Lack of Administration Support:**

Approach teachers and administration with a specific plan to implement Unified Schools initiatives. Consider inviting SOMN staff to present to them. Please be prepared to show why the Unified Schools Program is important for your school culture. Unified Schools can be implemented into any school setting.

## **Finding Quality Unified Partners and Students Who Care:**

To ensure students are serious and ready to make the commitment to Unified Schools, you may consider using an application and interview process. Special Olympics Minnesota has marketing resources available upon request for use in your school.

## **Finding Volunteers:**

Ask friends at school who can't make the time commitment, but want to be involved. Ask for parental support and work with other service groups including National Honor Society, Student Council, Best Buddies, etc., or partner with other community organizations.

*Live Unified.*





# UNIFIED SCHOOLS SPOTLIGHT



## **Columbia Academy**

Raised \$2,655 through the Polar Plunge  
Competed in the Unified Basketball State Competition  
Competed in the Unified Soccer Area Competition



## **East Ridge High School**

Hosted their first ever Unified Prom  
Over 30 student members in their Unified Club



## **Edina High School**

Offers an inclusive 'Theater for All' semester long class  
Students were selected to compete on the MN United Unified Team  
Team Raised \$6,211 through the Polar Plunge



## **Monticello High School**

Hosted a Spread the Word to End the Word Campaign  
Members participated in the Unified Champion School Conference  
Students danced at the MN SHAPE Conference and UDM



## **Proctor Public Schools**

One of two schools in the state to pilot the Unified PE class  
Raised \$6,371 through the Polar Plunge  
Students danced at the MN SHAPE Conference



## **Redwood Area Schools**

Over 20 students attended the 2017 Youth Summit  
Holds a strong Law Enforcement Torch Run Partnership



## **Wayzata High School**

The top K-12 school in the state raising over \$14,000 through the Polar Plunge  
A pilot school for the Unified PE course in the state  
Attended Unified Bowling and Unified Basketball invitionals  
Competed in the Unified Soccer Area Competition

# RESOURCES

## Classroom

- [specialolympics.org/Sections/What\\_We\\_Do/Project\\_Unify/Project\\_Unify\\_Educator\\_Resources.aspx](http://specialolympics.org/Sections/What_We_Do/Project_Unify/Project_Unify_Educator_Resources.aspx)
- [specialolympics.org/educators/](http://specialolympics.org/educators/)
- [getintoit.specialolympics.org/students/event-planner](http://getintoit.specialolympics.org/students/event-planner)

## Special Olympics

- [somn.org](http://somn.org)
- [specialolympics.org/projectunify.aspx](http://specialolympics.org/projectunify.aspx)
- [specialolympics.org/projectunifyresources/](http://specialolympics.org/projectunifyresources/)
- [r-word.org/](http://r-word.org/)

## Impact of Special Olympics Programming

- <http://bit.ly/2auvSad>
- <http://nyti.ms/2amKYzM>

## Research Studies Conducted

- [media.specialolympics.org/soi/files/healthy-athletes/SpecialOlympics\\_ResearchBibliography.pdf](http://media.specialolympics.org/soi/files/healthy-athletes/SpecialOlympics_ResearchBibliography.pdf)

## Bullying Prevention

- <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/students-with-disabilities.asp>



[somn.org/  
unifiedschools](http://somn.org/unifiedschools)





*Let's break down barriers and foster  
inclusion in every school throughout  
Minnesota!  
Play Unified. Live Unified.*



**Special  
Olympics**  
Minnesota

