

Youth Activation & Leadership

-provides students with and without intellectual disabilities opportunities to take on leadership roles as they work with adults in the school to promote and conduct Unified Champion School activities. See below for ideas, but don't be limited to these! Engage youth as leaders in as many ways as you can.

HOW DOES IT LOOK IN SCHOOLS?

Here are examples of ideas that Unified Champion Schools employed to engage youth as leaders & advocates:

1. Create a Unified Club -*often referred to as a Buddy Club, Partner's Club, Project UNIFY Club or Fan Club*

BENEFITS:

- creates a place for social inclusion that works in the school's structure and schedule
- valuable in schools with limited options (scheduling, etc.) for social inclusion, Unified Sports training
- provides access for the general education students that really want to get involved to serve as advocates and unified partners
- opportunity to raise awareness around the UNIFIED program; don't forget to be recognized in the school's yearbook!
- can work well in all grade levels

2. Include youth with and without intellectual disabilities on any Special Olympics planning committees, including your Unified Champion School Coordinating Team

BENEFITS:

- provides a platform for youth leaders to have a voice in progressing the Unified movement in their school
- ensures that initiatives being implemented will be effective for students
- provides greater insight and influence on engaging other youth
- can work well in all grade levels



- UNIFY existing school clubs, organizations or groups by inviting students with intellectual disabilities to be a part of them (i.e. Beta Club begins to include Special Olympics athletes)

BENEFITS:

-provides a more inclusive school climate as inclusive opportunities are available throughout the school, not just in PE or on the Special Ed hall

- Identify Leadership Roles through Unified Sports experiences- *athletes and partners can run warm-ups, students can serve as peer coaches, students can decide what sports they want to do each semester or students could host younger athletes for a unified event*



BENEFITS:

-youth find their voice in an inclusive environment, learning to respect one another and lead among peers of all backgrounds

-youth develop ownership and pride in Unified Sports once they are leaders in the movement

-adults learn new ideas, preferences and best practices from youth

-effective strategy for any age group

- Engage youth leaders as ambassadors, promoting Unified programs to other schools (especially feeder elementary or middle school) or the larger community

- Empower youth to recruit new players for the upcoming season-ensuring that the turnover of students as they progress through school does not leave a Unified Sports program empty-handed; these youth leaders could also have a voice in the selection of players, such as those who apply to be in a Unified PE class

