



Unified Champion School Letter of Intent 2025-2026

This letter is a formal expression of our school's commitment to inclusion, acceptance and respect of all students through the implementation of the Unified Champion School® model. Our students and teachers will make efforts to continually improve as an inclusive community for everyone, especially students with Intellectual Disabilities (ID). Students with and without ID will be empowered to lead the efforts to improve the climate at our school with teacher and administrative support.

Unified Champion School activities are comprised of three main components:

- **Inclusive Sports:** Sports participation involving people with and without intellectual disabilities
- **Youth Leadership:** Newly formed clubs or an existing school club which plan/carry out activities for/with Special Olympics athletes
- **Whole School Engagement:** Campaign(s) to encourage acceptance of people with intellectual disabilities and educate students about this population through activities such as pledge drives and other school activities

As a school/district, we understand that in order to receive monetary support from Special Olympics Iowa, we commit to participate in at least 1 activity in each component. Please check mark the boxes of the activities your school would like to participate in.

UNIFIED SPORTS

- ☒ **Unified/Inclusive P.E.**
- ☒ **Unified Team Sports** (ex: unified cheerleading at your school or competing with SOIA)
- ☐ **Young Athletes Program (elementary):** Sport and play program focused on developing motor skills for two to seven year olds
- ☐ **Unified Fitness**
- ☐ **Other:** _____

INCLUSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP

- ☒ **Unified Clubs:** Students plan/carry out recreational activities for/with Special Olympics athletes at school or in the community
- ☐ **Youth Activation Committee:** Participate in the Statewide YAC or create a committee within your school
- ☐ **Youth Summit:** Attend the free statewide Youth Summit during the 2025-2026 school year
- ☐ **Unified Young Readers Club:** A resource that covers topic such as inclusion, awareness, friendship, bullying and acceptances to young audiences of students with and without intellectual disabilities
- ☒ **Best Buddies**
- ☐ **Other:** Student Coaches, Student Volunteers, Mentor Program (Middle or High School students mentor Elementary students on Unified initiatives)
- ☐ **Other:** _____



WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

- ☒ **Inclusion Week/Spread The Word Campaign:** Students and faculty will organize campaigns encouraging respect, tolerance and acceptance for all
- ☒ **Fans in the Stands:** Students cheer as fans for Special Olympics athletes at school events or local competitions
- ☒ **Pep Rallies:** Students lead a school wide assembly to promote respect and acceptance in the hallways
- ☐ **Cool School Plunge:** Raise money and support Special Olympics Iowa athletes by jumping into frigid water!
- ☐ **Unified Sports Day/Young Athletes Play Day:** Hosted by the school.
- ☐ **Other:** Unified Challenge (school-wide challenge to promote inclusion ex: SOIA step challenge)
- ☐ **Other:** _____

As a Unified Champion School, your school is eligible to receive the following resources

- Special Olympics Young Athletes kit: curriculum, equipment, training
- Funding for materials to support your Inclusion Week activities
- Opportunity to participate in a statewide Youth Activation Committee/Summit for no charge
- Inclusive Youth Leadership Guide
- Special Olympics Iowa staff support

All Unified Champion Schools will be required to include:

- Student leadership roles in carrying out the initiatives of the Unified Champion School® model with an emphasis on 'athlete' involvement in some manner
- Completion of online survey at semester and the end of the year is to be completed by the school liaison
- Brief monthly reports which can be completed by student or educator
- Use the Special Olympics Unified Champion School® logo on all printed materials.
- Work towards financial sustainability of their school program

Financial Sustainability:

All Special Olympics Iowa Unified Champion Schools are required to be on a track of financial sustainability for their school programs. Special Olympics Iowa will provide occasional financial support to school programs for up to three years depending on available grant funds. Funding levels may vary each year of participation in the Unified Champion School program.



**Thank you for agreeing to participate in
Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools@!**

Congratulations on becoming a Unified Champion School for the 2025-2026 school year. Please create a proposed budget for your Unified Champion School Funds which must all be expensed within the following period of performance (September 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026).

Desired Outcome:

With your participation, SOIA will be able to continue providing significant positive outcomes for participants, promote positive school climates, develop physical fitness, build character, prevent bullying, enhance student engagement and promote student leadership skills.

Requirement a Unified Champion@ School District:

In order to receive UCS grant funding schools within a Unified Champion School District will focus on a minimum of one activity from each of the three core UCS components mentioned below:

- 1) Unified Sports
- 2) Youth Leadership
- 3) Whole-School Engagement

Budgeting for 2025-2026:

As a Unified Champion School, you have been approved for funding in the amount of **\$1,000**. To receive these funds, you agree to:

- Submit a proposed budget that accounts for how your program will use your Unified Champion School funds.
- Have school liaisons participate in a survey at the end of the school year (administered by University of Massachusetts).
- Provide photos of unified programs (only of students with photo releases)

Examples of Budget Line Items & Guidelines:

Supplies: Paper, markers, wood for signs, stickers, posters, etc.

Equipment: Uniforms, sports equipment, banners (that are reusable), etc.

Transportation: May include bus expense to Special Olympics Iowa/Unified Champion Schools related events and competitions including State Games.

Lodging: Lodging for athletes and Unified partners and school staff attending Special Olympics programs.

Provisions- Food and/or refreshments for an event; snacks during training session, etc. This line item should not exceed 20% of your overall budget. This does NOT include pizza parties, ice cream parties, etc.

Coaches stipends, bowling lanes and gym rental fees, conference attendance, and coaches training costs are also acceptable budget items for Unified Champion School programs.



Commitment and Certification

Certification:

By signing this Application Form, the school district representative certifies that:

- the information provided is accurate and that any awarded funds received have been, and/or will be used according to the stated purpose during the funding cycle as stated above;
- Grantee will comply with all Special Olympics general rules and SOIA policies during all Unified Champion Schools® and Special Olympics programming;
- Grantee will provide SOIA with regular progress reports as stated in the Grant Application;
- Your school/district will follow all Unified Champion School branding guidelines when ordering/printing uniforms and/or promotional materials.
- Below signatures represent persons with the authority to commit the school to these conditions.

Administrator's Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

School Liaison's Signature:  _____

Printed Name: Curt Castenson Date: 9/26/25



2025-2026 Budget Agreement

Please enter proposed expenses for your grant funding amount of \$1,000 and what event or program this line item will support (ie: Unified Sports, Unified PE class, rivalry game, young athletes program, Inclusion Week, Youth Summit, State Games, etc). After completing your proposed budget, please provide justification for your desired expenses, sign the commitment and certification, and email this page to gpoots@soiowa.org or fax to 515-986-5520.

SCHOOL NAME:		
2025-2026 BUDGET for Unified Champion Schools Grant:	Grant Award Funding for Line Item:	Event/Program Utilizing Grant Funds (Inclusion Week, Summer Games, Unified P.E. Etc.):
Budget Line Item:		
SUPPLIES	\$	
EQUIPMENT/UNIFORMS	\$ 8.00	unified sports - basketball
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 2.00	unified PE transportation to events - unified PE Special Olympics
LODGING	\$	
COACH/TEACHER STIPEND	\$	
INCLUSION SHIRTS	\$	
OTHER (list additional items as needed)	\$	
TOTAL:	\$	

Budget Justification: Briefly explain why your request for funds is necessary for each line item.

SUPPLIES:

EQUIPMENT: equipment for track & field to be used for unified PE & special olympics practice. Uniforms for the unified basketball team.

TRANSPORTATION:

Transportation to & from events for special olympics

LODGING:

OTHER:

School Participation Numbers	
Number of Athletes (Typically a Special Education student)	15
Number of Unified partners (Typically a General Education student)	20