



HOW TO BECOME A CHAMPIONS TOGETHER UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOL



Steps to success:

Commit to making it happen

- This will be hard work and take some time. Are you up to it?
- Start NOW! It's never too early to start. The longer you wait the more difficult it becomes.
- It has been achieved when starting as late as April. It is just MUCH more difficult.

Form an inclusive student leadership team

- Find other students have the heart, mind and commitment and want to make a positive difference.
- 12-20 students (inclusive-grade levels, gender, general ed/special ed, etc.) reflecting diversity of your school.
- They do NOT all have to be current IHSAA athletes.
- This can be a group of friends, a group (school Student Athlete Council, Best Buddies, Student Council, National Honor Society, Key Club, etc.) or have a call out to form a new club.
- Seek those who understand difference between doing this **FOR** and doing this **WITH** persons with special needs.

Why a student leadership team?

- Champions Together was formed to be **STUDENT** driven, **NOT** more work for administrators and teachers.
- You **can't** do it alone. This is the only way to make it truly successful.
- Even if you do, it will not last. This is the only way to make it truly sustainable.

Why should students join a Champions Together leadership team or club?

- You will change the culture of your school and leave a legacy of inclusion and respect.
- You'll all learn a lot.
- It will be **FUN!**
- It will be worth it. (It also looks great on college applications!)

Find a teacher/coach that MIGHT be willing to mentor group

- You'll need an adult to mentor to handle things like scheduling meetings and providing supervision.
- Find a teacher, coach or administrator with an open heart and open mind.
- Invite them to Activation Meeting to learn more.

Seek support of principal and/or athletic director

- You'll need their support and encouragement to be successful. But...
- Let them know it is a **STUDENT** run program and they will **NOT** be asked to do all (or even most) of the work.
- Let them know that you are committed. Most educators have a hard time saying no to committed students.
- Find a solution to every obstacle they present. Don't simply quit before you try to find a way to succeed.

Seek support of special education teachers (if applicable)

- They have great suggestions.
- They are already committed to doing the best for their students.
- It will be much easier if they are involved from the beginning.

Schedule Champions Together Activation Meeting

- Get the approval of your advisor and principal to schedule a meeting
- Contact one of the following to schedule: **Brian Avery**, bavery@ihsaa.net, 317-752-5713 or **Mike Hasch**, mhasch@soindiana.org, 317-328-2005

This is the most important step in the process. Purpose is to introduce your team to Champions Together and get their ownership in implementation. Normally scheduled about for 25 minutes during the school day. Ideally it would include:

- 12-20 student leaders
- Administrator
- Someone from athletic department
- Someone from special education department
- Adult interested in mentoring group
- Anyone else interested

We would ask that you supply a digital projector with sound so that we can share a Power Point and video during the meeting.

Develop plan to earn banner

You get specifics during Activation Meeting

1. Inclusive Student Leadership options
2. Whole School Engagement Options
3. Unified Sports options
4. Fundraising options

Schedule a Virtual Champions Together Whole School Engagement activity (if available)

- Must be scheduled by administrator or teacher
- Contact is Craig Tornquist, ctornquist@soindiana.org, (574) 360-0853

Implement plan

- Get the events on the calendar
- Distribute responsibilities and deadlines
- Hold yourselves accountable

Form team for next year and set them up for success

- Continue your legacy by having underclassmen “shadow” leaders
- Get commitments from them to carry on program

Celebrate by Attending 6th Annual Champions Together Awards Luncheon

- Friday, June 14, 2024, Ritz Charles (just north of IHSAA)
- 4 complimentary tickets per honored school, additional tickets available to purchase at cost

One Way to Earn Unified Champion School Banner in 1 week

1. **Inclusive Student Leadership** Team plans a
2. **Whole School Engagement** theme week (e.g., respect, inclusion, R-Word, disability awareness, etc.)
3. centered around the **Unified Basketball** game (or any other sport) on Friday night against your biggest rival and
4. sponsor provided t-shirts sold as a **Fundraiser for Special Olympics Indiana**.

Guaranteed to be one of the highlights of your school year.