



UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

Building on Special Olympics’ values, principles, practices and impacts, the Unified Champion Schools® (UCS) program promotes social inclusion through intentionally planned and implemented activities affecting systems-wide change. Our goal is to engage students of all ages and abilities and to help shape a Unified Generation that Chooses to Include.

With sports as the foundation, the UCS model offers a unique combination of effective activities that equip young people with tools and training to create sports, classroom and school climates of acceptance. These are climates where students with disabilities feel welcome and are routinely included in, and feel a part of, all activities, opportunities and functions.

This is accomplished by implementing the program’s four pillars: inclusive youth leadership opportunities, Unified Sports®, whole school engagement and collaborative fundraising. The program is designed to be woven into the fabric of the school, enhancing current efforts and providing rich opportunities that lead to meaningful change in creating a socially inclusive school that supports and engages all students, teachers, and administrators.

WHAT MAKES A UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOL?

<p>Inclusive Youth Leadership</p> <p>Opportunities for youth with and without intellectual disabilities to become agents of change within their school, community, and state.</p>	<p>Special Olympics Unified Sports®</p> <p>Students develop athletic skills while forming friendships, fostering respect for each other, and becoming leaders on and off the playing field.</p>	<p>Whole School Engagement</p> <p>An important feature of creating a socially inclusive school climate is engaging the entire school community in the process.</p>	<p>Collaborative Fundraising</p> <p>School communities work together to raise the money needed to ensure that the UCS program is self-sustaining and can continue to grow.</p>
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CHAMPIONS AT EVERY LEVEL

As a global leader in the implementation of UCS programming, SOIN works with partners including the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA), the Indiana Middle Level Education Association (IMLEA), the Indiana Council of Administrators of Special Education (ICASE), and Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) to reach more than 260,000 students in over 650 Indiana schools each year.



Participating schools are challenged to engage their entire school community in inclusive activities and to achieve certain goals related to each of the four pillars of the UCS program. Schools that meet or exceed each of these milestones in a given school year are awarded a recognition banner, while those that go above and beyond may be eligible for national recognition by Special Olympics North America.

STATE OFFICE CONTACTS

Unified Champion Schools
Collegiate
High School
Middle School
Preschool and Elementary
Urban and City Schools
School Assemblies

Mike Hasch (mhasch@soindiana.org)
Matt Jones (mjones@soindiana.org)
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Chris Akers (cakers@soindiana.org)
Craig Tornquist (ctornquist@soindiana.org)

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BANNER PROGRAM

The Unified Champion School partnerships with the Indiana High School Athletic Association (Champions Together), Indiana Middle Level Education Association (Champions Together in the Middle), and Indiana Council of Administrators of Special Education (Young Champions) will provide a Unified Champion School banner to all partnership member schools that meet all of the following UCS goals:

1. All school sponsored activities must be planned, organized and administered by an Inclusive Student Leadership team that strives to do things WITH students with intellectual disabilities NOT FOR them.
2. The school must participate in at least one activity designed around Whole School Engagement that promotes and encourages awareness, respect and inclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities.
3. The school must organize and participate in at least one Unified Sports® activity, such as IHSAA Unified Track & Field or Unified Flag Football, Unified Bocce or Unified Bowling, Unified Robotics, Unified eSports, Unified Cornhole, a Unified practice or clinic, or Unified competition with students with intellectual disabilities OR Special Olympics athletes.
4. Fundraising: a school must raise a minimum of \$1,500 (high school), \$750 (middle school), or \$250 (elementary) for the support and expansion of Unified Champion Schools programs.

UCS FUNDRAISERS

Please contact Mike Hasch (mhasch@soindiana.org) or Matt Jones (mjones@soindiana.org) when you begin planning a fundraising event so they can establish a UCS fundraising page to monitor your donations and credit your school toward the Unified Champion Schools banner award.

UNIFIED CHAMPION CITY SCHOOLS

Special Olympics North America Unified Champion City Schools (UCCS) is a new initiative that began in the fall of 2021. UCCS is a focused approach to amplify the essential elements of Unified Champion Schools within city school districts. UCCS utilizes three interconnected components for social inclusion in schools:

- Inclusive Youth Leadership: when young people of all abilities are given opportunities to be leaders in their schools and communities.
- Whole-school engagement: creates a school climate that fosters understanding and respect for all and can influence how students think and act within and beyond the school.
- Unified Sports®: brings together people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team.

SOIN is one of the few state programs which focuses on expanding inclusive programming within city school districts. Contact Chris Akers (cakers@soindiana.org) for more details.



SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

Hosted by comedian Craig Tornquist, our high-energy school assemblies are a fun and uplifting way to engage students while learning about Champions Together and Unified Champion Schools. Best known for his love of audience participation, Craig has delighted more than 3,000 school assembly crowds across the country and is joined by SOIN staff and student ambassadors in providing an overview of our program.

YOUTH AMBASSADOR ALUMS

The Special Olympics U.S. Youth Ambassadors include 30 youth leaders with and without intellectual disabilities striving to make the nation a more inclusive place for all. They advocate, share stories, and demonstrate the values of Inclusive Youth Leadership across the country. Unified athletes Mitch Bonar (Noblesville HS '15, Indiana Wesleyan U. '22) and Liam Price (Center Grove HS '20, Univ. of Indianapolis '24) along with Unified partners Abby Abel (Carmel HS '15, Purdue U. '19) and Elizabeth Price (Carmel HS '21, Elon University '25) are Indiana alums of the program. Interested in being a National Youth Ambassador? Please contact Mike Hasch.



ChampionsTogether
IndianaUCS



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@Indianaucs



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@indianaucs



Championstogether
SOIN Unified
Champion Schools



@champstogether

Unified Sports®

HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS

UNIFIED BOCCE
HOSTED BY: SOIN

STATE CHAMPION:
2025 – Lafayette Jefferson
High School
STATE RUNNER UP:
2025 – Chesterton
High School

NEXT STATE EVENT:
September 20, 2026

UNIFIED BOWLING
HOSTED BY: SOIN
HS DIVISION

STATE CHAMPION:
2025 – Lafayette Jefferson
High School
OPEN DIVISION
STATE CHAMPION:
2025 – Cathedral
High School

NEXT STATE EVENT:
March 7 & 14, 2026

UNIFIED FLAG FOOTBALL
HOSTED BY: IHSAA

STATE CHAMPION:
2025 – DeKalb
High School
STATE RUNNER-UP:
2025 – Warren Central
High School

NEXT STATE EVENT:
October 17, 2026

UNIFIED TRACK & FIELD
HOSTED BY: IHSAA

STATE CHAMPION:
2025 – Elkhart
High School
STATE RUNNER UP:
2025 – Penn
High School

NEXT STATE EVENT:
June 6, 2026

**2025 Unified
Bocce Schools**

**2025 Unified
Bowling
Schools**

**2025 Unified Flag Football
Schools**

**2025 Unified Track &
Field Schools**

Bishop Chatard	Arsenal Tech	Avon	Indpls Arsenal Tech	Avon	Lafayette Jefferson
Blackford	Bishop Chatard	Bedford N. Lawrence	Jasper	Bedford N. Lawrence	Lake Central
Carmel	Blackford	Ben Davis	Lawrence Central	Ben Davis	LaPorte
Cathedral	Bloomington N.	Blackford	Manchester	Blackford	LaVille
Chesterton	Carmel	Brownsburg	McCutcheon	Bloomington North	Lawrence Central
DeKalb	Cathedral	Carmel	Mooresville	Bloomington South	Lawrence North
East Noble	Daleville	Carroll (FW)	New Haven	Bluffton	Martinsville McCutcheon
Edgewood	DeKalb	DeKalb	Noblesville	Boonville	Michigan City
Fishers	East Noble	East Chicago Central	North Wood	Brownsburg	Mishawaka
Franklin Comm.	Edgewood	East Noble	Perry Meridian	Carmel	Mooresville
Griffith	Evansville North	Elkhart	Pike	Carroll (FW)	Mt Vernon (Posey)
Hamilton Heights	Fishers	Fishers	Silver Creek	Castle	Munster
Hamilton SE	Griffith	Floyd Central	SB Adams	Center Grove	New Albany
Lafayette Jefferson	Hamilton Heights	Franklin Central	Southport	Chesterton	New Castle
Lawrence Central	Hamilton SE	Franklin Community	Tippecanoe Valley	Columbia City	New Palestine
North Central	Lafayette CC	Goshen	Twin Lakes	Columbus East	Noblesville
Pendleton Heights	Lafayette Jeff	Greenwood Comm.	Valparaiso	Columbus North	Northview
Perry Meridian	Lawrence Central	Griffith	Warren Central	Crown Point	NorthWood
Roncalli	Lawrenceburg	Hamilton Heights	Warsaw	Decatur Central	Norwell
Twin Lakes	Madison Con.	Hamilton Southeastern	Wawasee	DeKalb	Northwood
Washington Twsp.	Manchester	Harrison (WL)	Westfield	Delta	Pendleton Heights
Woodlan	Martinsville	Homestead	Whiteland	East Chicago Central	Penn
	Mooresville	Indian Creek	Zionsville	East Noble	Perry Central
	Muncie Central			Edgewood	Perry Meridian
	Noblesville			Elkhart	Pike
	North Central			Evansville Bosse	Plainfield
	North Putnam			Evansville North	Portage
	Perry Meridian			Fishers	Roncalli
	Roncalli			Floyd Central	Rushville Consolidated
	South Ripley			FW North Side	Seymour
	Tippecanoe Valley			Franklin Central	Silver Creek
	Twin Lakes			Franklin Community	South Bend Adams
	Valparaiso			Franklin County	South Bend Riley
	Washington Twsp.			Goshen	Southport
	Westfield			Greenwood Community	Southridge
	Woodlan			Griffith	Terre Haute North
				Hamilton Heights	Terre Haute South
				Hamilton Southeastern	Twin Lakes
				Harrison (WL)	Valparaiso
				Hobart	Vincennes Lincoln
				Homestead	Warren Central
				Indian Creek	Warsaw
				Indpls. Arsenal Tech	Wawasee
				Jasper	West Lafayette
				Jennings County	West Noble
				Jimtown	Western
				Kankakee Valley	Westfield
				Kokomo	Whiteland
					Zionsville

