



Unified Clubs & Unified Recreation

Unified Clubs: empower youth with and without intellectual disabilities to promote social justice through a variety of athletic, social, academic, and recreational opportunities.

Examples of Unified Club Activities: These youth-led clubs are encouraged to design and implement their own projects involving Spread the Word to End the Word activities, awareness campaigns, Fans in the Stands, Unified Recreation, inclusive activities and events in their schools and communities.

Unified Recreation: An inclusive recreational sports program that is comprised of teams with at least 25% athletes or partners. Activities must be physical.

Examples of Unified Recreation:

- **Young Athletes-** for ages 2-7, this is a sport-skill development program that prepares kids for sports through physical, cognitive, and social development. It can be implemented during, before or after the school day, or on weekends.
- **Physical Education Class-** A physical education class includes students with and without intellectual disabilities and focuses on a specific sport every class period for a season.
- **Unified Club- playing sport recreationally as part of club activities-** A group of club members with and without intellectual disabilities bowling on Saturday afternoons as a regular part of club activities.
- **Intramural team or community free/open play-** A group of university students invites local Special Olympics Athletes to play volleyball on Sunday evenings. The school opens up their gym the first Monday of every-month during lunches for an inclusive open play.
- **Exhibitions/demonstrations-** One-day events, including *Unified Sports Experiences*, are held with a school, community sports club or community sports organization that feature individuals with and without intellectual disabilities as teammates for the purpose of awareness, exposure and/or fundraising.
 - o **Unified Exhibition Soccer Match-** Multi-school event or single school event. Showcases what Unified Sports are, builds awareness, and provides a safe and fun environment for students with and without disabilities to work together and build new friendships.
 - o **High School Sports teams team up with Special Education Students** and teach students different skills and techniques while shattering stereotypes and breaking down barriers.

Who can run a Unified Club or Unified Recreation?

Any adult in the school, such as teachers, coaches, Para-educators, advisors, etc. Can be volunteered or paid.

When does a Unified Club or Unified Recreation meet?

The meeting times are very flexible and is adapted to each school's interest. Many Unified Clubs meet either weekly or monthly during lunch, advisory, after or before school, other schools use there Adaptive/Inclusive PE class time etc. Unified Recreation can often take place during those club meetings, but also may be a one-time event like an Exhibition Day, Unified Sports Experience etc.

Staff to Student Ratio: This ratio is dependent on school policies.

Cost: Depends on the activity.





Competitive Unified Sports

Competitive Unified Sports: Inclusive sports program with approximately equal number of athletes (persons with intellectual disabilities) and partners (persons without intellectual disabilities) who are **similar in age and ability** and train and compete together for a scheduled season or class.

Sport Seasons:

- **Fall:** Unified Flag Football & Unified Bowling
- **Winter:** Unified Basketball & Unified Snowshoeing
- **Spring:** Unified Soccer & Unified Athletics (Track)



What does a typical Unified Sports season look like?

- 12 Week long season
- Practice twice/week for at least 1 hour each
- Compete in weekly league play each week against another school's Competitive Unified Sports team **OR** compete in monthly tournaments where schools play multiple games against other schools in their league.
- Compete in Regional/District Tournament
- If team qualifies at Regionals/District, they will advance to state



Who can run Unified Sports? Any adult in the School District can be in charge Unified Sports or someone from the community. For example: teachers, coaches, Para-educators, advisors, etc. Can be volunteered or paid.

When can the team practice? Before or after school, during inclusive/adaptive PE, lunch, advisory, early release days

Staff to Student Ratio: 1:4

Cost:

- Transportation- Dependent on if there is weekly game play or monthly game play. \$800-\$2,000
- Uniforms- Can be extra or left over from previous sports or can be bought brand new.
- Equipment- Use existing equipment from other teams or buy new equipment.
- Coaches- Can be paid by a modified stipend or can be volunteered
 - Modified stipend- approx. \$800 for head coach and \$600 for assistant coach.

Insurance: Special Olympics will act as a secondary insurance during Special Olympics activities. This covers anyone involved.





Benefits of Unified Sports & Clubs

Unified Sports and Clubs go beyond simply providing fun, social opportunities for students with and without disabilities. By providing opportunities for social inclusion, students are gaining understanding, becoming more accepting, treating others with respect, and creating new friendships. And as those are happening, they are also increasing their confidence, reengaging in the classroom, earning higher grades, and feeling a part of the school community.

Benefits to the Education system in Washington:

- Assistance in providing increased opportunities for students of all ability levels,
- Assistance in facilitating meaningful inclusive opportunities within the school environment,
- Introduce students without intellectual disabilities (partners) to the gifts and talents of students with intellectual disabilities,
- Practical opportunities to learn about diversity and tolerance,
- Opportunities to foster positive character development,
- Opportunities to gain lifelong skills, physical fitness, acceptance and inclusion.
- Opportunities for service learning,
- Support for Individual Education Programs related to:
 - Least Restrictive Environment,
 - Learning and practicing life skills, communication skills, and community living skills,
 - Physical Education programs,
 - Participation with non-disabled peers,
 - Transition Planning,
 - Acknowledge and promoting all levels of ability,
 - Family involvement (sibling, parent, extended),
 - Supplementary aids and services – relationships with peers may transfer into assistance in the classroom on academics and behavior,
- Opportunities for professional development statewide and within the school,
- Assistance with strategies for family involvement in the program



Benefits to the Students:

- Promotion of sports, lifelong fitness and recreation skills,
- Assistance to students in developing positive relationships,
- Build positive character traits, such as patience, compromise, sharing responsibility, and helping others,
- Opportunities for students to use leadership skills to contribute to their school and community,
- Opportunities to identify, develop and practice academic, social, and athletic skills,
- 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.

Benefits to Special Olympics Washington:

- Assistance in furthering its efforts to fulfill the Special Olympics Washington mission by providing people with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to develop sports skills, demonstrate skills, experience joy, and share gifts with family, friends, and the community,
- Continuation of statewide outreach efforts,
- Assistance from professionals in the field of education, youth, disabilities, and sports/physical fitness,
- Ability to provide support to local community programs,
- Facilitation of growth of Special Olympics Washington programs statewide.



The Partnership

Special Olympics Washington provides opportunities and resources for student learning, professional development, and administration of programs. We recognize the importance of school district endorsement and involvement in the success of this program. Our goal for this partnership is to meet the needs of the school district as well as lay the foundation for future collaboration between Special Olympics Washington and school districts across the state.

Special Olympics Washington provides:

- Inclusive extra-curricular and sports programs for students of all abilities;
- Consultation, education, training, support and technical assistance for all sports programs and activities that promote inclusion, acceptance, respect and dignity for all students;
- Policies and procedures, training manuals, schedules, Athlete and Unified Sports Partner paperwork, General Rules etc.;
- Special Olympics Washington staff dedicated to development, implementation and administration of programs;
- Resources to support school based unified activities (as agreed);
- Get Into It service-learning curriculum for all ages, aligned with national standards;
- Assistance transitioning students from school to community Special Olympics programs;
- Special Olympics Washington logo and communications resources such as press releases, media contacts etc. used to introduce and promote programs;
- Formal recognition of collaboration between Special Olympics Washington and the school.

School provides:

- Endorsement from administration;
- Schools, educators, and students to develop and implement programs;
- Assistance with sanction of unified clubs in schools;
- Assistance with annual evaluation of programs, including Monthly Impact, Mid-term, and Final Reports submitted to Special Olympics Washington;
- Assistance with long term planning for the program within the school district;
- Compliance to all Special Olympics Washington policies and procedures, Athlete and Unified Sports Partner paperwork, General Rules;
- Formal recognition of collaboration between the school and Special Olympics Washington.



Special Olympics Washington

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