

October Newsletter



Unified Physical Education brings students with and without intellectual disabilities together, as equals, in a physical education setting where all students earn physical education credit, thus putting all students on equal footing. In the Unified Physical Education course, all students will work toward meeting the grade-level outcomes required by the school district.

Highlights from Missouri Schools



**Odessa High School
Recognized as National
Banner Unified Champion
School**

"National Banner Status means a step towards a Unified Generation for our students, our community, and our future. We look forward to continuing to grow opportunities for our students and for students in surrounding communities to help our students feel seen, heard, and connected. To receive this honor through Special Olympics makes us proud of the student-led work that has been done, the support from our incredible community, and the motivation from our staff to make tomorrow better for everyone."
Elizabeth Fagre, Director of Special Education



**Poplar Bluff High School
Recognized as National
Banner Unified Champion
School**

"Oh my gosh! I am so happy that we got it! I'm happy because it helps improve the positive environment and helps change the community."
Emily Faith, Co-Secretary for Unified Champions and Unified Athlete

I think that it is pretty cool that we got recognized nationally. It is important to work together when we all have different abilities because it helps improve our future."
Cooper Ball, Unified Athlete



**Webb City Junior High
Recognized as National
Banner Unified Champion
School**

Our building motto is "Every Cardinal, Every Day." Our school leadership team is passionate about each one of our students believing that they are cared for and they belong in our building. The Unified Cardinals program has been instrumental in helping us move closer to achieving that goal. Watching our students participate in this program and then apply the skills that they are learning has been one of the most impactful moments in my career as an administrator. We

Read more:

<https://somo.org/release-three-more-missouri-schools-named-national-banner-unified-champion-schools/>

"I am so proud of the students and staff at Poplar Bluff High. They all work so hard each day to make our school environment a positive place for students of all abilities. Receiving this recognition helps the community see the good things that are happening at our school. It is so easy to focus on only the negative and our students and staff work hard each day to change that focus."

Miranda Huddleston
Special Olympics Coach, Co-Unified Champions Advisor

Being nationally recognized for our schools' contribution to inclusion is a very thrilling experience. I think first and foremost respect is an integral part of any environment and to be recognized as a standout proponent of respect and tolerance is very validating. We are not done, not even close, if anything this achievement proves that we need to continue to grow and promote a hospitable environment for everyone.

Spencer Wilson, Co-Vice President of Unified Champions

This recognition will hopefully allow our school to continue to grow as a place where all students feel they belong and are accepted, and all students have the opportunity to participate in activities they love!

Joan Lack, Assistant Special Olympics Coach and Adaptive PE Teacher

Being recognized as a National Banner School, to me, means that I can be proud of the environment that our school's students are in every day. This banner symbolizes that each individual, no matter what their capabilities are, has a group of people around them who want them to fulfill their potential.

Noah Shirrell, Co-President of Unified Champions

It means so much to me. I've always loved the idea of Special Olympics and what it stands for so the fact that we got the

are so proud of our students and staff! We are thrilled to be a National Banner Unified Champion School!

Tamara Ponce, Principal

Kristin Huff, Special Education Teacher-

The Unified Champion Schools program has transformed our school culture, uniting us under the motto 'Together We Can Do Great Things.' This year, we witnessed not only our students building authentic relationships, but also our dedicated staff coming together to ensure every child feels a sense of belonging at Webb City Junior High. This recognition holds deep meaning for us, as it reflects our unwavering commitment to inclusivity and unity.

Kristin Huff, Special Education Teacher

National Banner Award is such a great accomplishment. Maison Dennis, Co-Treasurer of Unified Champions and Unified Athlete

I am so proud of our students. Without the recognition, this is what they do and who they are. This accolade simply helps recognize and brings in resources to do more good for all of our kids.

Jennie Randolph, Co-Unified Champions Advisor; Co-Student Council Advisor, Assistant Special Olympics Coach



Festus High School Recognized, Once Again, as National Banner Unified Champion School

"It's exciting because the impact our program has had throughout the district is shown through this banner. I think it represents all the students, hours, and hard work dedicated to the project." Cece Meppiel, Unified Partner & Student Leader

"I love that our programs are growing and that more students want to be involved. It's important to us to continue this throughout our districts and make Festus a more inclusive environment day by day." Saigel Mickan, Unified Partner & Student Leader

"Being chosen as a National Banner Unified Champion School is a true honor. We have created programs throughout our school district that teach, promote, and model inclusion



2nd Annual Choose to Include Event

On September 20th, Lee's Summit School District hosted their 2nd Annual Choose to Include event. The fun-filled day is a field trip experience for K-12 students from across the district to come together and promote inclusion! All involved have the opportunity to promote involvement in Unified Sports, as well as inviting students to join existing clubs, activities and athletics.



7th Annual Unified Night Lights

On the night of September 20th, students throughout Kirkwood School District held the 7th annual "Unified Night Lights" flag football event at Kirkwood High School. The event included not only football players, but equally as important, cheerleaders, dance team members and pep band members. The community-wide celebration was amazing for all a great showcase of the unified movement in Kirkwood!

through all grade levels. The impact of these programs creates increased student interest in becoming leaders through inclusion. Students are eager to learn the leadership skills needed to run these programs to teach all students the importance of inclusion and belonging."

Jena Bohn, Special Education Instructor

Resources and Ideas for your School

Make your game plan, complete the Partnership for Inclusion 2023-24. Schools in the unified movement are invited to submit the [2023-24 Partnership for Inclusion](#) online form, which will register your campus as an official Unified Champion School in '23-'24. Please communicate with your student leaders and educators when planning for each of the three UCS components (Inclusive Youth Leadership, Whole School Engagement and Unified Sports & Activities).

Join us for an Inclusive Youth Leadership Summit

Special Olympics Missouri's Training for Life Campus
305 Special Olympics Dr. Columbia, Mo 65101

Thursday, Nov 16th 9:30-1:30

Register students by October

26th at: <https://form.jotform.com/231984279877074>

Unified pairs will rotate through a variety of leadership and sports activities. Bring a 1:1 ratio of athletes (students with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability) to Unified partners. This is not a SOMO competition, therefore students do not need to be registered SOMO athletes and Unified partners to participate. Lunch will be provided.



Youth Innovation Projects

Are you ready to promote inclusion in your community?

Special Olympics awards project-based grants to young people with and without intellectual disabilities. These grants fund youth-led projects that promote inclusion in schools and communities across the globe. [Grant application](#) deadline is November 1st, 2023.

YOUTH ACTIVATION COMMITTEE

This statewide, student lead committee will meet monthly (first Thursday of the month at 3:30 p.m. via zoom) for students to gain leadership skills and collaborate on providing inclusive opportunities to impact students across the state. Unified pairs (one athlete and one Unified partner) from your school may work together to submit an application by October 18th.



Missouri YAC Application 2023



Special Olympics Missouri

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools

Questions? Email ucs@somo.org



Gaming for Inclusion is a Unified Rocket League tournament for Unified pairs ages 15+.

Oct 15th Practice Tournament (Optional)
Nov 4th Registration Deadline
Nov 11th Rocket League Tournament
Nov 12th Rocket League Overflow Tournament
Nov 18th Celebrity Showcase (Winners of Rocket League Tournament will receive an invitation.)

More information at:
<https://somo.org/calendar/gaming-for-inclusion/>

Click Here for Upcoming Events Your Area

Special Olympics Missouri | Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®

COME VISIT THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS MISSOURI TRAINING FOR LIFE CAMPUS

FREE field trip opportunity inclusive of students of all abilities!

VISIT FOR A DAY, TAKE BACK IDEAS TO IMPACT YOUR SCHOOL YEAR ROUND!

Come join us for a free field trip to experience each component of the Unified Champion Schools strategy: Unified Sports, Inclusive Youth Leadership and Whole School Engagement.

Contact us to set a date, time and activity plan that works well for your students of all ages. We welcome large groups of students with and without Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Please note transportation assistance may be available.

CONTACT US

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- Contact your Area Program Director now to plan ahead for bowling and basketball sports seasons. These sports will have Area competitions beginning in November, basketball will have regional competitions around February 2024, and both will culminate in State Indoor Games in St.

Charles, MO in March 2024.

- Would you like to host a Unified sports competition to provide opportunities for your students with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities to compete together on the same team? Popular sports for fall are flag football, bocce, corn hole, and kickball. [Review this resource](#), get student input, and contact ucs@somo.org to start planning. This is a great way to engage your school, your district, or your surrounding area!
- We're looking for schools to partner with us to host **Unified Track and Field** meets this spring as we work towards emerging sport status with **Missouri State High School Activities Association**. These competitions are different from a traditional SOMO Track Meet because they are more competitive and athletes and Unified partners compete to earn team points instead of individual awards. If you'd like to learn more about this email ucs@somo.org. Support our efforts by advocating to your Athletic Director to acknowledge your Unified Sports team similarly to other teams. This might include equitable opportunities for athletic letters, pep assemblies, uniforms, equipment, transportation and practice space.

Visit Our Website to Learn How to
Become a Unified Champion School

Visit Generation Unified for Free
Lessons and Videos

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Questions? Want to share inclusive ideas from your school? Contact us at ucs@somo.org.