



April Newsletter

Missouri Schools' Inclusion and Achievement



Rockwood Schools recognized "Two of the students who led Marquette's [Spread the Word Inclusion Day] activities -- juniors Chloe Gilbert and Hassan Khan -- are on the Special Olympics Missouri Statewide Youth Activation Committee, an opportunity for students to gain leadership skills and collaborate on providing inclusive opportunities to impact students across the state. As part of the committee, they worked on designing the shirts for this year's "Spread the Word: Inclusion" Day."

Email ucs@somo.org to join our Youth Activation Committee.



"At **Woerther [Elementary]**, in addition to passing out "I Pledged" stickers to students and staff, every student made a thumbprint, personalized it and hung it on a bulletin board reading "Thumbs Up for Inclusion." Students also made themed bookmarks that were place in the library for anyone to take when they checked out books, physical education teachers hosted an inclusion activity in their classes, and all teachers had access to multiple online read alouds that they showed and discussed with their classes during the day."



Capital City HS held a unique fundraiser for SOMO. They had a staff vs. staff basketball game against Helias Catholic HS with student coaches and sponsored 4-point shots. They got their whole school engaged and raised \$2,412. Go Cavs Go!



Special Olympics Missouri



MASC Convention was a great place for sharing ideas!



Seckman HS [All Abilities](#)

celebrated Missouri Association of Student Council member schools who are dedicated to inclusion at their state convention in Carthage.

2024 Award of Merit:

- Odessa High School
- Poplar Bluff High School
- Rolla High School

2024 Gold:

- Buerkle Middle School
- Festus High School
- Fulton High School
- Lindbergh High School
- Seckman High School
- Webb City Junior High School
- Windsor High School

2024 Bronze:

- Pattonville High School

[Read more](#)

Fulton HS [Fun in the Sun](#)

For Spread the Word Inclusion Day Fulton HS's student council made a video with input from people of all ages across their district.



[Parties](#)



Rolla HS [Kindness and Inclusion in the School Setting](#)



Odessa HS [Unified Champion Schools](#)



State indoor games included sports competitions, healthy athletes screenings, a dance, bingo, and so much more!

[Read more](#)



The 2024 Special Olympics Missouri State Indoor Games brought more than 1,500 athletes, coaches, volunteers and Unified partners from across the state to St. Charles, March 15-16. The theme this year was Aloha SOMO! This year's State Indoor Games featured two sports: Basketball and Bowling. Our bowling competition was on Friday, and our basketball competition was on Saturday.



At the opening ceremony SOMO athlete Maison Dennis brought the house down with his amazing rendition of the national anthem. Dennis is a student at Poplar Bluff High School, which was recently named a National Banner Unified Champion School!



Resources for Your School

Liaison Survey Coming Soon

Starting next week primary contacts from Unified Champion Schools will receive our

National Banner Recognition

annual liaison survey from University of Massachusetts at Boston. Each year the Liaison Survey gives Special Olympics the opportunity to directly hear from each Unified Champion School. With such a large and growing network of schools participating in Unified Champion Schools across the country, this is the best way to hear about what is happening in each school—what worked and what did not work—and have liaisons' voices heard at the national level. **Please complete the survey by June 3rd.**

Unified Partner Trainings

It is possible that opportunities you create will be many students' first interaction with students with intellectual disabilities. Some individuals may have little-to-no experience interacting with Special Olympics athletes. Many teachers agree that it is a best practice to share educational materials and/or meet with Unified partners before their first engagement to promote comfortability and quality engagement.

Here are some educational materials:

- [What is Intellectual Disability?](#)
- [How to Speak With People With Intellectual Disabilities](#)
- [Inclusive Language for Talking About People With Intellectual Disabilities](#)
- Introduce Inclusion Tiles activity (try the [online version](#) or email ucs@somo.org to request cards)

Inclusive Youth Leadership is for Everyone

Students of all abilities and ages can learn about inclusion and how to be a leader by reading great books! [Unified Young Readers Club](#) offers book suggestions, discussion questions and activity recommendations aligned with the Unified Champion School Strategy.



Applications Open April 1st - June 3rd

A Special Olympics Unified Champion School has an inclusive school climate and exudes a sense of collaboration, engagement and respect for all members of the student body and staff. A Unified Champion School receiving national banner recognition is one that has demonstrated commitment to inclusion by meeting 10 national standards of excellence. These standards were developed by a national panel of leaders from Special Olympics and the education community.

Banner Unified Champion Schools should also be able to demonstrate they are self-sustainable or have a plan in place to sustain these activities into the future.

[College Standards](#)

[Middle & High School Standards](#)

[Elementary School Standards](#)

Contact ucs@somo.org to apply.



Click Here for [Upcoming Events In Your Area](#)

- Contact your [Area Program Director](#) now to plan ahead for track, powerlifting, volleyball and swimming season! These competitions typically start in March and culminate in State Summer Games in Columbia May 31st- June 2nd.

- State Pickleball Tournament July 27th and State Soccer Cup September 14th are great stand alone events your students will love!
- 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 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.
- Want to see a **Unified Track and Field** model? You're invited to join us on **Thursday, April 18th 9:30-1:30 at our Training for Life Campus in Jefferson City**. [Register here](#) by April 5th.



See the impact of Unified Track and Field



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

Visit Generation Unified for Free Lessons and Videos



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