



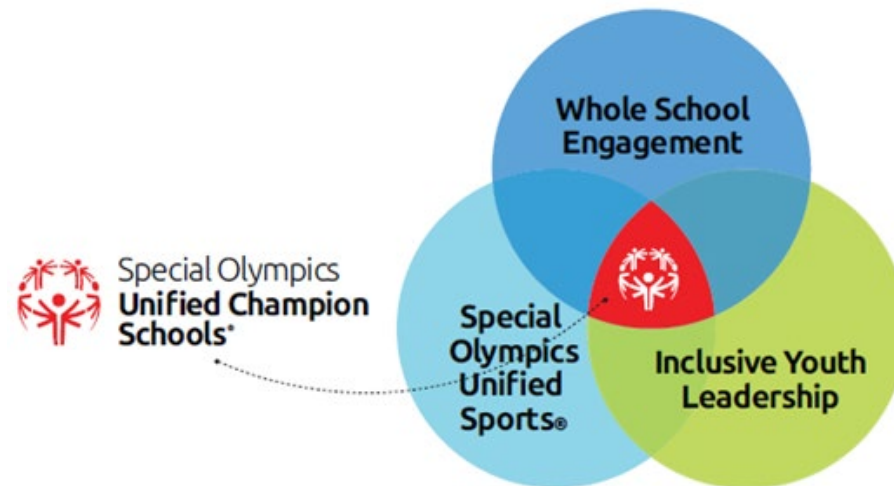
Special Olympics
**Unified Champion
Schools**

What is UCS? What is Unified?

What is UCS?



- Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS) is a strategy that aims to promote social inclusion in schools through sports and education. The program is available for schools from pre-K through college.
- UCS uses three main components to achieve its goals:
 - Special Olympics Unified Sports: Students with and without intellectual disabilities play on the same sports teams.
 - Inclusive youth leadership: Students with and without disabilities have opportunities to lead and have their voices heard
 - Whole school engagement: The entire school community hears messages of inclusion.



Strategy

*Special
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New Jersey*



- UCS is a strategy – it's not a blueprint. What works in one school or district may be different than what works in another school or district.
- At the end of the day, our goal is to create opportunities for students with and without disabilities to participate **meaningfully** together

What is Unified?



- All activities under the umbrella of UCS are Unified, meaning that there are approximately equal numbers of students with ID (athletes) and students without ID (Unified partners)
- Unified activities are intentionally inclusive and balanced
- All individuals, regardless of their role, are equal members of the group or team and participate meaningfully and to the best of their ability
 - No one is elevated to a position as leader, helper, mentor, especially based only on whether or not they have a disability
- All participants have shared roles and responsibilities, and the group as a whole has a shared purpose



Unified vs Inclusive vs Adaptive



Adaptive

Activities, classes, or spaces are modified to meet specific needs; things are often disability-specific; this is valuable for some students.

This is different than Unified in that adapted activities make modifications for specific disabilities while Unified integrates abilities for a shared experience.



Inclusive

Broad access, shared space but not necessarily participating together, may be embedded into a general setting.

This is different from Unified in that inclusive activities don't typically include shared roles and responsibilities or balanced numbers.



What is Unified?

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- Unified Champion Schools is not something that lives with one person, one club, or one event. At the center of Unified are students whose voices and participation matter.
- Unified is not about being in the same space; it's about participating in the same work
- Unified activities don't just happen – they need to be intentional.