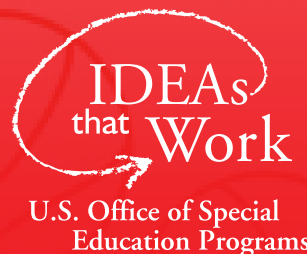


UNIFIED BASKETBALL PLAYBOOK



Special Olympics
**Unified Champion
Schools**



U.S. Office of Special
Education Programs

WHY DO WE NEED SCHOOLS TO BE SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE?

Creating an inclusive, educational atmosphere that ensures every student becomes a healthy, productive and ethical individual is a central focus of education.

Team sports bring people together. Unified Sports® provide opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities to participate in a variety of fitness and sports activities – on the same team.

Accomplishing this requires intentional planning and implementation, strong collaborations and initiatives that provide equitable and quality opportunities for all.

Basketball is a familiar sport to most students, requires minimal equipment, and provides an opportunity for the entire student body to be engaged as Fans in the Stands during games.

Follow the steps within this Playbook to launch a successful Unified Basketball League in your school district.

84%

84% of students generally regard the experiences they've had with a Unified Champion School as a positive turning point in their lives.

87%

87% of students learn that standing up for something they believe is the right thing to do.

85%

The majority of schools report that students learn about helping others and how their emotions and attitudes can affect others.

82%

82% of students feel that they are able to change their schools for the better.

GETTING STARTED

1. Secure your school system's and principal's support to launch a Unified Basketball League.
2. Identify four schools to participate in the inaugural season.
3. Identify an adult coach and others at each school who can support the team in different ways.
4. Have all coaches complete a free, one hour Unified Sports online course available at: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/coaching-unified-sports>.





SCHEDULE

- **Determine when games will be played. Options include:**
 - During school hours.
 - After school in the afternoon or evening.
 - On the weekend.
- **Determine where the games will be played. Options include:**
 - All games are played at the same school.
 - All schools host games throughout the season; home and away schedule.
 - All games are played at a non-school facility.
- **Determine when practices will be held at each school. Options include:**
 - During school hours. Consider creating an elective class that allows students with and without intellectual disabilities to be together on a regular basis for sports training and other inclusion activities.
 - Immediately after school. Consider arranging carpools home for those students that may have transportation issues.
 - In the evening or on weekends. This schedule requires the most parental support.



TEAMMATES

1. Recruit teammates with and without intellectual disabilities. Ensure there is a meaningful role for each student who is interested in participating (e.g. player, assistant coach, manager, cheerleader, announcer, etc.).

2. Determine whether the league will be competitive or player development. Most school teams will be player development.

- **Competitive League:** Use a targeted approach to recruit students without disabilities who will be of similar ability as students with disabilities and will be committed to the team. All teammates play to their maximum ability levels.
- **Player Development League:** Recruit students without disabilities who may have higher sports skills than students with disabilities and will be committed to the team. Students without disabilities may change their level of play to accommodate the abilities of students with disabilities. Students without disabilities facilitate play by involving all players on the team.

3. Ask interested teammates and their parents to complete and submit required participation forms.

4. Recruit qualified personnel to provide one-on-one assistance for any students that need support to successfully participate in the league.



FIRST AID



- Recruit a school nurse, athletic trainer or other qualified medical personnel to provide first aid during practices and games.
- Secure a first aid kit for all practices and games.
- Provide water for all participants at practices and games.



GAME DAY

- Recruit an announcer. Provide talking points for the announcer that include:
 - Team line-ups
 - Inclusion messages
- Determine the protocol for each game
 - Welcome
 - National Anthem if desired
 - Player introductions
 - Special Olympics oath if desired
 - Half-time entertainment
- Recruit two officials who either wear their VHSL uniform or are provided with a shirt.
 - Officials should enforce all rules.
 - Officials are strongly encouraged to watch the 5-minute Unified Sports® officials training at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNVli3NsezY&feature=youtu.be>.
- Provide a game ball and warm-up balls.
- Secure the gym's sound system and electronic scoreboard.
- Recruit two scorekeepers to keep the scorebook.
- Recruit one person to operate the scoreboard and clock.





ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



Implement an alternative activity at half-time for students with disabilities that prohibit them from participating in a full-court basketball game. For safety reasons, students who use wheelchairs or other devices should not participate in a game with students who do not use devices.

- Adaptive hoop shooting contest
- Skills stations that include shooting, passing and dribbling
- Modified half-court game with one-on-one assistance for all players

Offer Unified cheerleading for those students with and without intellectual disabilities who are not interested in playing basketball.

Recruit your school's pep band to play during games. Make the pep band inclusive.

Pack the bleachers by giving all students the opportunity to be Fans in the Stands.



Social Inclusion In Action

Identify the importance of all students serving in leadership capacities in which they demonstrate their skills and are recognized for unique contributions.

TRANSPORTATION



- Secure bus transportation if the school system will provide transportation to all games.
- Communicate with families if parents will provide transportation for students to all games.

CONCESSIONS



Schools may sell concessions if they wish. Consider giving student groups, such as the Unified Club or special education classes, the opportunity to sell concessions and other souvenirs commemorating the event.



RESOURCES

- **Uniforms** - Special Olympics Virginia will provide uniforms for school system's launching a Unified Basketball League.
- **Choose to Include** - Special Olympics has long been a movement for people with intellectual disabilities. Today, it is also a movement by them. The Choose to Include campaign reminds students that when we give others the chance to fulfill their dreams, everyone wins. Invite students to take the pledge and Choose to Include. Order FREE supplies at <https://tinyurl.com/ChooseToIncludeVA> to launch a Choose to Include campaign at your school.
- **Spread the Word: Inclusion** - Take a stand against discriminatory words and actions and create a more inclusive world. An inclusive world can be created through individual acts of inclusion – finding and welcoming those who have been left out, being a teammate, becoming a friend. That's why we are asking everyone to pledge to include and to commit to an act of inclusion in their school or community. Order FREE supplies at <https://tinyurl.com/Spreadthewordva> and visit <https://www.spreadtheword.global/> for additional resources.
- **Unified Sports®** - Visit <http://specialolympicsva.org/programs/unified-sports> for Unified Sports information and resources. Take the Unified Sports online course at <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/coaching-unified-sports>.
- **Unified Champion Schools** – Visit <http://specialolympicsva.org/beyond-sports/unified-champion-schools> for Unified Champion Schools information and resources.
- **Unified Sports Officials Training** - Take the Unified Sports officials training at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jNVli3NsezY&feature=youtube>.