



UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS & UNIFIED SPORTS



Iowa High School Athletic Association

Special Olympics Iowa and the Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) are partnering to grow and recognize Unified sports in schools across the state. IHSAA will promote unified sports programs in schools starting in the 2023-2024 school year, with plans to expand offerings in the future.

Potential for additional opportunities through Special Olympics Iowa and the IHSAA like unified bowling, unified basketball, and others as more and more IHSAA member schools establish unified programs. These opportunities will be shared as they become available while IHSAA also works to promote unified programs through the Special Olympics of Iowa.



Please contact Special Olympics Iowa or IHSAA Assistant Director, Andy Umthun, aumthun@ihsaa.org with questions or more information on their partnership.



Special Olympics Unified Sports

A fully inclusive sports or fitness program that combines an approximately equal number of students with and without intellectual disabilities

Inclusive Youth Leadership

Students with and without intellectual disabilities work together to lead and plan advocacy, awareness and other inclusive activities throughout the school year

Whole School Engagement

Awareness and education activities that promote inclusion and which reach the majority of the school population

SOIA Overview

Special Olympics Iowa is a movement that aims to promote the transformative power and joy of sports, fighting inactivity, injustice, and intolerance. The organization uses sports as a catalyst for change and includes programming on health, leadership, and education to create a more inclusive and respectful society for people with intellectual disabilities.

For people with intellectual disabilities, the benefits of Special Olympics include:

- Improved physical fitness and motor skills
- Greater self-confidence
- A more positive self-image
- Lifelong friendships

Our Mission



The mission of Special Olympics Iowa is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports



for individuals with intellectual disabilities by



giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and ...the community.

What is a Unified Champion School®?

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® bring together students with and without intellectual disabilities through education, sports and youth leadership to provide them with the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to create and sustain school communities that promote acceptance and respect.

Special Olympics Iowa partners with pre-schools, elementary schools, middle schools, high schools and colleges to implement or continue three main components of the Unified Champion Schools model.

Interested? Contact Krista Smith,
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