

UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

2024 - 2025
Program Booklet



Special Olympics
Unified Champion
Schools®

Live Unified. Play Unified. Teach Unified.



2023-2024 HIGHLIGHTS

10,000
Student participants from
across Ontario

50
School boards

250
Schools participated from
across Ontario

120
In-person and virtual
qualifying events

2,350
Unified Participants

750
Athletes, coaches, volunteers
attended 2024 Chatham-Kent
School Championships

Click here to become a Unified
Champion School today!

THE NEW VISION: UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS



We are not just sport; Special Olympics Ontario is launching the Unified Champion Schools (UCS) inclusive school strategy in Canada, creating a foundation for inclusive school cultures and communities across the province.

Unified Champion Schools is revolutionizing the school experience by fostering environments of inclusion and acceptance for all students. Our program integrates three key pillars that work to create a culture where every student is valued and included:

- 1. Inclusive Sports and Health:** This program promotes social engagement and development by integrating students with and without intellectual disabilities into sports.
- 2. Youth Leadership:** UCS also works to develop youth leadership by empowering students to advocate for inclusion and change within their communities.
- 3. Whole-School Engagement:** Through activities and initiatives involving the entire school, we ensure that inclusion is a core value embedded in the school's daily life.

Join us to create lasting change and foster a Unified, accepting, and positive school community.

Click here to visit
School Hubs



ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY SCHOOL HUBS

Our website has a new makeover and update! Most important: The Schools Hub. Looking for information on SOO? Resources, updates, rules, you name it - everything is now in one place. The Schools Hub will now exist as the main source for key information and continually be updated with all key communications, program developments, in addition to all hosting, coaching, Unified Champion Schools, sport technical resources - everything you need and more.



NEW REGISTRATION & PAYMENT SYSTEM

Effective immediately, we have launched a revamped (stop-gap) registration platform that all schools/disciplines will use for all events. Each school can expect to receive an individual registration link in their inbox from their local contact. To learn about the new way to register for events head to our new school hubs. Schools will no longer be charged on an event basis. They will be charged/invoiced one fee for the school year based on the number of students



RESOURCES

Join our WhatsApp community!

WHATSAPP GROUP



Join our official WhatsApp group for educators to connect with teachers across the province. This platform promotes collaboration, engagement, and communication within the Special Olympics community. It's where SOO shares updates, resources, and news, and gathers feedback.

The community includes:

- **Intermediate Events/Programing:** Tailored for grades 6-8, these initiatives focus on developing key sports skills, teamwork, and providing experience in competitive settings.
- **Unified Champion School Model:** All elementary schools can adopt UCS programming and compete for banner status
- **General Announcements (One-Way)** – Key updates from SOO
- **Regional/District Chats (Two-Way)** – Connect with fellow teachers in specific areas; check descriptions for city details
- **Connective Space for Parents** – A dedicated area for parent engagement



Click here to apply!

GRANTS



HOST GRANTS – Are back!

For the second year in a row, Special Olympics Ontario is offering a hosting grant for a school that chooses to host an unstaffed event (an event where staff are not on-site to support). Depending on the scale of the event, schools can expect to receive \$300- \$500 in funding.

Note: SOO is committed to touching every community; not all unstaffed requests will be granted. If you are interested in hosting a staffed or unstaffed event this year, please fill out our [hosting form](#).



TRANSPORTATION GRANTS – New

SOO will offer transportation funding support to schools travelling over 35km to attend an event, as well as to schools in need of funding. There will also be 50% transportation coverage for all Athlete Showcase Events/participants.



EQUIPMENT GRANTS – New

In addition to SOO's 6 floorball sticks and whiffle ball initiative for new schools, SOO will offer 50% coverage for schools needing to purchase shin pads up to \$350.

Note: Limited funds are available for all grants. Applications will be reviewed and accepted based on merit.



WHAT TO EXPECT THIS YEAR

A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR OF EVENTS

Get ready for an action-packed school year! With a record number of events on the horizon, there's something for everyone. From more qualifiers and showcases to exciting pilot events, intermediate competitions, and sports festivals, this year is set to be our busiest yet. Explore the full range of opportunities on our [Events Calendar](#) and start planning your participation today!

SOO is thrilled to announce a major expansion in elementary programming:

- **Active Start, Fundamentals & Multi-Sport Resources:** New schools will receive a welcome package filled with essential tools to kickstart their programs.
- **Expanded Sports Festivals:** Our engaging try-it days are back, offering students the chance to explore a variety of sports and activities in a fun, non-competitive environment.
- **Intermediate Events/Programing:** Tailored for grades 6-8, these initiatives focus on developing key sports skills, teamwork, and providing experience in competitive settings.
- **Unified Champion School Model:** All elementary schools can adopt UCS programming and compete for banner status

See flyer to register

INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS CONFERENCE



Special Olympics Ontario is excited to announce the launch of its first-ever Provincial Inclusive Schools Conference, happening from **October 18th to 20th** at Camp Muskoka. Thanks to the support from the Ontario Ministry of Education, this free event is open to all Ontario educators involved or planning to be involved in Special Olympics this school year. With limited spots available, registration is on a first-come, first-served basis **until September 18th**. Don't miss this unique opportunity to network, collaborate, and develop strategies for creating inclusive school communities. [Register here](#) or check out our flyer for more information.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

The future Special Olympics and inclusive schools are youth leading youth, youth engaging youth, and youth including youth; this year, SOO will be focused on providing continued recourses, workshops, and leadership opportunities to ALL students. Any student can get involved and develop into a future leader through our Athlete Leadership Program, youth leadership pillar initiatives, Unified Leadership Council, and our new Elementary-Secondary Pathway Program.

UNIFIED LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



We are thrilled to introduce our 13-member Unified Leadership Student Council, representing each major district in the province. This council comprises both Unified Partners and interested student leaders, along with SOO Athletes. The council's mission is to drive the youth movement of Unified Champion Schools in Ontario, engage the student body, and provide Special Olympics with valuable feedback from a student-athlete perspective. If you're passionate about inclusion and leadership, apply now. **The application deadline is October 7th.**

Apply here!



WHAT TO EXPECT THIS YEAR

Check out our Events Calendar



THE ATHLETE SHOWCASE SERIES

It's back! The SOO Athlete Showcase Series is launching across the province, featuring events in every corner of Ontario. Open to all schools, individual participants, and **athletes ages 16-30**, these events will include an SOO-style basketball and bocce tournament, with food, medals, prizes, and more. Parents and Guardians, don't miss the chance to watch your children compete!

PILOT SPORTS PROGRAM

In select regions, SOO is launching NEW pilot sport events: football, volleyball, and handball. Check our Events Calendar to see if there is a pilot near you!

VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING IS BACK

SOO will launch 3 week-long virtual events open province-wide in elementary and secondary schools! These programs offer sport-based programming online to engage students across Ontario, teaching them skills and educating them on the origins of sport and the importance of health.

Don't miss out on:

WELCOME WEEK

Secondary: September 16 - 20
Elementary: October 7 - 10

FUN FITNESS WEEK

Secondary: January 20 - 24
Elementary: February 3 - 6

MULTI-SPORT WEEK

Secondary: January 20 - 24
Elementary: May 12 - 15
Secondary: June 16 - 20



2025 PROVINCIAL SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Don't miss your chance to make it to Ottawa this year on June 3-5th. Our 3-day Secondary School Championships is back, bigger and better than ever this year. Kicking off on June 3rd in the nation's capital at Carleton University, SOO will bring hundreds of qualifying athletes from across the Province together for three days of competition and excitement.



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HEALTHY ATHLETES

Our expanded Health programs and resources are designed to enhance the physical health, social skills, and emotional well-being of Special Olympics athletes. The [SO FitNow App](#) allows athletes to engage in fun challenges, track their progress, and work towards personalized fitness goals.



Program Highlights:

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Focus on nutritious eating, improving fitness, and adopting active lifestyles.

SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

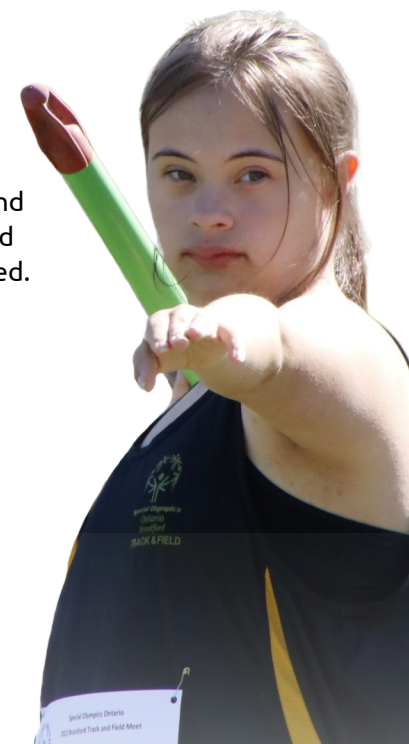
Strengthen social skills and overall mental health.

CHALLENGES

Participate in exciting challenges like the Fit5 and Step Challenges, designed to keep athletes motivated.

HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACTIVITY SERIES

SOO will be launching a free dance and fitness series. Starting September 12th, a live mobility/exercise class exclusively for SOO students will take place **every other Thursday from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.** On September 18th, a bi-weekly live dance class series will begin **Wednesday from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.** The session will be recorded and live on Zoom. You can register using your school year registration form.



ARE YOU A NEW SCHOOL?

[Click here](#) to get involved now!

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION!



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Thank you to our generous sponsors



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