



Unified Youth Leadership

Unified Youth Leadership is a key component of our Unified Champion Schools model. At Special Olympics Ontario, we believe that young people are the most powerful force in the inclusion movement. Under the guidance of our youth leaders, we can change schools and communities and make them places where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute, regardless of ability. Together, we are building a generation of inclusive leaders who champion acceptance and unity.

Let them Lead: developed by SOI, demonstrating the power of Unified Leadership.

The Unified Leadership Journey

Unified Leadership does not look the same for everyone, each student will join the path at a different point. This document outlines a student's one year journey and can be followed no matter where their starting point may be.

Just getting started? Take our Unified Introductory course!

Knowing where to start can be challenging. The Unified Introductory course is an in person or virtual training session that educates young leaders on the importance of Unified and the role that it can play in your school community. This course gives our leaders the information they need to teach others about Unified initiatives.

Ready to take action? Start in your school!

When you are ready to take the first step in the Unified Leadership journey it is best to start within your own school! While there are many ways to introduce Unified to your school, SOO recommends starting with a Unified Club OR advocating for unified positions on student council (ensure there is a role for a unified partner and athlete). Once established, use the **INCLUDE framework** to develop an initiative or make a change within your school.

*Potential Initiatives include: Participate in Inclusion Week, Host a Cool School Fundraiser, Start a Unified intramural program, Unified Clubs (walking, art, science or computer clubs are some ideas!), Unified Field trips, etc.

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- Participate in Inclusion Week
- Host a Cool School Fundraiser
- Start a Unified intramural program
- Unified Clubs (walking, art, science or computer clubs are some ideas!)
- Unified Field trips
- Recognize Special Olympic Athletes at assemblies
- Include Special Olympics programs in athletic banquets
- Attend a sport qualifier as a Unified Team
- Host a Unified campaign to educate others in your school about Unified
- Meet with administration to advocate for Unified programs within your school

Ready to learn from those in your community? Attend a regional conference!

Once you have a Unified leadership program up and running in your school, and you are beginning to recognize change in your school community, the next step is to attend a regional conference. Regional conferences are hosted in key areas across the province, offering students a day of leadership training and conversation with their peers. It is a chance to connect with others in their region and learn about how they have implemented Unified Leadership in their school and community!

Want to connect across the province? Apply for the Unified Leadership Summit!

Learning does not end within your region. SOO hosts a Unified Leadership Summit in conjunction with school champs. This is an application-based initiative and brings together up to 50 leaders from across the province for a two-day workshop. Developed with input from our ULC (see step four) the summit includes group work, guest speakers, team building and leadership activities, and an opportunity for a leadership role in the games.

Ready to train the next group of Unified Leaders in Ontario? Join the ULC

If you are looking to add to the lasting impact of Unified Leadership, we invite those who have completed the above steps to join our Unified Leadership Council. This council invites athletes and partners from across the province to meet monthly, provide feedback to SOO, and develop in school initiatives and advocacy such as Inclusion Week and administration presentations. Council members also play a role in developing our Unified Leadership Summit. Expression of interest forms open at the end of August.

Graduating but want to stay involved? Community Unified Leadership is for you!

Special Olympics wants to ensure that as students approach graduation, they are equipped with the necessary tools to have a meaningful adult life. Programs and opportunities are available to students and alumni of all ages in order to keep them active, social, and connected.

Learn more about what programs we offer and how to stay involved [here](#).