

Special Olympics Minnesota Grow Your Unified Club Kit



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CONNECT WITH SOMN

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WHAT IS A UNIFIED CLUB?

Mission Statement

The purpose of Unified Clubs is to increase athletic, social, and leadership opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities by promoting acceptance and inclusion within schools and communities to ensure all students feel included and welcome in their schools.

Unified Clubs are a part of the Special Olympics Unified Schools model. The model includes three pillars aimed towards engaging and empowering youth with and without intellectual disabilities to promote social justice through a variety of athletic, social, and recreation projects and activities.



Unified Clubs fall under the pillar of Inclusive Student Leadership. Unified clubs are unique school-based clubs giving students the opportunity to take a hands-on, leadership role in promoting inclusion in their own school environment. Each school has the opportunity to organize their club in a way that works best for their student body. From creating a new Unified Club to enhancing an already established inclusive club like Best Buddies. Each club is encouraged to design their own projects inside and outside of their own school involving Unified Sports, Polar Plunge teams, Spread The Word activities, etc.

UNIFIED CLUBS

STARTING A CLUB

Choosing a Club Theme

The definition of Unified Clubs can be very broad. You may want to start your own new Unified Club, or work on an already established inclusive club like Best Buddies or Key Club. Take a look at the clubs your school already has to decide if there are areas for opportunity. Maybe Unified Sports haven't been introduced, so you want to start a club focused towards offering inclusive sporting events. There are many opportunities, so do what you think will work best for your school and what most aligns with your goals as a club.



Creating your own Mission Statement

We included a Mission Statement for Unified Clubs as a whole earlier in the "What is a Unified Club?" section, however it is important that you create your own Mission Statement for your specific club. Doing this will help you get down to the core of what your club will do for the school and for its members. The statement should only be 1-2 sentences long, and describe the goal of your club. Take your time to write a meaningful Mission Statement that each of the founders can completely agree on. This will be important as the club will continue to look back at this statement to make sure everything it is doing aligns with it. Look back at the Unified Club Mission Statement as an example.

Mission Statement Outline:

- 1. What you do
- 2. How you do it (inserting clubs values)
- 3. Why you do it

В	SY	TO

Example for Unified Club with focus on social events:

To increase social opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities BY fostering inclusive weekly after school social get-togethers TO create a school environment filled with inclusive friendships and opportunities.



Finding an Advisor

Ask to set up a meeting with a teacher/school staff member that you think would be interested in being the club advisor. The advisor will be your adult leader guiding and overseeing everything the club does. Develop a short pitch presentation between 5-10 minutes allowing them to fully understand your plans. Answer any questions, and discuss the fit between the advisor and club. Being an advisor can require a large time commitment so it may be challenging to find someone to take on the role, but keep looking until you've found the right advisor for your club!

Pitch presentation:

- 1. Introduce yourself
- 2. Read mission statement
- 3. Speak more in depth about what the club is/does
- 4. Present possible activities/events the club may be involved in
- 5. Discuss the role of the advisor/their responsibilities
- 6. Tell them why you thought of them
- 7. Ask if they have any questions and how they feel about the role

Submitting a New Club Proposal

Submitting a new club proposal will be a similar outline to the pitch presentation you may have given to potential advisors. This should be a written statement giving an in depth explanation of your club to administration. Connect with your activities office to see about forms and specific proposal guidelines for your school. Be clear and concise about your plans and make sure to include information about each of the topics below.

Club proposal:

- 1. Mission Statement
- 2. In depth explanation of what the club is/does
- Club plans: Possible activities/ events the club may want to organize/be involved in
- 4. Club setup
 - A. How leadership will work (president, VP, etc)
 - B. Location/time/frequency of meetings
 - I. May need to ask for permission for meeting locations/times
- 5. Who the advisor is/their responsibilities
- 6. Why the club is important and how it will enhance the school environment



RECRUITMENT IDEAS

Recruitment is an extremely important part of building a successful club. Start small and develop a core group of inclusive students willing to help build a formation and foundation. Make sure this small group is completely knowledgeable about the club and its mission. Have these people start getting the word out about your club and recruiting new people to get your club growing. We have included a couple simple ideas to help you in the process of gaining new members. Below is a time line that the club can follow year after year to get recruitment rolling. The focus will be in September since regular meetings should be taking place from October to the end of the year.

Meet with advisor to discuss the new upcoming year Informational meeting

Week 1 Week Week 2

Week 4

Create promotional materials

First icebreaker meeting

Ideas

1. Flyers

Flyers are an easy and minimally time consuming way to get the word out to your peers. Use one of our sample flyers, or make an eye catching, single page flyer of your own including club name, meeting times/location, and a brief summary of what your club does. This lets anyone interested know when/where they can start getting involved. Included on pages 27 & 28 are sample flyers for an informational meeting, and a sample event.

2. Email

Once again, email is an easy and quick option to get information out to other students. Consider making an online flyer to send out to a general school directory if possible. There are many websites, like MailChimp, Smore, or Canvas, that make it easy to make email flyers and schedule mass email blasts. If you don't have access to people's email, try getting people to write their email down for you if you have a tabling event or informational meeting. Following these, send out an email blast to make sure those interested students get updated about the next club opportunity. Make the email visually interesting so that it stands out. After you have recruited, this will be a great way to keep in contact with your club members as well.

3. Morning Announcements

Ask staff in the office if they can talk about your club during the morning announcement, or if teachers will make an announcement during first hour. This should be quick and let people know where/how they can learn more, rather than a long, informational statement.

Example announcements:

- 1. This Tuesday, Sept 11th the Unified Club is having an informational meeting at 3:30pm in Room 1022. The club is a great way to meet new people and participate in multiple events. Everyone is welcome to attend to learn more about club involvement.
- 2. The Unified Club will have a table set up in the commons after school on Wednesday, Sept 19th. Stop by to get more information from student members about meetings, events, and membership. The club offers many social activities and opportunities for new friendships.

Ideas (cont.)

4. Tabling

Tabling is a more hands on and interactive way to discuss what your club does and how people can get involved. Set up a table decorated with flyers, posters, and whatever else you like to make it stand out. Have a few representatives at the table who are willing to talk about the club to those interested. Ask your advisor or another staff member for permission to see if you could set up a table before school, after school, or during lunch period so that you can recruit fellow students to join your Unified Club.

5. Informational Meeting

This is a great way to give any student interested a chance to hear from you about your club and everything you do! Ask a teacher/staff member if you can hold an informational meeting before or after school, during lunch, or home period. The meeting should only last 10-15 minutes tops and give everyone all the info they need to take part in the club.

Outline:

- 1. Presentation 10 min
 - a. Introduce selves
 - b. Read Mission Statement
 - c. Explain further what club is/does/potential events and activities throughout the year
 - d. Explain commitment levels for members
 - i. General club member attending meetings, events
 - ii. Participating in club committees helping organize events
 - iii. Interest in club officer position leading the club
 - e. Short video option
 - i. Youtube: Unified Schools Program Special Olympics Minnesota
- 2. Questions 5 min
- 3. Announcements
 - a. First meeting time/location

Ideas (cont.)

6. Collaborating with Other Clubs

Look into collaborating with your Student Council to increase awareness and enhance opportunities for whole school engagement with your club. Once your club is formed and has a solid foundation, think about collaborating with other school clubs that may be interested in working together on specific events. Ask other clubs that have similar interests if you can talk to their members at one of their meetings about your Unified Club, or talk with their Officers. The opportunities are endless and getting connected with other clubs will expand your reach, and may lead to additional members!

Examples: Student Council could help with whole school awareness of UNITY day and Person First day. NHS interested in hearing about volunteer opportunities SOMN has to offer. DECA interested in getting marketing experience if your club plans a Polar Plunge or Unified Dance Marathon.



ICLUB REGISTRATION/SETUP

One Page Application (page 12)

If your club must limit membership, have each interested student fill out a one page application to show their commitment and interest in the club. Have your club advisor read through them and make decisions on club membership. Either use the sample application form included or make your own. Consider making the application form online using Google Forms, or another application, depending on what will work best with your own student body.

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First Meeting

Keep the first meeting simple by making it about getting to know each other and general info about the club. Have a simple sign-up sheet, or a Word Document, so members can sign in as they walk in. This will allow you to have a list of all club members. Grab some snacks and have a couple icebreakers ready to get everyone comfortable with each other. At the end of the meeting make important announcements, answer questions, and notify members interested in becoming officers to prepare a statement for the next meeting as officer selection is a good second meeting. Follow this outline for an easy first get together.

Outline

- 1. Introduction 5 min
 - a. Sign-in
 - b. Brief summary of what club is/does
 - c. Read Club Mission Statement
- 2. Icebreakers/Snacks 15 min
 - a. Ideas: 2 truths and a lie, find 10 things everyone in the club has in common, rock paper scissors tourney, speed "dating", introducing each other, decorating cookies/cupcakes
 - b. Be sure to take into account dietary restrictions other students may have
- 3. Important Announcements 5 min
 - a. Next meeting time/location
 - b. Upcoming Officer Selection
- 4. Questions

Application Form
1. Name
2. Grade
3. Contact Info
Phone
Email
4. Why are you interested in joining our Unified Club?
5. What does the word inclusion mean to you?
6. Why is inclusion important?
7. How much time are you willing to commit to the club?
8. How much commitment are you interested in giving?
a. General club member attending meetings, events
b. Participating in club committees helping organize events

c. Interest in club officer position leading the club

Officer Selection

The second meeting should consist of Officer Selection so that the club leaders can start organizing activities and upcoming meetings. The Executive Board should consist of a Chair(s), Vice Chair(s), Secretary, and Treasurer. Interested members should prepare a brief statement about what position they want to run for, why they want to be an officer, and why they think they would be a good fit. Following presentations, have club members vote for their new club officers! If your officers end up consisting of mostly to all seniors, consider letting juniors shadow the roles so they can understand how the club works for the following year.



Officers

- 1. Chair(s) lead/supervise club
- 2. Vice Chair(s) fill in for/assist president, ideally taking over role of Chair(s) the following year
- **3. Secretary** take notes at meetings, keep members updated, manage social media communications
- **4. Treasurer** manage budget and expenses

Member Committees

Member Committees will be an important part of keeping the club organized and keeping all members actively involved. Each area of the club should organize appropriate member committees to help in the planning and execution of the events. Have members sign up for specific jobs and responsibilities so the events come together smoothly. This way members are engaged and can participate as much as they so choose! Below are several examples of committees your club could have, but don't feel the need to take on every single committee at once. Your club may be new and want to focus simply on Student Leadership activities the first year, then add Whole School Engagement the following year. Remember to organize your club the way that works best for your school.

Example committees

Student Leadership Committee – focused on the development of club activities/social events

Whole School Engagement Committee – focused on whole school campaigns like Unity Day, Person First or Spread The Word

Unified Sports Committee – focused on organizing practices/competition for unified sports teams

Fundraising Committee – focused on SOMN fundraising activities like Polar Plunge and Unified Dance Marathon

Marketing Committee - focused on the creation of materials for club marketing and helping other committees create marketing materials for their events

Weekend Committee – focused on setting up outings to form relationships outside of school like attending movies or going to the park

Event Setup Committee – focused on helping in the event setups of other committees events

Event Cleanup Committee – focused on helping in the clean-up of other committees events

General Meeting

Meetings for the year should be run by the officers and can follow this simple outline to keep things consistent and clear. In the "Meeting/Event Ideas" section (page 17), we have included more specific meeting ideas for throughout the year that you can work into this general outline. The length of each section and each meeting will vary depending on what works best for you.



Outline

- 1. Opening: General announcements, outline of day's meeting
- **2. Discussion:** Recap/results from recent events, planning upcoming events, organizing new committees, updates from officers/members/committees on any projects to keep everyone in the loop
- **3. Committee break outs:** Give committees time to meet with each other and work on their upcoming project
- **4. Activity:** Simple activity so everyone interacts
- **5. Closing:** Restate important announcements members need to remember such as events before next meeting and next meeting time/location

Member Point System

Consider implementing a point system for club members. Assign a number of points to different types of events. For example, 1 point for attending meetings, 2 points for attending events outside of school hours, etc. Have a minimum amount of points each member must reach per semester to be in the club. You could also have a number of points that requires attending a large majority of the events and reward all members that reach that level. For example, a "15 Point Club". Each member who has racked up 15 points at the end of the semester gets pizza, donuts, or another prize. This gives you a way to make sure members who are signing up are actually participating and reward the members who are most active.

Communications

Consider creating a Facebook page, Twitter, Instagram, or Snapchat account for your club. Have your club members follow them and use them as a way to post about upcoming meetings and events. The Executive Board can use this as a way to pass on necessary information to club members. Posts could include links to register/sign up for upcoming events or sports teams. Keeping a club Google Drive or folder with all the documents created throughout the year allows for members to look back at presentations and information when necessary. It is also a great resource to be passed down to the next group of students taking over!



2 Meeting/ Month Calendar

Discussion topics and activities for 2 meetings a month. Insert these into the general meeting outline from page 15.

September

1. Topic: First Meeting

Discuss the meaning of the club, events that will occur throughout the year, and how the club will be organized from the board to committees and everything in between.

Activity: Icebreakers; ideas on page 11

2. Topic: Officer Selection

Have interested members give speeches explaining why they would be good for the role they are trying for. Give each candidate around 5 minutes to talk and answer any questions that come up. At the end of the meeting vote on ballots and announce the board. Following this, member committees can be made so that the whole club is ready to jump into event planning/organization at the next meeting.

Activity: Sit down-stand up teamwork exercise -- have everyone stand in a circle with a chair behind each person. Without saying any words the group must find an effective way to get everyone to sit down and stand up all at the same time. To make the challenge harder, don't allow people to use their fingers to count down when to sit and stand.

October

1. Topic: UNITY Day Planning

UNITY day is all about coming together to end bullying. Make sure the club knows when UNITY day is and that everyone is geared up to wear orange that day to show their support. Create posters, sell t-shirts beforehand, and create announcements so the entire school knows about it. Think about teaming up with Student Council to make UNITY Day a full school event.

Activity: Split the club into 4 groups and have each pick a representative. Have your advisor play the first few seconds of a song. The first team/representative to raise their hand and answer correctly gets a point. Play until someone reaches 3 points, or extend it based on how much time you have.

2. Topic: Unified Homecoming Events Planning

Develop events and planning responsibilities for unified events during homecoming. Toss around ideas and choose which ones your club would like to do. Some ideas include a Unified Pre-homecoming dinner and pictures, a unified homecoming parade float, or a complete unified dance. Come up wit everything it will take to execute these plans and make sure each committee knows their responsibilities so they can work to get them done before homecoming.

Activity: With Halloween coming up, get everyone in the spirit by having a mummy making competition. Bring a few rolls of toilet paper and split the group into a couple teams. Have each wrap toilet paper around one person to create a mummy. Take pictures and vote for the best one.

November

1. Topic: Unified Dance Marathon

Develop a plan to fundraise for the Unified Dance Marathon to execute until the date. Make sure to sign up for UDM during the meeting and organize everyone that wants to attend.

Activity: Get everyone in the club paired up with a partner. Have each group work together to come up with some sort of new dance move. Once everyone is ready, have each group show off their new move o the club. This way you'll have the freshest moves at UDM.

2. Topic: Sport Event Planning

If your club has a desire to include unified sports, then there should already be a committee focusing solely on the planning and execution of practices/competition. However, if your club does not have a full committee for unified sports or you club just wants a separate chance to get everyone involved, then spend this meeting setting up a plan for what that could look like throughout the year. Maybe you want to plan a field day where your club divides into teams and competes against each oth0.75er, or against another school. If you club does compete in unified 0sports, maybe you want to organize a sign-up sheet for each competition so other members can carpool and create a fan section.

Activity: Give out a small piece of paper or two to everyone in the club. Have each person write down something the are grateful for, why they are grateful for this club, or just anything they are thankful for in general. Put all of them into a jar then spend a few minutes pulling them out and reading them. This is a great way to reflect with Thanksgiving nearby.

December

1. Topic: Inclusive Schools Week

Take this meeting to discuss the importance, success, and future opportunities of inclusive schools, and develop a plan to start the discussion around school. Base your plans around the ISW theme for the year and check out inclusive schools.org for more resources, ideas and activities.

Activity: Buy some plain holiday shaped sugar cookies from the store and bring frosting for everyone to decorate them, or buy a few gingerbread houses for people to work on together. Remember to address any allergies before starting the activity!

2. Topic: Organize Cool Schools Polar Plunge

Sign up for a plunge and set a plan for how your club with fundraise. Create a realistic goal you can all work towards.

Activity: Give each person in the club a piece of paper for them to write down their New Year's resolutions, or have the whole club work together to create resolutions for the club.

January

1. **Topic:** Person First Campaign Planning

Develop a full day or full week Person First Campaign. Look in the Person First Guide to get ideas on what events to run and how to organize each.

Activity: Set up a PowerPoint with trivia questions about SOMN, movies, or any other topic you think your club would enjoy. Split the club into teams and have a quick competition!

2. Topic: Person First Campaign Execution

Focus on the actual execution of the Person First Campaign. Spend the meeting getting updates from committees on how the week is looking, if they need any last minute help, and getting everything together.

Activity: With a busy week going on, keep the activity simple by playing a few rounds of Heads Up Seven Up.

February

1. Topic: Mid-Year Check In

Take this meeting to discuss how the year has gone so far. Have members give updates on club funding, campaign success, committee organizations, etc. This way everyone is on the same page and any situations can be addressed so the rest of the year can run smoothly.

Activity: Have an arts and crafts day making Valentines to either give to friends or give all of them to a local nursing home, hospital etc. to brighten the days of members in your community.

2. Topic: Spread the Word Campaign Planning

Develop a full day or full week Spread the Word Campaign. Look into the Spread the Word Guide to get ideas on what events to run and how to organize each. Some events may include organizing a school pep rally with a unified spots game played in front of the entire school, or selling "Respect O'grams" consisting of a note with a treat attached that students can buy and have them sent to other students. The funds could go back into the club.

Activity: Get everyone to sit in a circle. Pick someone to start with and have them say the beginning to a story. Go around the circle and have each person add a few more sentences to the story. Soon it'll be a long, crazy story made by all of you!

March

1. **Topic:** Spread the Word Campaign Execution

Take this time to make sure the campaign is running smoothly and everything is still in place. Help out any committees that are needing extra help and have each give updates on how the campaign is going.

Activity: With another busy week going on, find a Ted talk o meaningful video for the club to watch. There are Ted talks on a wide variety of topics, so pick one that you think will interest the group. Have a short discussion on thoughts afterwards.

2. Topic: Autism Awareness Planning

Autism Awareness Day is on April 2nd. Organize a one day campaign by creating posters for around the school, getting people to wear blue on April 2nd, #lightitupblue on your club social media accounts, and any other activities you club wants to plan/participate in.

Activity: Play a game of human tic-tac-toe. Place nine chairs in rows of three and split the club into two group. Have someone from one team sit down in a chair, then have the other team do the same. Play until a team gets 3 in a row to win!

April

1. Topic: ALPS University

ALPS stands for Athlete Leadership Program where an athlete/partner duo can attend specific leadership related courses. Attendees will be able to listen to guest speakers, attend sessions, and more throughout a single weekend. Have people who have attended talk about their experience, see if anyone is interested in going, and talk about how to apply.

Activity: Have the club split into partners. Have one of the partners draw a picture on a piece of paper without letting their partner see it. After they are finished, give the second partner instructions on what to draw without telling them what the picture is of, and without the partner asking any questions. After a couple minutes, have the first partner revel their drawing and see which group came the closest to drawing the same picture. This will help partners communicate with each other and help both understand what it takes to give/listen to instructions.

2. Topic: Sport Event Planning

Check back in to see if there is interest in planning another full club porting event. If so, work on organizing a second semester field day of some sort. If Unified Sports final competitions are coming up, once again set up a carpool to support them or a small pep rally to send them off. This is a good time to see if the Unified Sports committee needs any help as well.

Activity: Bring a couple board games or decks of cards to the meeting this week, or borrow them from a teacher if one already has some in their room. Just give people time to hang out with each other and play whatever game they want.

May

1. Topic: Disability Awareness

Spend the meeting talking about disability awareness, why it is important, and how you can teach others about it this week. Come up with a couple simple ideas on how to spread awareness, like having everyone wear the same shirt one day or having morning announcement about it.

Activity: Set up stations where members of the club can do exercises to experience different disabilities to educate everyone on what a variety of disabilities may feel like. To get the whole school involved, set up tables in the library or gym and invite others to partake as well.

2. **Topic:** Inclusive graduation planning

Plan inclusive graduation activities for the seniors to participate in once graduation comes in June. This could include setting up inclusive graduation pictures before the ceremony, organizing a post ceremony celebration, or creating a video highlighting each person.

Activity: Create a time capsule by having each member bring in a small item symbolizing their experience in the club or a letter. Put them all in a box and make sure not to open it until the end of the following year. This way you'll accumulate years of memories over time and be able to look back at all the people the club affected.

June

1. Topic: End of year To Do's

Spend this meeting doing all of your last to do's. Have each member complete the survey, write thank yous, and discuss next year info for returning members.

Activity: Make the thank yous extra special by making your own cards. Paint, draw and decorate the front then hand write the thank you. Putting in that extra work will mean a lot to the people receiving them.

2. Topic: End of year party

As the final meeting, spend this time celebrating the year you had and all you accomplished. Get some snacks, play games, and just have a fun time with everyone in the club.

Activity: Go around in a circle and have each member tell the highlight of their year in the club.

Extra Activity Ideas

- Matching Mondays: wear a matching t-shirt or color as a group
- Welcome Wednesdays: welcome other students as they come to school
- Lunch table swap: challenge everyone to switch up their lunch table and sit with people that they normally do not
- Lip Sync Battle
- Minute to Win It Competition
- Battle of the Bands
- Trivia Night
- Pumpkin decorating
- Costume party
- Friendsgiving celebration
- Ugly holiday sweater day
- Secret Santa
- Day at the park
- Spring BBQ
- Movie night or movie marathon
- Fun workout night; 80's theme, games, funny workout videos
- Board game or lawn game hangout
- Craft night
- Campfire night
- Make a club video; could be a silly music video, year recap video, or a fun video showcasing each club member!

END OF YEAR CLUB REVIEW

Yearly Recap

Take some time to go over everything the club has accomplished, what everyone has learned, and the great memories you have made throughout the year.

End of Year Thank Yous

Making a club successful can be hard to do, so write Thank Yous or acknowledge in person the teachers, volunteers, officers, and graduates that made the year and club memorable. Ordering Senior Kits through SOMN is a great way to send off the graduates as they take their next steps.

End of Year Survey (page 26)

Have everyone take the sample survey in this packet, or one similar, so the club can continue with what went well and understand areas where the club could improve in the upcoming year. Consider making your own survey online using Survey Monkey or Google Forms.

Information for Next Year

Discuss anything that may be relevant to making next year a success. Officers may be leaving and new people may want to think about taking their spots. Have the current officers give advice on their position and how they managed their role. Discuss any ideas members have come up with throughout the year that could be implemented in the next year.

End of Year Survey			
1.	Name		
2.	Grade		
3.	What did you enjoy most about the club?		
4.	What could be improved/is there anything you would change?		
5.	Did this club make a positive impact on you this year?		
6.	Do you have any ideas for upcoming years?		

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

UNIFIED CLUB MEETING

The purpose of Unified Clubs is to increase athletic, social, and leadership opportunities for students with and without disabilities by promoting acceptance and inclusion within school communities to ensure all students feel included and welcome in their school.

Where:

When:

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