



National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association

Whereas the NIAAA and Special Olympics Unified Sports® is a vital component of the overarching Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® strategy, serving as a transformative and inclusive initiative that fosters a sense of belonging, camaraderie, and skill development among students;

Whereas the Unified Sports program engages students of all abilities, from pre-k to college, in a continuum of sports, fitness, and leadership activities, providing a unique platform for social inclusion and personal growth;

Whereas Unified Sports are a powerful catalyst for positive change in schools, aligning with the mission of the NIAAA. By embracing inclusivity, promoting social inclusion, and facilitating skill development, Unified Sports contribute to a more compassionate, supportive, and holistic educational environment;

Whereas to identify the positive characteristics, Unified Sports addresses the following key points:

Inclusive Athletics Culture:

Unified Champion Schools create a more positive culture of inclusivity by breaking down barriers and fostering a sense of belonging among students of all abilities. By bringing together individuals with and without intellectual disabilities on the same teams, Unified Sports celebrate differences, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation among peers.

School Climate & Social Inclusion:

Participation in Unified Sports provides students with unparalleled opportunities for social inclusion. The bonds formed on the field transcend differences, creating friendships that extend beyond the sports arena. These relationships contribute to a more compassionate and empathetic school community.

Skill Development:

Beyond the immediate benefits of physical activity, Unified Sports offer a platform for skill development, both athletically and personally. Students gain valuable life skills such as teamwork, communication, and leadership, laying the foundation for their future success in various aspects of life.

Holistic Education:

Education is not solely confined to academic pursuits. Unified Sports contribute to a holistic educational experience by addressing the social and emotional aspects of a student's development. By integrating sports and fitness activities into the school curriculum, we ensure that all students are well-rounded individuals equipped for the challenges of life.

Promoting Health and Wellness:

Unified Sports play a crucial role in promoting physical health and wellness among students. By encouraging regular physical activity, the program addresses the growing concerns related to sedentary lifestyles and contributes to the overall well-being of students of all ability levels.

Community Engagement:

Unified Sports extend beyond the school premises, fostering community engagement and collaboration. By involving parents, educators, and community members in the Unified Champion Schools strategy, to create a supportive network that reinforces the values of inclusion and acceptance. Special Olympics offers community involvement after high school and creates a pathway for a lifetime of inclusion and involvement for all.

Therefore Be It Resolved that the NIAAA recognizes the crucial need for Unified Sports and encourages all schools to integrate these programs into their athletic and activities offerings, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to participate, learn, and thrive.

Be It Further Resolved that recognizing the numerous benefits derived from participation in school-based sports and activities, the integration of Unified Sports in schools creates a truly inclusive and supportive educational environment.

Be It Further Resolved that the NIAAA recognizes the need for education on the subject of Unified Sports to prepare athletic administrators to appropriately prepare for the implementation and administration of these incredibly important programs. Therefore all members are encouraged to engage in continuous learning by completing the course Administering Interscholastic Unified Sports available through the [NFHS Learn platform](#).

Related NIAAA LTI Courses:

[LTC 633 \(The Administrations of Interscholastic Athletic Programs for Students with Disabilities\)](#)

NFHSLearn:

[Administering Interscholastic Unified Sports](#)

[Coaching Unified Sports](#)