



Special Olympics Pennsylvania Interscholastic Unified Sports®

Special Olympics Interscholastic Unified Sports® (IUS) is a fully-inclusive co-ed high school sports program which successfully facilitates social inclusion by bringing together students with intellectual disabilities, other disabilities, and without disabilities on teams for training and competition. By providing opportunities for students with *all types of disabilities* and without disabilities to participate in sports meaningfully, Interscholastic Unified Sports helps schools fulfill the spirit and intent of the federal law (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and improve school climates.

Special Olympics PA will partner with **90 high schools in 2016-17** statewide in 14 counties and the cities of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Erie.

Interscholastic Unified Sports has three components designed to promote inclusion, foster enriching and accepting school environments for all, develop youth leadership, and increase awareness.

1. Interscholastic Unified Sports High School Team

- a. Composed of a proportional number of students who are Special Olympics eligible (intellectual disabilities, cognitive delay, or developmental disabilities) and students without intellectual disabilities. This is a co-ed program.
- b. The team is regarded just like every other interscholastic sports team at the school.
- c. 10 week long season with practices twice a week and at least three competitions.
- d. Team members represent their school by wearing uniforms with their school name and colors.
- e. Participate in regional championships with the opportunity to advance to state championships held in conjunction with PIAA state events.
- f. Sports offered: Indoor Bocce and Track and Field. These sports offer students with different types and levels of disabilities, as well as those without disabilities, opportunities to participate together meaningfully and safely.

2. Inclusive Youth Leadership

- a. Students with and without intellectual disabilities come together as a structured inclusive group to determine ways to improve their school's environment for everyone.
- b. This can be a Unified Club or expansion of an existing school group.
- c. Purposes of the club are to (1) give students with intellectual disabilities a voice in their school along with their peers without disabilities; (2) help students develop leadership skills; (3) conduct youth-led activities which promote acceptance, respect, and community throughout the school.

3. Whole School Engagement

- a. Students come together to raise awareness, as well as show support for their IUS team.
- b. Spread the Word to End the Word is a student-organized campaign which helps everyone to understand the need for using respectful language. Its focus is getting youth and adults to stop using the derogatory r-word ("retard" or "retarded").
- c. Fans in the Stands: Students show support for their IUS team by promoting attendance at the competition hosted by their school.

For More Information, Contact:

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