



Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®

Dear Student Council,

Special Olympics Missouri's mission is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics Missouri athletes and the community.

Our Unified Champion Schools strategy is designed to promote social inclusion by bringing together students with and without intellectual disabilities on Special Olympics Missouri Unified Sports teams, through whole school engagement opportunities and by fostering youth leadership. At its core, this Unified strategy is about unifying all students using sports as a catalyst for social inclusion and attitude and behavioral change. We believe all students have strengths and can contribute to their school community in meaningful ways.

Much of the success of our Unified Champion Schools strategy is due to our fantastic partnership with Missouri Association of Student Councils. MASC members have raised over \$1 million for Special Olympics Missouri by engaging their whole schools in fundraising. Student council members volunteer countless hours at SOMO competitions and events. MASC's unwavering dedication to service supports sports competitions, health and wellness programs and athlete leadership classes across the state. Many of our whole school engagement opportunities, such as Inclusion Revolution (Unified Sports Days) and Spread the Word >> Inclusion campaigns, are hosted by student councils. These student-led efforts to make Missouri schools more inclusive have created an atmosphere where students of all abilities feel they belong and their contributions are valued.

Special Olympics Missouri celebrates MASC member schools who are dedicated to inclusion with the School of Character Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards at the annual MASC State Convention. The top School of Character honor, Award of Merit, is given to the school which displays the most outstanding commitment to individuals with intellectual disabilities, a true understanding of unity and a passion for raising money and awareness for SOMO athletes.

Please reach out if your school is interested in joining or growing the unified movement, or if you would like to help your school create a more inclusive environment in any other way.

Thank you for your dedication to inclusion,
Ben Johnson
Unified Champion Schools – Senior Manager
johnson@somo.org
314-961-7755



Special Olympics
**Unified Champion
Schools®**

SCHOOL OF CHARACTER APPLICATION
2025 Award Year

SCHOOL:	
STUDENT COUNCIL ADVISOR(s):	
SPECIAL OLYMPICS MISSOURI COACH(es):	
SCHOOL ADDRESS:	
CITY:	ZIP:
☐ High School	☐ Junior High/Middle School
I certify that the below activities are accurately represented:	
Signature of Advisor or Principal	
Date	

DIRECTIONS

- You must be a MASC member school to participate. Contact Chad Rizner (missouristuco@gmail.com) for details on how to become a member or visit www.masc1.org to sign up today.
- You may submit your application via email to ucs@somo.org
- Include one artifact for verification of each activity (photograph, newspaper article, receipt, notes about activity, etc.). Label all artifacts with the name of your school and the category number (i.e. – “Required #2” or “Optional #6”).
- Activities from **January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025** may be used.
- Have your advisor or principal review the completed application, sign and date application.
- **Application must be received by February 15, 2026.**

Questions? Contact:

ucs@somo.org

314.961.7755

www.somo.org/ucs

AWARDS SUMMARY		High School	Middle School
Award of Merit Awarded to one school displaying outstanding commitment to individuals with intellectual disabilities, a true understanding of unity, and a passion for raising awareness and funds for SOMO athletes. Winner will receive the following: • One automatic MASC Summer Leadership Workshop scholarship • \$500 in support funds to support your school's unified movement • Award of Merit plaque and additional recognition by Special Olympics Missouri		This prize will be awarded to the student council with the highest point total.	
Gold <i>(Points must be from the required activities + a minimum of 2 optional activities.)</i>			
• Winners will receive one entry into the MASC Summer Leadership Workshop scholarship lottery selection, as well as a Gold Award plaque		1400	900
Silver <i>(Points must be from the required activities + a minimum of 1 optional activity.)</i>			
• Winners will receive a Silver Award plaque		1000	700
Bronze <i>(Points must be from the required activities + a minimum of 1 optional activity.)</i>			
• Winners will receive a Bronze Award plaque		800	500

Resources for Student Council Advisors and Members:

<https://somo.org/ucs/>

<https://www.generationunified.org/>

<https://www.specialolympics.org/what-we-do/unified-champion-schools/banner-recognition-program>

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

SUBMITTE D (Advisor Initials)	POINTS TOTAL	QUALIFYING ACTIVITY
		1. Have a group of 10 or more volunteers at a SOMO local, area, regional, or state event. This may include fans in the stands, scorekeepers, and referees. – 150 points
		2. Take an inclusive group picture and an action picture. – 100 points

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

SUBMITTED (Advisor Initials)	POINTS TOTAL	QUALIFYING ACTIVITY
WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT		Awareness & education activities that promote inclusion and reach the majority of the school population. Examples include Spread the Word >> Inclusion Campaign, Respect Week, Pep Rally, Fans in the Stands, Inclusion Revolution (Unified Sports Day), Polar Plunge or other student fundraising.
		3. Host a whole school engagement activity. – 125 points Enhancement Opportunities which qualify for National Banner Program: ☐ Students with and without disabilities are involved with the planning and leading the whole school awareness activities. - 50 points ☐ Host more than 1 whole school engagement activity. - 50 points
UNIFIED SPORTS®		A fully inclusive sports or fitness program that combines an approximately equal number of students with and without intellectual disabilities. Types of Unified Sports include Unified sports team, Unified PE, Fit 5, or Unified Intramurals.
		4. Your school has one of the types of Unified Sports®. - 150 points Enhancement Opportunities which qualify for National Banner Program: ☐ At least 2 seasons of Unified Sports are offered throughout the school year. - 50 points ☐ There is an adult certified coach for each sport who has received training on Unified Sports. - 50 points ☐ Unified Sports is officially recognized by the school in a similar style as other athletics/activities. - 50 points

INCLUSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP		Students with and without intellectual disabilities work to lead advocacy, awareness, inclusion and other Special Olympics Missouri activities throughout the school year. Examples include Unified Club, Kindness Club, or similar types of inclusive student groups.
		5. Have a Unified Club, Kindness Club, or inclusive student group. – 125 points Enhancement Opportunities which qualify for National Banner Program: □ The Inclusive club or group meets at least once per month throughout the school year. - 50 points □ The inclusive club or group has an adult liaison and is officially recognized by the school in a similar style as other clubs and activities. -50 points

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES - CONTINUED

SUBMITTED (Advisor Initials)	POINTS TOTAL	QUALIFYING ACTIVITY
Traditional Special Olympics		Your school has a Special Olympics Missouri team that does not participate in Unified Sports but is a part of the school environment.
		6. Your school has SOMO athletes who compete at local, area, regional and/or state competition – 125 points Enhancement Opportunities which qualify for National Banner Program: □ Your school recognizes SOMO athletes with athletic letters. – 50 points
YOUNG ATHLETES		The Young Athletes Program (YAP) is an innovative sports play program for children with intellectual disabilities, ages 2 to 7, designed to introduce them to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics Missouri eligibility at age 8.
		7. Organize & run a Young Athlete Program. Training required prior to execution. Contact your local Special Olympics Missouri Area Program Director to set up training. – 250 points
MASC & SOMO		Merging the missions of both organizations together to build awareness of inclusion, leadership and service.
		8. Host a SOMO information booth at an MASC event. – 250 points
		9. Host a round table or discussion group at an MASC district or state convention about a relevant SOMO topic. -500 points

		10. Fundraise. Plunge, Over the Edge, Raffle or other fundraiser. Use Tracking Form below. - 10 points per \$100
		11. Student Council has a Special Olympics Missouri committee. – 250 points
		12. A minimum of 1 Individual with intellectual disability is a member of the Student Council. Please include number of individuals with and without intellectual disabilities in council. – 250 points
		13. STUCO member with intellectual disability serves in meaningful leadership role on the council. Please provide documentation of what roles they serve. – 250 points

FUNDRAISING TRACKING FORM

Date of Event	Location	Event Title	Amount Raised	Beneficiary SOMO or School's SO Team	Advisor Signature