Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®

SOCIAL INCLUSION FRAMEWORK

UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS is a strategy to activate youth, engage educators, and promote school communities of acceptance and inclusion.

Core Processes

Element 1
Inclusive Youth Leadership

Element 2
Creating & Sustaining Relationships

Element 3
Unifying Programming

Element 4
School/Community Collaborations

Operational Processes

Element 5
Communication

Element 6
Professional Development

Element 7
Continuous Improvement

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® has identified seven key elements (or characteristics) of socially inclusive learning environments. Each characteristic has equal importance to the success of efforts to promote social inclusion but is insufficient on its own.

The seven characteristics are categorized into broad functions as Core Processes and Operational Processes.

The four core processes:
- Establish a vibrant role for youth leadership.
- Create and sustain positive relationships for students with and without intellectual disabilities.
- Design unified programs that eliminate boundaries of separation in favor of shared events, activities, goals and leadership.
- Create school, family and community partnerships that promote safe, nurturing and inclusive environments.

The three operational processes ensure effective implementation and sustainability over time. They are particularly important to schools and communities seeking to create socially inclusive relationships among diverse young people.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

☑ *Inclusive Youth Leadership (Core Process #1):* The school leadership and staff value inclusive youth leadership as a priority, and youth representing the diversity of the student body are engaged in leadership positions.

☑ *Creating and Sustaining Relationships (Core Process #2):* Relationships between peers with and without intellectual disabilities are created, cultivated and sustained through a variety of interactions in school and afterschool settings.

☑ *Unifying Programming (Core Process #3):* Access and opportunities are provided for students with and without intellectual disabilities to participate *as peers* in sports, leadership and whole school engagement activities.

☑ *School - Community Partnerships (Core Process #4):* Sustainable collaborations exist to benefit youth, school and community. They are supported by mutual commitments, high levels of trust, funding, measurable deliverables and formal policies.

☑ *Communication (Operational Process #1):* Clear, concise communication strategies with inclusive language to ensure program effectiveness and stakeholder understanding.

☑ *Professional Development (Operational Process #2):* A variety of opportunities are established for school staff members, students with and without intellectual disabilities, families, and community leaders to acquire and enhance knowledge and skills to effectively implement and sustain inclusive schools.

☑ *Continuous Improvement (Operational Process #3): Structures and processes are put into place to ensure the development and ongoing support of an inclusive school climate and effective learning environment for all students.*

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