



Special Olympics
Unified Champion
Schools®

CASE

Viewing Diversity of Schools and Experiences through Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® Case Study Videos

Elise Calanni | October 2018

This year, the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools team traveled around the United States with content production partner ClickOn Media to collect stories. Through the collaboration of ClickOn and the schools visited, the team was able to capture stories about the inspiring students, faculty, and community members that make up Unified Champion Schools. This has resulted in the creation of many amazing videos that have been shared ahead of the back to school season as a social media campaign!

To create these videos was to create a glimpse into the diversity of Unified Champion Schools: diversity of schools, population, and experiences of the students. Thanks to the incredible stories gathered across the country, this array of perspectives is creatively depicted in the following videos.

Three-Component Case Studies:

Thanks to the Unified Generation, over 6,000 schools around the country are centers of inclusion. With sports as the foundation, the three component model offers a unique combination of effective activities that equip young people with tools and training to create sports, classroom and school climates of acceptance. These are school climates where students with disabilities feel welcome and are routinely included in, and feel a part of, all activities, opportunities and functions. This is accomplished by implementing inclusive sports, inclusive youth leadership opportunities, and whole school engagement.

The following case studies were created to showcase how different schools implement these three components. Each component is critical on its own, but together they make a truly inclusive Unified Champion School.

To view the Three-Component Case Study videos, follow the links below:





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[Whole-School Engagement](#)

[Inclusive Youth Leadership](#)

[Special Olympics Unified Sports® and Unified PE](#)

School Setting Case Studies:

While the Unified Champion Schools program is structured in its planning and implementation, it is important to note that one size does not fit all! The program is designed to be woven into the fabric of the school, enhancing current efforts and providing rich opportunities that lead to meaningful change in creating a socially inclusive school that supports and engages all learners. What a Unified Champion School “looks like” can vary greatly from school to school, based on the needs, goals, schedules and other factors unique to each school; but the basic building blocks remain the same.

The following case studies focus on three separate schools to highlight UCS programming in an urban, suburban, and rural setting, respectively: Washington High School in Phoenix, Arizona; Alamo Heights High School in San Antonio, Texas; and Mead High School in Longmont, Colorado. These case studies were designed primarily as a resource for schools interesting in implementing the UCS program to show how the foundations of the program can be built into any school, no matter the setting.

To view the School Setting Case Study videos, follow the links below:

[Urban](#)

[Suburban](#)

[Rural](#)



Portraits:

In the planning and creation of the above videos, four unique portraits took form. Each of these four portraits focuses on a specific story: that of brothers in an inclusive school, a Special Olympics superstar and Chief Inspiration Officer, an entrepreneurial student in Rhode Island, and a Special Olympics athlete and X-Games star. These four stories deep dive into what makes inclusion so essential; in fact, not all of these subjects have always



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experienced true inclusion in their lives. Hearing from their multiple viewpoints really drives home why inclusion must be the golden standard in our schools and our society.

To view the Portrait videos, follow the links below:

[Jay and Evan Halberg](#)

[Loretta Claiborne, Special Olympics Chief Inspiration Officer](#)

[Kate DeCotis](#)

[Daina Shilts](#)



Not only are all of these videos an incredible promotional tool to generate excitement for Unified Champion Schools, but they can also be instructional in showing the great potential each school has—no matter where it is or how it is organized! Every school has the capability of implementing Unified programming, it's just a matter of getting started. Take that first step now, and join the 6,493 Unified Champion Schools that are making social inclusion the norm!

Resources:

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

<https://www.specialolympics.org/our-work/unified-champion-schools>

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Elise Calanni is a Communications, Resources, and Content Specialist for Unified Champion Schools, the youth engagement and activation strategy that promotes school communities where all young people, as well as adult leaders, become agents of change. The program currently is in 48 states, 2,103 school districts, and more than 6,400 schools, reaching students each year with messages and activities that promote inclusive youth leadership and social inclusion.