



***Special
Olympics
Alaska***

Partners Club® &

Unified Sports® Handbook



Special Olympics Alaska School Program “At A Glance”

The 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games Alaska, held in Anchorage March 4-11, and the School Enrichment Program, generously funded by a US Department of Education Grant, provided an opportunity for Alaskan schools and Special Olympics to benefit from each other. As a result, a movement to partner both entities in Alaska has developed. We share a common mission to provide children with mental disabilities a chance to learn skills, gain confidence and prepare for lifelong participation in the community. The Special Olympics Alaska School Program provides opportunities for students of all abilities to learn about each other’s strengths and celebrate ability differences through inclusive social, recreational, and fitness activities. It also promotes the benefits of fitness while providing opportunities to empower students and allow them to recognize their ability to make a difference in the world.

Mission of Special Olympics Alaska: To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. This would give them continuous 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 athletes, and the community.

Mission of Special Olympics Alaska School Program: To provide opportunities to Alaska youth through a partnership with Alaskan schools that supports the above mission; to provide opportunities for youth with and without intellectual disabilities to participate in activities together; and to provide opportunities for the expertise and experience of Alaska Schools and Special Olympics Alaska to benefit from each other in working towards building lifelong skills through inclusive opportunities.

Partners Club®: The Partners Club® is a unique Special Olympics Alaska sponsored, school-based program. It teams students with and without intellectual disabilities through sports training and competition. This club also offers social and recreational opportunities.

Unified Sports®: Unified Sports® combine approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes and athletes without intellectual disabilities (partners) on sports teams for training and competition.

Athlete*: An individual receiving special education services participating in the Special Olympics Alaska School Program.

Partner: An individual receiving general education services who pairs up with an athlete to form a partnership while participating in the Special Olympics Alaska School Program.

Coordinator: A school district personnel, preferably a teacher, that assumes the role as “sponsor” of the school based program by coordinating with the school district and Special Olympics Alaska.

Coach: A school district personnel with a sports background that serves as a resource to the Partners Club® through assisting with Unified Sports®.

*Special Olympics Alaska community based programs require participating athletes (youth and adults) to be identified as having an intellectual disability in order to qualify for the program.



Dear Coordinator,

Welcome back to School! As we start the school year, Special Olympics Alaska School Program is looking forward to a year filled with sports, recreation, friendship, and fun. The School Program consists of several K-12 programs, including the Partners Club® and Unified Sports®. The Partners Club® is a Special Olympics Alaska sponsored school based club for students with and without intellectual disabilities. This club offers social, recreational and sports opportunities. Unified Sports® is an initiative that combines approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes and partners (students without intellectual disabilities) on sports teams for training and competition.

This handbook was designed to help you, as the coordinator, start up your Partners Club® and/or Unified Sports® program utilizing resources that other teachers have noted were helpful in pioneering this program. Enclosed you will find resources such as the calendar of school events, sample letters to parents and school administration, topics to address with Activities Principals, and strategies for recruiting partners.

To get started, please complete the Partners Club® Registration Form and fax or email it to the contact information below. This will ensure you are registered with Special Olympics Alaska and that you have access to all of the opportunities throughout the year.

Again, welcome back to school. Have a great year!

Sincerely,

Sarah Arts
Director of Sports and Programs

Sarah Arts

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Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation for the benefit of persons with intellectual disabilities



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SECTION I
PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Special Olympics Alaska School Program Overview

Introduction

Special Olympics Alaska provides opportunities for students with and without intellectual disabilities to learn about each other's strengths and celebrate differences through inclusive social, recreational, and sports activities. Through Alaska standard based classroom resources, school sanctioned clubs, and Unified Sports™, the Special Olympics Alaska School Program helps students learn about those who are different but who can nonetheless inspire greatness with their individual talents, gifts and personal contributions. This program promotes the benefits of fitness while providing opportunities to empower students and allow them to recognize their ability to make a difference in the world.

History

The 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games, held in Anchorage March 4-11, and the School Enrichment Program, generously funded by a US Department of Education Grant, provided an opportunity for Alaskan schools and Special Olympics to benefit from each other. As a result, a movement to partner both entities in Alaska developed. Special Olympics Alaska and school districts share a common mission to provide children with intellectual disabilities a chance to learn skills, gain confidence and prepare for lifelong participation in the community. Through participation in physical activity and sports, the partnership allows children of all abilities the opportunity to work together, live, and learn in an environment that accepts all people.

The Special Olympics Alaska Advisory Committee was established by the 2001 World Games School Enrichment Program in 1999 and played a crucial role in the success of this program. By establishing a mission statement, action plans, and goals and strategies, this group of education leaders and practitioners worked with Special Olympics Alaska staff to ensure that individual district needs were being met.

Other Agencies

Along with Special Olympics Alaska corporate sponsorships and local volunteers, agencies, including the Alaska School Activities Association, have embraced the Special Olympics Alaska School Program with a goal of increasing sports opportunities for students of all ability levels within the school structure. In addition, other education related community organizations such as University of Alaska and Special Education Services Agency have identified the advantages of collaborating with Special Olympics Alaska. Special Olympics Alaska will continue to foster these partnerships to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of quality programs.

School District Involvement

For the past several years, Special Olympics Alaska has worked directly with several administrators, educators, and students who are currently involved with Special Olympics in their schools and communities. From these efforts, we have received positive feedback in regards to increased meaningful and inclusive opportunities for students, program development and support, curriculum materials, and professional development opportunities.

This experience and feedback promotes a formal relationship with school districts, enabling us to approach the program holistically and provide quality services to districts statewide.

The Vision

The goal and vision of the Special Olympics Alaska School Program is to give 53 school districts access to the program. All districts in Alaska will be introduced to opportunities for their schools through collaborating with Special Olympics Alaska. Through several programs available to students and teachers within the general education and special education setting, the program is designed to allow districts to be involved at the level they determine best for them.

Benefits to the Education system in Alaska:

- Assistance in meeting the Alaska content and performance standards,
- Assistance in providing increased opportunities for students of all ability levels,
- Availability of materials and support at no cost to the district,
- Assistance in facilitating meaningful inclusive opportunities within the school environment,
- Practical opportunities to learn about diversity and tolerance,
- Opportunities to foster positive character development,
- Opportunities for service learning,
- Direct services to meeting student needs through Individual Education Programs,
- Assistance in transition planning for students,
- Opportunities for professional development statewide and within the district,
- Assistance with strategies for family involvement in the program,
- Assistance in meeting Alternate Assessment requirements.

Benefits to the Student:

- Promotion of sports, lifelong fitness and recreation skills,
- Assistance to students in developing positive relationships,
- Opportunities for students to contribute to their school and community,
- Opportunities to identify, develop and practice academic, social, and athletic skills,
- Support to students when transitioning from school to community programs,
- Assistance with providing services identified in the Individual Education Plan,
- Building confidence through success and positive interactions with peers.

Benefits to Special Education Programs

- Opportunities to gain lifelong skills, physical fitness, acceptance and inclusion.
- Support Individual Education Programs related to:
 - Least Restrictive Environment,
 - Learning and practicing life skills, communication skills, and community living skills,
 - Physical Education programs,
 - Occupational therapy programs,
 - Physical therapy programs,
 - Participation with non-disabled peers,
 - Transition Planning,
 - Acknowledge and promoting all levels of ability,
 - Family involvement (sibling, parent, extended),
 - Supplementary aids and services – relationships with peers may transfer into assistance in the classroom on academics and behavior,
 - Alternate Assessments-Data Collection setting, community participation, S/HL goals.
- Introduce students without intellectual disabilities (partners) to the gifts and talents of students with intellectual disabilities,

- Provide opportunities for academic and social support in the classroom, in the hallways, and the overall school environment and community.

Benefits to Special Olympics Alaska:

- Assist in furthering its efforts to fulfill the Special Olympics Alaska mission by providing people with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to develop sports skills, demonstrate skills, experience joy, share gifts with family, friends, and the community,
- Continue statewide outreach efforts,
- Enlist the assistance of professionals in the field of education, youth, disabilities, and sports/physical fitness,
- Provide support to local community programs,
- Facilitate growth of Special Olympics Alaska programs statewide.

The Partnership

Special Olympics Alaska provides opportunities and resources for student learning, professional development, and administration of programs. We recognize the importance of school district endorsement and involvement in the success of this program. Our goal for this partnership is to meet the needs of the school district as well as lay the foundation for future collaboration between Special Olympics Alaska and school districts across the state.

Special Olympics Alaska provides:

- Inclusive extra-curricular and sports programs for students of all abilities,
- Professional development and teacher training,
- Assistance with funding of programs,
- Access to Special Olympics Alaska corporate sponsorships, volunteers and education related grant funding, as well as event opportunities and sponsorship,
- Special Olympics Alaska staff dedicated to development, implementation and administration of programs,
- Liaison of programs to Alaska School Activities Association, Alaska Institutes of Higher Education, and the Department of Education and Early Development,
- Service Learning Curriculum resource kit for all ages, based on Alaska standards,
- Resource for transition of students from school to community sports and volunteer/service programs,
- Formal recognition of collaboration between Special Olympics Alaska and the school district.

School District provides:

- Superintendent endorsement,
- Schools, educators, and students to develop and implement programs,
- Assistance with sanction of Partners Club® in schools,
- Assistance with annual evaluation of programs,
- Assistance with long term planning for the program within the school district,
- Formal recognition of collaboration between the school district and Special Olympics Alaska.



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SECTION II
GETTING STARTED



Getting Started: Partners Club®/Unified Sport®

The Partners Club® is a unique Special Olympics Alaska sponsored, school based program that teams students, with and without intellectual disabilities, through sports training and competition (Unified Sports®). This club offers social and recreational opportunities as well.

Special Olympics Alaska is a resource to your club and sports teams. While some clubs are specifically sports oriented, others include activities that are social and recreational. Over time, clubs develop the program to offer opportunities in both areas. The support of faculty and administration in both general and special education departments is crucial in ensuring the success of students in the program.

Clubs must meet all requirements of their school policies and procedures. Each member is required to meet the guidelines for participation in a school club. The club coordinator should contact the Activities Principal within the school to identify criteria that must be met in order to be sanctioned.

Getting Started

- Contact Special Olympics Alaska and submit the Partners Club® Registration form. This will activate the start of your club, allowing Special Olympics Alaska to begin providing resources where needed (funding, access to other clubs, supplies and materials, equipment etc).
- Introduce your Special Education Department to the Partners Club® concept. Enlist their endorsement and support of the club. They will be crucial to the success of the program in regards to students with special needs participating.
- Identify a general education teacher to co-sponsor or collaborate with.
- Contact your Activities Principal to identify areas of support and requirements for your school district to start a sanctioned club. Recommended topics to discuss include:
 - Special Olympics Alaska's role and sponsorship,
 - Partners Club® activities,
 - Unified Sports®,
 - Criteria to be sanctioned,
 - Transportation to and from activities or events,
 - Student requirements for participating in school sanctioned activities,
 - Criteria for earning a "letter" or other school based recognition,
 - Media release for pictures and video,
 - Fundraising guidelines.
- Present information/opportunities to students.
- Send information and forms home to parents.
- Hold first club meeting. Introduce Partners Club® and Unified Sports® concept.
- Have students complete any school required forms for club and/or sport participation in school, as well as those required for the Special Olympics Alaska School Program.
- Identify coaches in your school that would be interested in helping start up and/or supporting Unified Sport® Teams.



SAMPLE MEMO TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

To: Special Education Directors
From: Sarah Arts, Director of Sports and Programs
Date:
Re: Special Olympics Alaska *School Program*

Special Olympics Alaska would like to introduce the school based program to your school district. Special Olympics Alaska provides year round sports training and competition to youth and adults with intellectual disabilities. In Alaska, we are working to partner with school districts across the state to provide these opportunities to students during the school day. Within this partnership, Special Olympics Alaska is a resource to students, teachers, districts and families. This inclusive and innovative program is funded by Special Olympics Alaska and a grant through the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

Programs

Partners Club®: The Partners Club® is a unique Special Olympics Alaska sponsored, school based program that teams students with and without intellectual disabilities, through sports training and competition. This club offers social and recreational opportunities as well.

Unified Sports®: Unified Sports® is an initiative that combines approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes and partners (students without intellectual disabilities) on sports teams for training and competition.

Motor Activities Training Program: Motor Activities Training Program is a motor skills program designed for students with significant disabilities. The training program sets long and short term objectives and focuses on the student achieving their personal best.

Young Athletes Program®: The Young Athletes Program® is a developmentally appropriate play program for children with intellectual disabilities ages two through seven. It focuses on skills such as walking, running, balancing, jumping, trapping, catching, throwing, striking, kicking, and advanced and foundational skills.

Special Olympics Get Into It!: A free, nationally endorsed curriculum resource kit for students with and without intellectual disabilities. The kit addresses standards, character education, positive youth development, and service learning by involving students in learning about persons with intellectual disabilities and Special Olympics.

Transition: A component that focuses on working alongside students, families and teachers in ensuring post secondary access to Special Olympics Alaska and other sports/fitness programs in the community.

Camp Shriver: Camp Shriver is a place for people with and without intellectual disabilities to learn new sports skills and improve individual sport performance, participate in individual and team sports, build friendships, and have fun with their peers.

Please contact me to get your school district involved. I am happy to answer any questions you may have when making that decision.

Sarah Arts
Phone: 1-907-222-7625 ext 601
Toll Free: 1-888-499-7625 ext 601
Fax: 1-907-222-6200
sarah@specialolympicsalaska.org
www.specialolympicsalaska.org



SAMPLE MEMO TO PARENT

ENTER DATE HERE

Dear Parent,

The Partners Club® is a unique Special Olympics Alaska sponsored, school based program that teams students with and without intellectual disabilities, through Unified Sports® training and competition, social and recreational opportunities.

The Partners Club® program provides opportunities to build student character, increase acceptance of disabilities, develop leadership and other skills in a service-learning environment, and enhance their school community. It is a program that teaches beyond the classroom and expands students' social horizons.

Each Partners Club® determines what activities and events they wish to participate in throughout the school year. In addition to social and recreational activities, the Unified Sports® that will be offered by Special Olympics Alaska to Partners Clubs® this year will include bowling, floor hockey, and track and field. Clubs are encouraged to participate in other sports opportunities outside of those offered by Special Olympics Alaska, but are not required to do so. Clubs meet on a regular basis during the school day or after school.

Attached you will find the permission slip and forms required for your son/daughter to participate in the Partners Club® and Unified Sports® this year. Please review the forms and contact me if you have any questions. When the forms are complete, send them back to school with your son/daughter.

Sincerely,

Teacher



Partners Club®/Unified Sports®
Informational Meeting

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Teacher Contact: _____

Join the FUN!

The Partners Club® is a school based club for students with and without disabilities. Members of the club participate in social, recreational and sports activities together. This club is sponsored by Special Olympics Alaska.

Opportunities this year include:

Unified Bowling Tournament

Unified Tennis Event

Unified Floor Hockey Tournament

Unified 3on3 Basketball Clinic and Tournament

Opportunities to participate in track meets across the state





Special Olympics Alaska School Program
Registration Form

The Special Olympics Alaska School Program requires that each school submit a Registration Form each year to officially register. This activates your program at Special Olympics Alaska for the year, allowing you to use the Special Olympics Alaska/Partners Club®/Unified Sports® name and resources, and receive support and information regarding **school related programs.**

Name of School: _____

School District: _____

Grade Levels: _____

School Program Coordinator: _____

Additional School Support (adults): _____

Position/Department of Coordinator: _____

Coordinator/School Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Contact Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Anticipated number of participants: _____

Athletes (anticipated number of students w/ intellectual disabilities): _____

Partners (anticipated number of students without intellectual disabilities): _____

Please return completed form to:

Joanna Paris

Special Olympics Alaska
3200 Mountain View Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

joanna@specialolympicalaska.org

Phone: 1-907-222-7625 (606)

Fax: 1-907-222-6200

Toll Free: 1-888-499-7625 (606)



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SECTION III
**TIPS & RESOURCES FOR
THE PARTNERS CLUB® &
UNIFIED SPORTS®**



Tips for a Successful Partners Club® and Unified Sports® Program

Student Recruitment

- Utilize existing systems (announcements, flyers, school newspaper, word of mouth),
- Enlist the assistance of the Special Education Department faculty,
- Enlist the assistance of school based clubs including:
 - Key Club
 - National Honor Society
 - Student Government
 - Class Councils (Freshmen class meeting)
 - Other student-led clubs
- Ask students to determine ways to recruit others. How have students been successfully “recruited” in the past?

Strategies for enhancing your club

- Utilize your school sports teams, PE department and/or the Adapted Physical Education teacher to assist with Unified Sport® related activities. Consider paralleling sports and fitness activities occurring in PE and/or extracurricular programs when determining sports for Partners Club®,
- Recruit school sports teams to help with sport training (Bowling team - provide a clinic at a bowling practice, Track team – assist with practice),
- Conduct a clinic put on by school sports teams or youth community league members as the trainers,
- Identify various roles. Make a distinction between those who participate in the Partners Club® and those who wish to participate in sports,
- Connect with your school’s Student Government. Request representation at Student Government meetings,
- Determine an individual’s interest in joining Special Olympics community based program,
- Ask Special Olympics Alaska to assist when needed,
- Invite guest speakers to your meetings to identify specific topics. (Special Olympics coach of your sport, fundraising experts to help with a project, or an athlete from the community to speak about your sport),

Suggested Orientation Topics

While clubs are encouraged to conduct all meetings, sports training, and activities with both partners and athletes present, many have found it valuable to hold an *orientation* meeting for Partners separately.

An orientation meeting helps ensure students are aware of and able to meet their responsibility as a club member. It also provides a time to openly discuss topics such as confidentiality, the importance of a commitment to consistently attend practices and meetings, and strategies for working with fellow students. Topics might include:

- What is Special Olympics Alaska, Partners Club® and Unified Sports®?
- What do the terms “athlete” and “partner” represent?

- Responsibilities/Expectations during meetings, club activities, and sports,
- Requirements for participating (School and Special Olympics Alaska),
- Expectations of appropriate interaction between Partners and Athletes,
- Individual needs of Athletes (when appropriate),
- Strategies for having a positive relationship when facing challenges,
- Strategies for recruiting new members,
- Upcoming activities, events and dates,
- Benefits of being a member: develop relationships, inclusion, letters of recommendation, college application/resume recognition, fun, fitness, social interaction, etc.
- Best day/time of the week/month for meetings,
- Discuss roles: Athletes/ Partners and what expectations are for participation in the club or sports if they choose.

Fundraising Strategies

While funds are available through the Special Olympics Alaska School Program, fundraising is an effective resource for your group to earn money for events and an opportunity for students to learn, gain skills, build relationships and socialize. Below is a list of some fundraisers that have worked for Partners Clubs® in the past. All fundraising should be cleared with Activities Principal.

- Check with your school's student government at the beginning of the year for fundraising opportunities. For example:
 - Host a dance (Kodiak High School, Kodiak),
 - Work concessions in the school (West High School, Anchorage),
- Bake sales at school events such as conferences, back to school night, etc. (Wasilla High School, Wasilla),
- Garage sale. Use resources within the school, have students/ teachers donate, or put out flyers for donations (Service High School, Anchorage),
- Sell espressos at school (East High School, Anchorage),
- Sell Smoothies. Overhead cost is low, student interest high (Various Clubs),
- Popcorn sales (West High School, Anchorage),
- T-shirt/Sweatshirt sale for Partners Club® members. Special Olympics can often get clothing and printing costs at a reduced price (South High School, Anchorage),

SAMPLE Criteria for earning Awards and Letters

Your schools will require specific criteria for earning an award or letter for participation in activities (club) and athletics (sports). In many cases, members of the Partners Club® and/or Unified Sports™ will be eligible to earn this recognition. Program specific criteria might include:

- a. School letters may be awarded for student participation only in events that are school district sponsored and controlled.
- b. Student participates in % of activities (meetings, practices, fundraisers, competition, etc)
- c. Student holds a lead position in the club (president, secretary, etc) for one year.
- d. Student demonstrates significant value to the club: (Written justification for letter by coordinator.)

SAMPLE Constitution for Partners Club®

The Activities Principal at your school may require a club constitution to sanction your club. Below is a sample constitution from Service High School in the Anchorage School District.

Constitution and Bylaws

Partners Club® , *Robert Service High School*

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Partners Club®

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose is for students with and without disabilities to be involved in leisure and recreational activities as partners and to support Special Olympics Athletes and other individuals with disabilities in sport, recreational and leisure activities.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

- a. Any student who is enrolled in Robert Service High School is eligible to join, vote and hold an elected office.
- b. Membership paperwork must be completed.
- c. Meetings will be held twice a month on Thursdays in room C-111.
- d. Special or Executive Board meetings may be called by the President and/or advisor.
- e. If officers miss three meetings in a row without prior arrangements, they will be notified to resign their position.

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

Section 1 - Responsibility

The officers shall manage and direct the business affairs and make decisions to effect the operations and maintenance of the Partners Club®.

Section 2 – Composition

The officers of the Partners Club® shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and Special Events Coordinator. An officer's position may be filled by two members cooperating to fill the duties of the position.

Section 3 – Vacancies

Vacancies of the officers however occurring shall be filled by vote of the total membership.

Section 4 – Quorum

Two-thirds of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE V – PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Section 1 – Voting

Unless otherwise specified herein, any action permitted or required to be taken at any meeting of the club, its officers or special committees, may be approved by a quorum.

Section 2 – Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Partners Club® in all cases to which they are applicable.

ARTICLE VI – AMENDMENTS

Amendments and bylaws may be added to the Constitution by a quorum of the membership present at any designated meeting.

POSITIONS

Co-Presidents

Co-Vice Presidents

Co-Secretaries

Special Projects Coordinators

Parliamentarian

Co-Treasurers

Sponsor

Principal