



Special Olympics Unified Sports

IUS is a fully-inclusive co-ed high school sports program which facilitates social inclusion by bringing together students with intellectual disabilities, other disabilities, and without disabilities on teams for training and competition. These teams are regarded the same as any other varsity sports team at the school.

IUS also includes Unified Clubs where students with and without disabilities collaborate to improve their school's culture; and whole school engagement activities designed to promote inclusion, acceptance, and respect for all students.

The Issues:



Children with disabilities are **two to three times** more likely to be bullied than their peers without disabilities.



There is a **strong relationship** between school connectedness and important outcomes such as regular school attendance and staying in school.

Our Impact:



58% of administrators feel that IUS components have made a big impact in reducing bullying and teasing in their schools.



63% of school liaisons and administrators feel that IUS components have made a big impact in creating a more inclusive school environment.

Our IUS Strategy
Consists of 3 Components:

1

Unified Sports

2

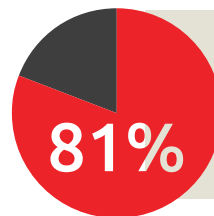
Inclusive Youth Leadership

3

Whole School Engagement

Our Focus and Approach

Special Olympics PA's (SOPA) goal is to offer IUS in at least 180 of the nearly 1,000 high schools in Pennsylvania by the end of 2020. Currently 85 high schools participate in 12 counties and the cities of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Erie. While the early demand for Interscholastic Unified Sports (IUS) from school districts around the state has been incredibly strong, SOPA is currently limited in its ability to grow the program, largely due to financial limitations. Currently three Unified Sports are offered: indoor bocce, track and field and soccer. Student athletes participate in 10 week long seasons with practices twice a week, 3-5 local competitions, county/city championships, and state championships.



of students say that the three **IUS components** are changing their school for the better.

Our program is supported by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.