



## Creating Unified Sports for Your School

DANA JOHNSTON - ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR AND  
DR. STEVE AMARO, CMAA, ED.D - FREEDOM HIGH SCHOOL  
MARCH, 2017



## Unified Sports Agenda

- ▶ The NFHS Introduction.
- ▶ Unified Sports Definition & Targets.
- ▶ How to Implement Unified Sports.
- ▶ After Season Considerations.
- ▶ The Role of Activities.
- ▶ Questions & Answers.



## Introduction

- ▶ Unified Sports recognized by NFHS
- ▶ Dear Colleague Letter OCR 2013. (More states)
- ▶ Growing Interest in the future






## Role of Activities

- ▶ Opportunity to generate spirit.
- ▶ Opportunity for clubs to support school.
- ▶ Create events that are all inclusive.
- ▶ Celebrate diversity of all students.
- ▶ [http://www.unifiedsports.org/articles/adding-a-unified-activity-to-your-school/](#)
- ▶ [http://www.unifiedsports.org/articles/rediscovering-the-joy-of-sports-in-unified-sports/](#)

## Unified Sports Mission

- ▶ Unified Sports is a division of Special Olympics.
- ▶ Special Olympics Mission: 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 athletes and the community.





## Unified Sports Targets

- ▶ Principle of meaningful involvement.
- ▶ Appropriate sports selection.
- ▶ Coaching Staff.
- ▶ Selection of teammates.
- ▶ Regular training and competition.
- ▶ Compliance with Official Rules.
- ▶ Commitment and Support.



**Special Olympics**  
Be a fan.

**Project UNIFY.**



## First Steps

- ▶ Start small.
- ▶ Identify needs and resources.
- ▶ Cost/benefit analysis.
- ▶ Do you believe?



## Sport Selection

### Is your team capable?

- ▶ Can you modify the rules to make it meaningful?
- ▶ Can you gather the appropriate buy in from your teammates and coaches?
- ▶ Can you count on staff, administration and school to support it?
- ▶ Can you get other schools to participate?



## Appropriate Sports selection

- ▶ Facilities
- ▶ Student Interest
- ▶ Safety



## Selection of teammates

- ▶ Survey/Interview potential team members.
- ▶ Identify committed Gen. Ed students.
- ▶ Generate appropriate sport and team rules.



## Coaching staff

- ▶ Identify inclusive coaches.
- ▶ Determine time commitment.
- ▶ Identify special education support staff.
- ▶ Create open lines of vertical and lateral communication.



## Regular training and competition

- ▶ Create minimum weekly/daily practice schedules.
- ▶ Identify competition dates and times.



## Compliance with Official Rules

- ▶ Rule creation/adaptation.
- ▶ CIF Implications.
- ▶ Design meaningful participation for all.





## Commitment and support

- ▶ Generate district/school support.
- ▶ Synchronize with partner/opponent schools.
- ▶ Create relationship with Special Education Department.
- ▶ Keep school personnel and community informed.





## After Season considerations

- ▶ Awards/Recognition/Letters
- ▶ Media
- ▶ Review/Adjust/Change as meaningful.
- ▶ Adapt/Invite/Share Experiences.



## Final Thoughts

- ▶ Experiment with enthusiasm!
- ▶ "We are not identical. Others may have more ability, but no one should be superior in such very important qualities as team spirit, enthusiasm, industriousness, cooperation, loyalty, determination, honesty, sincerity, reliability, and integrity. Acquire these traits and success is assured." - John Wooden
- ▶ Questions?

# Thank you for all you do!

DANA JOHNSTON & DR. STEVE AMARO, CMAA, ED.D

CONTACT INFORMATION:  
[AMARO@LUHSD.NET](mailto:AMARO@LUHSD.NET)  
[JOHNSTON@LUHSD.NET](mailto:JOHNSTON@LUHSD.NET)  
 @SMCAMARO