

Media Talking Points - UCCS Media Toolkit

SONA Talking Points

ANNOUNCEMENT

- We are thrilled to launch the Special Olympics North America Unified Champion City Schools initiative in cities across the U.S. this fall.
- The Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® program is generously funded by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education.

UCS

- The Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS) program is implemented in nearly 8,000 schools **pre-K through universities**.
- Going into the 14th year of programming.
- The UCS program systematically promotes **inclusion through sport and play**.
- UCS utilizes three interconnected components to create **social inclusion** in schools:
 - Special Olympics Unified Sports®,
 - Inclusive Youth Leadership, and
 - Whole-school engagement
- In schools that have implemented UCS programming, **92% of educators** reported **reduced bullying, teasing, and offensive language** among students.

UCCS

- The Unified Champion City Schools (UCCS) initiative is a **focused approach** to amplify the essential elements of UCS within city school districts.
- This initiative will be partnering with underserved communities in order to **expand and accelerate UCS programming**.

WHY UCCS

- Special Olympics North America has a goal to **reach 10,000** Unified Champion Schools in the **U.S.** by the **2023-2024** academic school year.
- Currently 26% of our schools are in urban school districts but **only 7%** are urban schools of the **highest need**.
- With recent national attention to the **inequities that exist in underserved communities**, the time is right for systematic approaches to position city schools as **models of what's possible**.
- UCCS programming has the power to;
 - empower the youth,
 - inform educators, and
 - support caregivers and community leaders...

to become the **influencers of change** in their schools and communities.

GOALS OF UCCS:

- Establish a presence that **extends inclusive programming** from schools into each city's greater community.
- Build new **stakeholder relationships** within each community.
- **Grow UCS implementation** into more schools and communities.
- Amplify the voices of young people of **all abilities** who are **advocating for inclusivity** in their communities and schools.
- Contribute to the **mission** of Special Olympics by empowering **youth of all abilities** who are:
 - living healthfully,
 - engaging with one another thoughtfully, and
 - owning and controlling personal wellness.

SO State Programs Talking Points

ANNOUNCEMENT

- **[Name of City/School District]** will be partnering with **[SO state Program]** this fall to implement the Unified Champion City Schools initiative, with the goal to **[OPTIONAL: increase and amplify social inclusion in our most underserved communities and schools.]**
 - **Example:** Boston Public Schools will be partnering with Special Olympics Massachusetts (SOMA) this fall to implement the Unified Champion City Schools initiative, with the goal to increase and amplify social inclusion in our most underserved communities and schools.
- This initiative is a **focused approach to amplifying and accelerating** UCS programming in U.S. city school districts.
- This initiative is being generously funded by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education.
- **[SO Program]** will be supporting the implementation of the UCCS initiative in **[number of schools, which school level]** within **[Name of City/School District]** during the **[2021-2022 school year]**.
 - **Example:** SOMA will be supporting the implementation of the UCCS initiative in 10 elementary, 10 middle, and 15 high schools within the Boston Public Schools district in the fall of 2021.

WHY

- Our populated city schools typically face **more complex challenges**, warranting **greater and more deliberate actions**.
- **There is a great need to increase programming** in our city school districts and communities as only **[%]** of current UCS programs in **[State]** are in urban communities.



- Our program has had great success implementing [successful components of UCS programming] and we want to continue to expand that success into our most underserved communities.
- [SO Program] plan to implement [program/event] in order to [expected benefit].
 - Example: SOMA plans to implement student-led Unified Clubs in order to increase Inclusive Youth Leadership in our city schools.
- Context information:
 - SONA has a goal to reach 10,000 SO UCS in the U.S. by the 2023-24 school year.
 - SONA is growing the UCS presence in the most underserved communities, which tend to be communities of color in urban school districts.
 - With the events of spring/summer 2020 in the U.S. magnifying the need for further inclusion and representation, SONA decided to redouble UCS efforts in urban communities.

HOW

- [State SO Program] UCS plans to implement the UCCS initiative by:
 - Engaging in new/Continuing and expanding successful partnerships with [community programs/organizations your Program plans to partner with]
 - Providing professional development resources and trainings to engage and empower the educators that will facilitate UCCS programming.
 - Increasing participation in signature events to engage and inform the greater community of UCCS programming.
 - Recruiting [#] new volunteers and hiring [#] staff members in order to properly support this new initiative.
 - Continuing existing [MOUs/written contracts] with [school district/city] to involve and inform the greater community.

GOALS

- This initiative is a **focused approach to amplifying and accelerating** UCS programming in U.S. city school districts.
- Work with [Community partners] to establish a presence that **extends programming** from our schools into the greater communities.
- Build **new stakeholder relationships** within our local communities and our state.
 - Example: To help implement the UCCS initiative and engage [City's] local community, SOXX will be starting a new partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of [City] in the fall of 2021.
- Contribute to SO **mission of inclusion** by empowering youth of all abilities who are:
 - living healthfully,
 - engaging with one another thoughtfully, and
 - owning and controlling personal wellness.
- [Most urgent strategies (aligning with 12-point integrated strategies) your Program will be working on and how]
 - **Example:** Create a student-led advisory council in each UCS school to champion the movement toward teams that compete city-wide.
- Context information- 12 Point Integrated Strategy:
 1. Add staffing at national level and in each targeted city school district.
 2. Secure MOUs with school districts/Superintendents and Mayor's commitment.
 3. Engage professional, college and community sport teams.
 4. Engage city-based colleges and HBCUs to support elementary, middle and high school activities.

**UNIFIED CHAMPION
CITY SCHOOLS INITIATIVE**



5. Strengthen/grow community partnerships – Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, Parks & Rec, Head Start, Law Enforcement.
6. Engage places of worship – faith leaders support UCS teams, volunteerism, and families.
7. Expand family outreach.
8. Engage Health organizations – annual health fairs/med fests.
9. Partner with local civic and service organizations (e.g. Urban League).
10. Bring on local media outlets for community engagement and event promotion.
11. Establish an annual signature event or amplify existing events in each city promoting sport, health, and community engagement.
12. Utilize Global Ambassador Program, athletes and partners to promote and inform the UCCS initiative.