

Special Olympics Massachusetts *Schools Newsletter*

National Banner *Applications*

The Special Olympics National Banner Recognition Program provides an opportunity for schools across the U.S. to be acknowledged for their achievements with inclusion at the national level. Schools have been doing great work to improve school culture, provide opportunities, and celebrate the abilities of all students. **Please read the details below to learn if your school might be in the running to be recognized as a National Banner School!** *Applications due May 8, 2026*

National Standards

2025-2026 Application Process Timeline

- **March 23rd, 9AM ET** – Application opens**for both NEW schools and schools that are reapplying (every 4 years)*
- **May 8th, 5PM ET** – Applications close
- **May & June** – State Special Olympics Programs Review Applications
- **July** – National Certifying Body Reviews Applications
- **Beginning of September** – School Notification
- **Spring 2027** – Applications Reopen

If you have been a Unified Champion School for a minimum of 2 years, you are eligible to apply. All banner schools from the 2022 cycle (banners read 2021-2025) are now eligible to renew their status this 2026 cycle!

IMPORTANT NOTE: The 2026 application is based on activities which took place during the 2025-2026 school year and years prior.

All schools are invited to apply through the online application below:

Apply to be a National Banner School!

Contact schools@specialolympicsma.org before you consider applying!



Middle School Unified Basketball

Middle School Unified Basketball is winding down with 11 Jamborees. We are thrilled that students are celebrating their own March Madness through the season's culminating events. A big thank you to our generous hosts: Ashland MS, Beckwith MS, Coolidge MS, Duxbury MS, FA Day MS, Hopkinton MS, Memorial MS, Nissitissit MS, Northbridge MS, Rumney Marsh MS, and West Bridgewater MS.



Middle School Youth Summit

Happening This Friday!

- **When:** Friday, April 10th
- **Timeframe:** 8:30 am to 1:00 pm
- **Location:** Special Olympics MA Office - 512 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752

Inclusive Youth Leadership opportunities empower students to become leaders in the Unified Champion Schools movement, exploring their collective gifts, developing leadership skills, and leading unified activities alongside adult leaders in their school.

The Special Olympics Massachusetts Youth Activation Council (YAC) invites you to learn how to promote Unified Champion Schools programs and how to be a leader advocating for inclusion. Please join us for this student-to-student leadership opportunity.

Registration is on a first come first serve basis for 80 students. Schools have a capacity of 4 students. **Please sign up today!**

Summit Registration



High School Unified Track & Field

The High School Unified Track and Field season is officially underway! Please continue to update your league sheets with your roster detail, student performance detail, and the exact time and dates you have secured on your schedule.

Unified Track and Field information can be found on the MIAA website on the spring sports, Unified Track and Field page.

MIAA Unified Track & Field

The Unified Track Format contains dates, details and guidance for the season. It is a requirement to read the [Unified Track and Field Format 2026](#) to be informed on all the requirements for the season.

Dates and Deadlines

April 16:

1. 'Intent to Enter' form completion for the Postseason and Final Roster Number Deadline
2. Schools must submit team rosters on Athletic.net
3. Schools must submit team rosters on Special Olympics MA – Unified Roster league sheets 12:00pm on this date.

April 29/May 6: Sectional Meet Entry Deadline

Times/distances for all students participating in the Sectional Meets must be submitted via Athletic.net by 11:59pm on the deadlines listed below.

- **April 29:** by 11:59pm (for meets taking place May 4-8)
- **May 6:** by 11:59pm (for meets taking place May 11-14)

May 8: Team Sportsmanship Award Nomination Deadline



Unified Basketball for Fall 2026

Each sport season we ask all schools to complete a registration form. **Registration for Unified Basketball for fall 2026 is due June 5, 2026**

Register for 2026 Unified Basketball

End-Of-Year Liaison Surveys

Watch Your Email

The Unified Champion Schools Liaison Survey from UMASS Boston will be emailed out to you this month. This is one of the two surveys liaisons are asked to complete at the end of the school year to report on its unified programming.

Survey #1: UMASS Survey: For this survey each school has a unique link, and the link cannot be shared with anyone other than the listed liaison contact. If you need to collaborate on the survey with another person, please email yu.xia@umb.edu.

This annual evaluation of the UCS program is required by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education is carried out at multiple levels. They did heed the request to shorten this survey! The survey will come from this address (sounifiedchampionschools@qualtrics-survey.com). Please add the survey program's email address to your "safe sender list" or check your spam folder.

Survey #2: This survey will be sent out in May from the local Special Olympics Massachusetts Chapter. It's a shorter survey to help your Regional Manager to support your school. Thank you in advance!

Have questions? Email us at schools@specialolympicsma.org