



FCPS Unified Sports® Program



Maryland Fitness and Athletics Equity for Students with Disabilities Act

- Mandates students with disabilities receive access to same sports and fitness opportunities as their peers
- Law applies to interscholastic sports, recreational/intramural sports and physical education



Unified Sports Partnership

- FCPS partnership with Special Olympics
- Implemented Unified Sports® Model
- Idea is to transform schools, shape new attitudes, and serve as the type of program that other school systems can emulate.



What is Unified Sports®?

- Unified Sports® model has been around over 20 years
- World-wide
- Inclusion program
- Rosters includes students with disabilities (athletes) and students without disabilities (partners)



Ideal Roster

- 50% - students with intellectual disabilities
- 20% - students with other types of identified disabilities
- 30% - students without disabilities

- Not all rosters are ideal
- Idea is to make sure we get teams at all 10 high schools so our students get to participate

Benefits of Unified Sports®

- Builds stronger social connections between students with and without disabilities
- Changes attitudes and nurtures enlightenment
- Strengthens overall sense of community
- Improves sports skills and tactics



Partnership with Special Olympics

- Outstanding partnership
- Has helped FCPS build a reputation of achieving excellence and being a leader
- FCPS has a model program that other counties are now trying to replicate



Partnership with Special Olympics

Special Olympics has helped in the following ways:

- Organization of the program
- Equipment and Uniforms
- Recruiting athletes
- Coaches Inservice and Training
- Medals and Ribbons
- Offering State-wide competitions



FCPS Offerings

- Fall Sport- Unified Team Tennis
- Winter Sport- Unified Indoor Bocce
- Spring Sport- Unified Track & Field



FCPS Guidelines for Unified Sports®

- Athletes must fill out paperwork packet including a physical
- Current Unified Sports athletes do not pay the \$95 participation fee
- Teams practice a minimum two times per week
- Each school competes in regular season competition (dual or tri meets or matches)
- Culminates with a County and State Championship meet.

Unified Sports® are Changing School Culture

- Motto- “On the field we are teammates, off the field we are friends”
- Developing friendships that may have never happened
- All kids are learning that “disability” is not a negative term
- Many success stories
- FCPS is truly becoming “Unified”

Contacts for FCPS Unified Sports® Program

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Questions?

