

Washington State Office of Public Instruction
Special Olympics Washington
Washington Interscholastic Activities Association

December 11, 2013

Dear Washington State Superintendents:

The WIAA and Special Olympics have been working with Athletic Directors all across the state to identify and train school coordinators to implement programs and create opportunities for eligible students to participate in Washington State Special Olympics. We ask that you join us in the vision of providing all students the opportunity to participate and be part of an experience that brings the school community together and enriches all that are involved.

Some of those programs provide additional opportunities for all students to be involved. Research suggests that quality programs provide an atmosphere of acceptance, respect and dignity; all factors that reduce bullying. These types of programs impact the whole school including administrators, staff and students, and have the ability to change school climate.

Several of those Special Olympics programs include multiple components which when implemented in an integrated fashion and with fidelity provide high quality consideration for our special Olympians on their campuses, in their communities and through state competition. They involve:

1. Tenets of various proprietary programs
2. School-wide Activities
3. Youth Activation/Leadership including, in some cases, the activation of school clubs

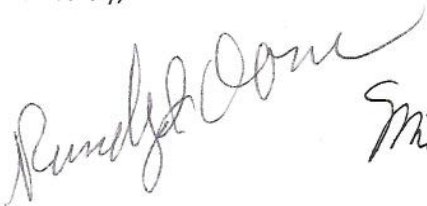
Elements for success in moving forward:

1. Designate a coordinator or lead person responsible for nurturing and guiding the Special Activities in your district. This could be district staff and/or volunteers.
2. If possible provide opportunities for those person(s) to participate in Special Olympics training.
3. Work with the WIAA and Special Olympics to organize Basketball teams this winter and Soccer teams/leagues beginning in April. Our vision is that you recognize Special Olympics participants as others get recognized in your schools.

We appreciate all that you and your staffs have done to respond to recent guidance from the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights regarding the provision of athletic activities for students with disabilities.

If your school or district has not already begun to implement a Special Olympics program, please contact Brian Smith at bsmith@WIAA.com or Joe Hampson at jhampson@sowa.org to get more information as soon as possible. Now is the time. Join us!


Sincerely,



Randy Dorn
Superintendent
WOSPI



Mike Colbrese
Executive Director
WIAA



Beth Wojick
President & CEO
Special Olympics Washington