

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL SERVICES
Township of Union Public Schools
M-E-M-O-R-A-N-D-U-M

TO: Dr. Gerald Benaquista

C: Dr. Jose Rodriguez, Marissa McKenzie, Yolanda Koon, Kim Conti, Bernadette Watson,
Diane Cappiello

FROM: Stefannie Buthorn 

RE: Board Agenda

DATE: July 15, 2026

Approve application to the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools 2026-2027 Grant for Kawameeh Middle School-
\$1075, in accordance with the information appended to the agenda:



Stefannie Buthorn <sbuthorn@twpunionschools.org>

Fwd: Thanks for filling out this form: 2026-27 SONJ UCS Funding Application

2 messages

Michele Nick <mnick@twpunionschools.org>
To: Stefannie Buthorn <sbuthorn@twpunionschools.org>

Mon, Jul 13, 2026 at 2:12 PM

Good Afternoon,

Kawameeh will be offering Club Unified again as part of the Special Olympics Unified Grant. Here is a copy of the application form. Please let me know if you have any questions or need anything else from me.

Have a great day,
Michele Nick

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Forms Response Receipts** <forms-receipts-noreply@google.com>
Date: Mon, Jul 13, 2026 at 2:07 PM
Subject: Thanks for filling out this form: 2026-27 SONJ UCS Funding Application
To: <mnick@twpunionschools.org>

Thanks for filling out this form: 2026-27 SONJ UCS Funding Application



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Here's what was received.

2026-27 SONJ UCS Funding Application

We are excited to once again provide the opportunity for eligible New Jersey schools to apply for funding to support Unified initiatives for the 2026-27 school year.

Please be sure to visit our application guide on <https://www.sonj-ucs.org/about-ucs/funding-application/> prior to applying for important information and the application's password.

Please submit a separate form for each school.

Self-funded schools - please indicate your self-funded status where requested. You will be offered an abridged application.

Email *

mnick@twpunionschools.org

Application Information

Name of person completing application *

Michele Nick

I am completing this application with the knowledge and approval of relevant administrators within my school and/or district. *

☒ Agreed

Application Password

This was distributed during the May 14 webinar and is included in the application guide, which is available on the UCS website (www.sonj-ucs.org) --> About UCS --> Funding Application

Choose to Include

School Information

School Name

(please enter your entire school name, i.e. Ramsey High School, not RHS):

*

Kawameeh Middle School

School District

(please enter your entire district name, i.e. West Milford Township Public Schools, not WMTPS or West Milford):

*

Township of Union Public Schools

School Mailing Address *

490 David Terrace

School Zip Code *

07083

School County *

Union County

Grades at your school: *

☐ Pre-K

☐ Kindergarten

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

- ☐ 5
- ☒ 6
- ☒ 7
- ☒ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10
- ☐ 11
- ☐ 12
- ☐ Beyond grade 12

How many students are enrolled in your school? *

800

School NCES Number

You can search here: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/>

*

341650005746

How many years has your school received UCS funding? *

- ☐ This is our first year
- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years

- ☐ 4 years
- ☐ 5 years
- ☒ More than 5 years
- ☐ We've been self-funded for at least one year.

School Contact Information

Principal Name *

Jason Malanda

Principal Email Address *

jmalanda@twpunionschools.org

Superintendent Name *

Dr. Gerry Benaquista

Superintendent Email Address *

superintendent@tups.org

Business Administrator Name *

Yolanda Koon

Business Administrator Email Address *

ykoon@tups.org

UCS School Leadership Team

Each

Unified Champion School is required to have a school leadership team in place. The SLT is, at minimum, composed of two student leaders (one with and one without an intellectual disability), two staff liaisons, and a school

administrator, all of whom are dedicated to supporting UCS activities and creating a culture of inclusion.

Primary School Liaison Name

This is the person who will receive the majority of the communication from the UCS team and will be held accountable for completion of monthly reports and other required submissions.

*

Michele Nick

School Liaison Email *

mnick@twpunionschools.org

School Liaison's Role within School *

- ☒ Teacher
- ☐ Social Worker/Case Manager
- ☐ Director of Special Services or equivalent
- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Athletic Director
- ☐ Other School Administrator

☐

Other:

School Co-Liaison Name

Christina Neas
.....

School Co-Liaison Email

cneas@twpunionschools.org
.....

School Co-Liaison's Role within School

☒

Teacher

☐

Social Worker/ Case Manager

☐

Director of Special Services or equivalent

☐

Principal

☐

Athletic Director

☐

Other School Administrator

☐

Other:

School Administrator Name *

Jason Malanda
.....

School Administrator Email *

jmalanda@twpunionschools.org
.....

School Administrator Role Within School *

- ☒ Principal
- ☐ Director of Special Services (or equivalent)
- ☐ Athletic Director
- ☐ Business Administrator
- ☐ Other School Administrator
- ☐ Superintendent
- ☐ Other:

The UCS Grant requires that at least two student leaders serve on your school's leadership team. *

- ☒ I understand.

If there are individuals on your School Leadership Team that are not listed above, please provide their name(s), email address(es), and role(s) within the school here. *

N/A
.....

Three Components of UCS

Special

Olympics Unified Champion Schools is a three-component model that combines Unified Sports, Inclusive Youth Leadership, and Whole School Engagement to create climates of acceptance and inclusion.

In order to receive financial support from Special Olympics New Jersey, my school commits to satisfactorily implement the three components of UCS.

*

☒ Agreed

Does your Unified Sports team and/or Unified Club have their own social media account(s)? If so, please share your platforms and handles. *

No

How will your school promote your Unified activities, events, and opportunities to your students, faculty, and community members?

*

- ☐ Unified Sports listed on school website
- ☒ Unified Club listed on school website
- ☐ Social media posts about Unified Sports
- ☐ Social media posts about Unified Club
- ☒ Morning announcements will mention Unified
- ☒ Unified will be mentioned in school newspaper
- ☒ Unified will be included in school yearbook
- ☐ Unified will be recognized at school rallies
- ☒ Unified will be included in emails to parents/guardians/etc
- ☐ Bulletin Boards
- ☐ Newsletters
- ☐ Other:

Unified Sports

Students with and without intellectual disabilities train and play together on the same team or in the same class in approximately equal numbers.

What Unified Sports opportunities will your students be involved in? Choose all that apply.

For each selection, please provide an implementation plan where requested.

*

- ☐ Interscholastic Sports Team(s) - playing against other schools
- ☒ Intramural Sports Team(s) - playing recreationally with no competitions
- ☐ Unified PE - offered during at least 1 grading period
- ☒ Field Day or Game Day
- ☐ eSports
- ☐ Fitness activities or demonstrations
- ☐ Unified Recess (Elementary School only)
- ☐ Young Athletes (Grades K-2 only; do not select for grade levels above 2)
- ☐ Developmental Sports (grades 3-5 or 3-6)

If offering interscholastic sports (competing against other schools), what Unified Sport(s) does your school plan to offer?

This question is for middle and high schools only. Elementary and pre-schools should select "not offering interscholastic Unified Sports"

*

- ☐ Soccer
- ☐ Bowling
- ☐ Basketball
- ☐ Track and Field

- ☐ Kickball
- ☐ Flag Football (Spring)
- ☐ Flag Football (Fall)
- ☐ Tennis
- ☐ Volleyball
- ☒ Not offering interscholastic sports
- ☐ Other:

For each Unified Sports opportunity you intend to implement - including Unified PE, Unified Recess, Young Athletes, intramural and interscholastic Unified Sports, etc. - please describe your plan for implementation.

Your response should include information on practice or meeting schedules, anticipated competitions, and recruitment strategies.

*

Unified intramural sports will be offered throughout the school year, with practices held once or twice each week after school. Sports will include basketball, soccer, and volleyball. Friendly competitions will be held monthly. To recruit new students our returning club members will speak to the gym classes during the first month of school.

Inclusive Youth Leadership

Young people of all abilities are given training and opportunities to be leaders in their schools and communities.

**What Inclusive Youth Leadership opportunities will your students be involved in?
Please choose all that apply. ***

- ☒ Unified Club
- ☒ Inclusive School Leadership Clubs (Student Council, National Honor Society, etc.)

☐ Young Athletes (Grades K-2)

☐ Unified Young Readers

☐ Other:

For your Inclusive Youth Leadership offerings, please describe your implementation plan.

Your response should include how often the group will meet, the activities students will lead or participate in, and how students with and without intellectual disabilities will collaborate in decision-making, self-advocacy, and school-wide awareness and advocacy initiatives.

*

Our Inclusive Student Council will meet twice each week throughout the school year, with additional planning meetings scheduled as needed for special events and campaigns. The team will work together as equal partners to plan, organize, and lead activities that promote inclusion, respect, and school connectedness. Student council meetings will provide opportunities for students to identify school needs, set goals, develop action plans, and evaluate the success of their initiatives. During the meetings the students will collaborate to organize school-wide awareness and advocacy initiatives such as Inclusion Week, Spread the Word campaigns, disability awareness activities, school assemblies, and peer engagement opportunities.

Decision-making will be shared among all student council members, ensuring that students with and without intellectual disabilities have equal opportunities to contribute ideas, lead discussions, be part of planning committees, and take on leadership roles. Staff advisors will provide guidance while encouraging student voice, self-advocacy, and shared responsibility for planning and implementing activities.

Whole School Engagement

Activities that foster understanding and respect for all and positively impact school climate by including all students, teachers, staff, and administrators; they are planned and executed by students with and without disabilities.

What Whole School Engagement opportunities will your students be involved in? *

☒ Club Fair / Recruitment Table / Back to School Night Info Table

- ☐ Start With Hello Day
- ☒ Week of Respect, including Disability Awareness
- ☐ Fall Fans in the Stands for Unified Sports
- ☒ Thanks4Giving Cool Schools Challenge
- ☒ International Day of Persons with Disabilities Celebration
- ☐ Jingle All the Way Cool Schools Challenge
- ☐ Winter Fans in the Stands for Unified Sports
- ☐ Wildwood Plunge Cool Schools Challenge
- ☒ Spread the Word: Inclusion Campaign
- ☒ Week of Inclusion Spirit Days
- ☒ Rock Your Socks for World Down Syndrome Day
- ☒ Autism Acceptance Day
- ☐ Lincoln Tunnel Challenge Cool Schools Challenge
- ☐ Unified Field Day
- ☐ Spring Fans in the Stands for Unified Sports
- ☐ Walk SONJ Cool Schools Challenge
- ☐ Other fundraising event or campaign
- ☐ Unified Sports teams will be introduced and recognized at school assemblies and/or pep rallies
- ☒ School or district social media features Unified Sports or Unified Clubs
- ☐ Unified has its own social media account(s)
- ☒ Morning announcements (or equivalent) frequently mention Unified and/or include a message of inclusion
- ☐ Other:

Please describe your school's Whole School Engagement plan.

Include what activities or initiatives will be offered, when they will take place, and who will be involved in planning and participation.

*

Our Whole School Engagement plan will provide a variety of school-wide activities that actively engage students, staff, families, and community members in promoting inclusion and supporting Unified Champion Schools initiatives. Throughout the school year, we will participate in events such as the club fair for incoming and new students, spirit weeks/days, World Down Syndrome Day, Autism Acceptance Day, Cool School Challenges, and have weekly announcements promoting inclusion.

Planning for these activities will be shared between our Unified Club members and our Inclusive Student Council in partnership with school administrators, teachers, special education staff, general education staff, and counselors. The students will collaborate as equal partners in developing ideas, organizing events, promoting participation, and serving as ambassadors for inclusion.

Participation will be open to all students, their families, and staff members, with activities designed to encourage meaningful interaction, teamwork, and relationship-building among individuals of all abilities. Integrating these events into the school year helps our school create a sustainable culture of inclusion that becomes part of the everyday school experience.

Self-Sustainability

UCS

grants are intended to be used to get your Unified programs up and running so your school and district can see the many benefits and impacts within the school. The goal is that the school/district will eventually fully fund these Unified opportunities.

How much funding does your school or district anticipate contributing to Unified initiatives during the 2026-27 school year?

This amount should be *in addition to* any Unified UCS funding received from SONJ. Please include specific dollar amounts and indicate how funds will be allocated.

Example:

\$10,000 total (\$5,000 for coach stipends; \$2,500 for transportation; \$2,500 for supplies and uniforms)

*

\$3000 total: Transportation - \$2000 Cost for bowling and golf - \$1000

What fundraising efforts are you planning to support your Unified initiatives during the 2026–27 school year, and how much do you anticipate raising?

Example:

Cool Schools Challenge (November): \$1,000

Car wash (April): \$400 expected

*

Cool Schools Challenge November - \$500

How does your school plan to reduce reliance on SONJ UCS funding beyond the 2026–27 school year?

Please describe strategies your school will use to financially sustain Unified initiatives over time, such as securing school or district support, fundraising efforts, community partnerships, sponsorships, or other long-term funding plans.

If your school is self-funded, please enter N/A.

*

Securing funding to continue to pay for transportation for Club Unified members.

Additional comments about self-funding and self-sustainability.

Budget

Each UCS pillar—Unified Sports, Inclusive Youth Leadership, and Whole School Engagement—has its own budget section. Please list expenses separately under each pillar and avoid duplicating costs across sections.

Are you requesting funding for the 2026-27 school year? *

- ☒ Yes. Please continue the application.
- ☐ No, we're self-funded. Congrats - you're finished with the application!

Unified Sports Expenses

In each of the categories below, please indicate the total amount of funding requested as well as an itemized budget.

Unified Sports Coach Stipends - Itemized Budget

This budget category is available only to middle and high schools offering an interscholastic Unified Sport.

Pre-K and elementary schools offering Unified Sports outside of an individual's contracted work hours should report stipend expenses under Inclusive Youth Leadership Stipends

Please itemize anticipated transportation costs.

Example: Unified Bowling Coach @ \$1,000, Unified Track and Field Coach @ \$1,000

*

0

Unified Sports Coach Stipends - Total Amount Requested

Enter the total Unified Sports Coach Stipends cost calculated from the itemized budget in the previous question.

*

0

Unified Sports Facility Rental – Itemized Budget

This budget category is available only to middle and high schools offering an interscholastic Unified Sport that requires off-site facility rental.

Please itemize anticipated rental costs.

Example: 4 practices at Bowlero @ \$100 per practice

*

0

Unified Sports Facility Rental - Total Amount Requested

Enter the total facility rental cost calculated from the itemized budget in the previous question.

*

0

Unified Sports Transportation - Itemized Budget

This budget category is available only to middle and high schools offering an interscholastic Unified Sport.

Please itemize anticipated transportation costs.

Example: 4 away Unified Flag Football games @ \$500 each

*

0

Unified Sports Transportation - Total Amount Requested

This budget category is available only to middle and high schools offering an interscholastic Unified Sport.

Enter the total transportation cost calculated from the itemized budget in the previous question.

*

0

Unified Sports Officials' Fees - Itemized Budget

This budget category is available only to middle and high schools offering an interscholastic Unified Sport. Officials' fees may be reimbursed for up to three (3) home competitions per interscholastic Unified Sports team

Please itemize anticipated officials' fees.

Example: 2 officials (\$75 each) at 3 home Unified Basketball games

*

0

Unified Sports Officials' Fees - Total Amount Requested

This budget category is available only to middle and high schools offering an interscholastic Unified Sport. Officials' fees may be reimbursed for up to three (3) home competitions per interscholastic Unified Sports team.

Enter the total officials' fees cost calculated from the itemized budget in the previous question.

*

0

Unified Sports Supplies – Itemized Budget

Please itemize all anticipated supplies needed to support your Unified Sports program. This category may include sport-specific equipment and consumable supplies. **Do not include t-shirts or uniforms in this section.**

Example:

Flag footballs (6 @ \$25 each) and Cones and training equipment (\$150)

*

4 soccer balls @ \$25 each and Field Cones \$50

Unified Sports Supplies - Total Amount Requested

Enter the total officials' fees cost calculated from the itemized budget in the previous question.

Do not include t-shirts or uniforms in this section.

*

\$75

Unified Sports Uniforms - Itemized Budget

This budget category is available only to middle and high schools offering an interscholastic Unified Sport. Uniforms are expected to be used for multiple years.

Please itemize all uniform-related expenses needed to support your Unified Sports team(s).

T-Shirts should not be included in this category. You may request them in Inclusive Youth Leadership Supplies.

Example:

Unified basketball jerseys (first season): 12 @ \$40

Supplemental bowling jerseys (team is growing): 3 @ \$20

*

0

Unified Sports Uniforms - Total Amount Requested

This budget category is available only to middle and high schools offering an interscholastic Unified Sport.

Enter the total uniform cost calculated from the itemized budget in the previous question.

*

0

Inclusive Youth Leadership (Club) Expenses

In each of the categories below, please indicate the total amount of funding requested as well as an itemized budget.

Club Advisor Stipends - Itemized Budget

Example:

Unified Club Lead Advisor \$500

Unified Club Assistant Advisor \$400

*

Unified Club Lead Advisor \$500

Club Advisor Stipends - Total Amount Requested

Enter the total club advisor stipend cost calculated from the itemized budget in the previous question.

*

\$500

Club / IYL Supplies - Itemized Budget

Limits include: Up to \$100 for non-durable goods

Example:

\$50 for posterboard for inclusion week

Please do not include t-shirts in this category.

*

0

Club / IYL Supplies - Total Amount Requested

Enter the total club/IYL supplies cost calculated from the itemized budget in the previous question.

Please do not include t-shirts in this category.

*

0

Club / IYL T-Shirts - Itemized Budget

Limit \$500 for up to 75 shirts

*

\$500

Club / IYL T-Shirts - Total Amount Requested

Enter the total club/IYL t-shirts stipend cost calculated from the itemized budget in the previous question.

*

\$500

Whole School Engagement Expenses

In each of the categories below, please indicate the total amount of funding requested as well as an itemized budget.

Whole School Engagement Supplies - Itemized Budget

Please only include items which are not reasonably available at your school.

Promotional items and awards are not eligible for reimbursement.

*

N/A

Whole School Engagement Supplies - Total Amount Requested

Enter the total WSE supplies cost calculated from the itemized budget in the previous question.

*

0

Total Funding

Total Funding Requested

Should equal the total of all categories above

*

\$1075

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Does this form look suspicious? Report

--
Mathematics Teacher
Yearbook Advisor
Kawameeh Middle School
(908) 851-6570

