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Dear Educators:

We are excited to present you with the Special Olympics NEW **Get Into It** for grades K-12. **Get Into It** is a curriculum resource kit for students with and without intellectual disabilities. This service-learning curriculum is age-appropriate and is designed to advance student's civic knowledge and skill development, promote acceptance and understanding of people's differences and to motivate them to become advocates for and together with all people. This is a curriculum that celebrates giftedness—the giftedness of every student whatever his or her ability. Through the world of Special Olympics we hope each student will come to recognize that he or she has the power to make a difference.

In Special Olympics we celebrate ability, dedication, accomplishment, teamwork and community. Special Olympics is not just about “higher, faster and stronger.” Rather, it is about achieving one's personal best.

Though it all starts with sports, Special Olympics is much more. We are bridge-builders helping to form relationships between our athletes and young people without intellectual disabilities, teaching them to become leaders in their own right. With this potential as a catalyst for social change in mind, Project UNIFY was formed to educate, motivate and activate young people. Funded in part by the U.S. Department of Education, the goal of Project UNIFY is to activate young people around the country to develop school communities where all young people are agents of change – fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities by utilizing the programs and initiatives of Special Olympics.

Through **Get Into It**, students will engage in fun, interactive, creative activities that promote respect and acceptance and teach about this important social movement. Most important, they will be invited to make a difference themselves. Not only is this a fun and engaging way to motivate young people into action and leadership, but we are creating connections between schools and communities, people with and without intellectual disabilities and advancing overall achievement. Students will be inspired by athlete stories that demonstrate true triumph and teamwork. **Get Into It** is a portal through which young people can discover the pathway to building a more inclusive society for all.



Each grade level span of the **Get Into It** materials offers four basic lessons for regular education or inclusive classrooms. The program was designed to achieve several student learning goals:

- To understand, accept and celebrate differences;
- To learn how to identify issues in school climate, develop a plan, and work with others to create positive change;
- To become involved in a service-learning project or activity related to Special Olympics that addresses issues such as bullying, stereotypes or obesity;
- To learn about and become involved in Special Olympics sports and events such as Unified Sports or a youth rally for respect.

The lessons support and are in alignment with academic standards, youth and character development, and service-learning. Although you may limit your teaching of **Get Into It** to the four basic lessons, you also may find that the program opens doors to important new learning opportunities throughout the school year.

Special Olympics is already one of the world's great success stories. Around the world, more than 3.4 million children and adults with intellectual disabilities in more than 170 countries take part in the year-round sports training and athletic competition programs Special Olympics offers. Athletes train in 30 Olympic-type sports at the local, area, state, national and international levels, and they compete in 33,000 events per year. And now all young people in schools across the U.S. are part of the movement, engaging in lessons demonstrated both on and off the field.

The **Get Into It** curriculum has received the endorsements of a number of leading educational organizations. These are listed on our website. We are grateful to these organizations and the many individuals who helped in developing **Get Into It** for sharing our vision of bringing the message of Special Olympics to students everywhere.

We hope you and your students will enjoy these lessons and learn new ways to respect, appreciate and empower others. Special Olympics athletes inspire greatness in all of us.

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