



2010 NATIONAL PROJECT UNIFY EDUCATION LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE

Purpose:

A Leadership Roundtable co-hosted with the U.S. Department of Education will launch the 2010 Special Olympics USA National Games Week, on Sunday, July 18th. The Roundtable engages national education leaders and policy makers, providing a principle vehicle for developing consensus and a voice among youth and educators, on the major education, political and social issues that align with the principles, characteristics and impacts of Special Olympics Project UNIFY. The group will also explore a set of proposed policies and national action steps for the participants to move forward that further the cause of youth voice, youth leadership, inclusion and social justice as education principles.

Design:

Co-hosted by Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, and Tim Shriver, Chairman and CEO of Special Olympics, the roundtable will engage some of the country's most progressive leaders in the fields of general and special education, inclusion, diversity, character education, service learning, youth leadership, civic development and social justice. The 2-hour discussion will be held at the Nebraska Governor's mansion immediately prior to 2010 Special Olympics USA National Games Opening Ceremony. A key question the leaders will address is what are the "game changing issues" and strategies that demand national priority and have implications for Special Olympics and Project UNIFY, and society at large.

The national education, political and social leaders to be invited potentially include:

- Nebraska First Lady Sally Ganem, former elementary school principal;
- Members of the Special Olympics Project UNIFY National Education Leadership Network;
- Members of the Special Olympics Project UNIFY Youth Activation Committee;
- Edward Rust, CEO, State Farm Insurance Companies;
- Jim Clifton, CEO, Gallup Organization;
- Senator Tom Harkin, D-Iowa;
- Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor of California.

The process to effectively engage members of the Leadership Roundtable will involve:

- Facilitation focused on quality and equitable participation by all members and focused on the outcomes;
- The purpose to identify the "game changing" education, political and social issues that align with the principles, characteristics and impacts of Special Olympics Project UNIFY is clear and understood by each participant;
- Participants have clear, explicit and mutually agreed-upon commitments in terms of expectations, agreements and protocols that will be employed at the Leadership Roundtable;

- The atmosphere allows and encourages participants to voice their opinions and feel comfortable disagreeing with their colleagues to most effectively inform Special Olympics of opportunities to advance its agenda and social justice movement, and;
- A focus on informing Special Olympics and at the same time committing to advocating for specific strategies each participant can employ within their own organization and with their constituents.

Outcomes:

A clarion call to the nation that Special Olympics is positioned and prepared to advance and sustain a social justice agenda through sports and education focused on students with and without intellectual disabilities including:

- Recognition by education leaders and policymakers that Special Olympics Project UNIFY philosophy and characteristics of quality practice address current and anticipated national education and social issues;
- Acknowledgement that student competencies include knowledge, skills, attitudes and leadership – so that youth contribute to school climate, community improvement and civic engagement;
- Development of a policy agenda to encourage, support and reward school practices consistent with Special Olympics Project UNIFY philosophy, engagement, service and teaching and learning.