

## FARMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Press Release

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Released by: Kathleen Greider, Superintendent Farmington Schools

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### FHS UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOL

(For immediate release: Farmington Public Schools-April 20, 2017)

At the April 4, 2017 Farmington Board of Education Meeting, Special Olympics Connecticut and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference recognized Farmington High School's Unified Sports program for their outstanding accomplishments.

Connecticut is one of the first states to participate in the *Banner Unified Champion School* program. The state's Unified Sports program was one of three nationally to be chosen for this pilot before the award is available to schools across the United States. The Special Olympics National School Recognition Program provides an opportunity for schools across the United States to be acknowledged for their achievements with inclusion and their partnership with Special Olympics.

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools have an inclusive school climate and exude a sense of collaboration, engagement and respect for all members of the student body and staff. A Banner Unified Champion School is one that has demonstrated commitment to inclusion by fully adopting the three components including: Special Olympics Unified Sports, Inclusive Youth Leadership and Whole School Engagement. Banner Schools also demonstrate they have a plan in place to sustain these activities into the future.

To qualify for the recognition schools must:

- Have Unified Sports team(s) that participates in at least two sports seasons
- Demonstrate Inclusive Youth Leadership
- Demonstrate Whole School Engagement
- Ensure the sustainability of the above components

Schools like Farmington High School that achieve the standards are awarded a large vinyl banner that reads "Special Olympics Unified Champion School" which includes a sticker for the given year similar to the athletic championship banners that hang in most school gymnasiums. The

banners include open space for future year stickers. Once a school receives a banner and continues to meet the standards it will be eligible to apply for additional year stickers.