

Dear School Board members,

Tonight we recognize Duluth East on becoming a Unified Champion School.

Unified Champion Schools is a program that aims to engage students with and without intellectual disabilities in Inclusive Student Leadership, Unified Sports and Whole School Engagement activities designed to create a school community that fosters respect and dignity for all.

The vision of Unified Schools is to activate youth, engage educators, and promote acceptance and inclusion in school communities. Over 200 schools in the state are officially Unified Champion Schools with another 100+ engaging in Unified programming on some level.

Shannon Murray, the Unified Schools coordinator for Northern Minnesota had this to say about Duluth East:

“We are so excited to have Duluth East join Unified! The students, staff and admin have jumped right in with so much enthusiasm and energy for spreading inclusion in their school and beyond. East hosted the first Duluth area Unified Track & Field Invitational last spring just a few weeks after joining Unified and this fall piloted a fun Unified Flag Football match-up with Cloquet during the varsity football game half-time. This idea has since been picked up by other Unified Schools.”

I had the pleasure of attending the track and field invitation and the varsity football half-time game, and what I saw was students having fun and enjoying themselves. Everyone of those students had a big smile on their faces.

So we want to recognize those who have stepped up at Duluth East to make sure these special education students feel welcomed and included.