



**UNITED SOUND**  
relationships that resonate



OUR MISSION: TO PROVIDE MUSICAL PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS





# Mission

United Sound, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide musical performance experiences for students with special needs through peer mentorship.

Our goal is to support individual music educators in creating their own United Sound ensembles through training, curriculum, support, and organizational resources so that all children have access to meaningful and authentic music education and musical experiences.

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**OUR VISION:  
10 STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL  
NEEDS INVOLVED IN  
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AT  
EVERY SCHOOL IN AMERICA.**

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# What We Do

Partnering with existing music programs on school campuses around the country, United Sound is a peer mentoring program that pairs students with special needs and general ed. peers in the band and orchestra setting.

Music teachers and their students utilize United Sound's specialized curriculum, training, and structure to create band and orchestra clubs. New Musicians (students with intellectual or developmental disabilities) are taught by Peer Mentors to play the instrument of their choice at a personally modified level. United Sound students then join the full band or orchestra to perform in concert, twice per year, with their peers.

## WHO



Each United Sound Club is run by a music teacher and a special education teacher, working together. Peer Mentors and New Musicians are chosen from the on-campus population, creating a system that exists entirely “in house” as New Musicians become part of the existing school band or orchestra.

## WHEN

Most United Sound Clubs meet once per week, outside of the regular school day. Our goal is to create an experience that *adds value* to the existing music program.



## WHERE



There are United Sound chapters at High Schools (public and private), Middle Schools, Colleges, and Universities! Wherever music is being made, we seek to establish peer to peer, like age, musical relationships.

## WHY

Through our own experiences, we know that the joy of learning in and performing with an ensemble can be life-changing. We believe that everyone, especially in the school setting, should have this opportunity. The opportunity for peer mentors to teach and serve is life-changing as well!



# HOW

United Sound is intended to be a very simple process. Structure (how to run the club, parameters, permission slips, registrations, etc.) is set forth by the organization in an effort to decrease the time commitment required of participating teachers. We understand that a clear and simple process is a sustainable commitment.

Teachers receive ongoing training from United Sound throughout the process.

Special education teachers have the responsibility to teach the mentors how to be effective. Music teachers guide the musical process.

Students receive training in a variety of ways. Online training videos give

## CONTINUOUS, MEANINGFUL TRAINING FOR BOTH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

mentors the opportunity to watch successful peer mentors in action. Professionals guide them through the process, pointing out what to look for, and encouraging creativity in their own teaching. Special education teachers host a training session prior to the start of United Sound, explaining the individualities of the New Musicians.

These teachers are hands on during rehearsals as well, moving from group to group, and offering real-time advice.

One student chapter president is chosen from each school to represent the club in monthly online training/ leadership sessions. These opportunities to connect with peers and share ideas are meaningful learning environments. Presidents then take ideas and goals back to their own schools for implementation.

The United Sound curriculum was created with research-based principles in mind. Using colors and foods, the abstract concepts of music (rhythm and pitch) are transformed into concrete steps.



## TRAINING

Our student training module breaks teaching into three categories:

### COMMUNICATE



Effective, patient, and sometimes creative communication strategies are employed by Peer Mentors.

### MODIFY



Mentors begin by using appropriate modifications they have learned through training and then create their own paths for individual success.

### EMPOWER



Meaningful participation, accountability, authentic teaching, and genuine celebration of success empowers everyone involved in the process.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## Who Can Join?

- New Musicians: Students with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD). As a part of United Sound, labeled “Musicians”
  - Students will have the opportunity to experience and perform music on an instrument of choice with musical adaptations and accommodations
- Peer Musicians: Typical students who are enrolled at the participating high school and are members of the participating Band or Orchestra program



## Minimum requirements for participation:

- Must be able to count to 10 expressively or receptively
- Can understand and follow the verbal and gestural cues of the conductor
- Can regulate behavior during rehearsals and concert performances
- Participating students must have reliable transportation to attend weekly rehearsals and concerts.

## Details:

- Peer Mentor/New Musician ratio is 2-3/1.
- Weekly rehearsals
- 1 performance per semester (New Musicians, Peer Mentors, and Support Ensemble)

## JOIN US!



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(sign up to receive newsletters on our website!)



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[instagram.com/united\\_sound/](https://www.instagram.com/united_sound/)



[info@unitedsound.org](mailto:info@unitedsound.org)

### AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP:

Service opportunities develop an increased sense of social responsibility, offer exposure to diversity, provide an opportunity to apply academic learning to real human needs, build relationships and "social connectedness," improve communication and critical thinking skills, and help students to find their passions and interests that may lead to a career choice they may not have considered.

Consider the impact, 5 years from now, as these students enter the world as mature, connected adults.