



Walker Partnerships discusses its impact on the communities and residents it serves.

James B. Earley, Ed. D., Managing Director of Walker Partnerships and Sally Smith, M. Ed., Early Childhood Coordinator for Walker Partnerships and Director of Professional Development for the Educational Collaborative of Greater Boston were asked recently about the establishment of Walker Partnerships and its impact on the communities and residents it serves. Here is what they had to say.

Why was Walker Partnerships (WP) established?

Walker Partners (WP) was established in 1994 to assist students transitioning from Walker Day & Residential School back to their home district. The thinking was to assist school based staff with receiving these students who may have been away from their district school for two or more years, and that the staff may require professional development experiences to build and refine their skill set to be able to more effectively work with these students. The other aspect of the creation of WP was to build the capacity of the district to be able to serve school-age children and youth who are demonstrating challenging behaviors, especially social/emotional behaviors that school based staff would not be familiar with. Since the establishment of WP, additional services have been added in response to school districts' needs and request for further support. These services include embedded WP staff, Early Childhood services, Individual Case Assessments, Program Development and Consultation, Special Education Program Evaluations, and Coaching/Mentoring of Administrators of Special education.

How does WP align with the Walker School?

WP aligns with the mission and values of Walker in that WP's mission is to build the capacity of school districts to serve children, youth and families by transforming their lives through the supports of WP services. Whereby Walker's mission is to transform the lives of children, youth and families by partnering with these children, youth and their families, and communities to nurture hope, build strength and develop lifelong skills.

What impact does WP have on the communities it serves, and how have the services it offers helped

districts?

WP is serving a school building, a school district, and in turn the entire community. It is through the various services that WP provides to a district, educational collaborative, Charter School, community and based human service agencies that WP is able to impact the lives of children by strengthening their social, emotional, behavioral needs so that they can be successfully integrated into community life and experience the benefits of a positive educational experience.

Where do you see WP headed in the next five years and beyond?

WP will expand its community-based services to after school programs, preschool and early childhood programs over the next three years, along with its continued expansion into new school districts, educational collaboratives, and Charter Schools. A main focus of WP's work over the next several years is to increase the number of WP services that each affiliate contracts for.

About James B. Early

James B. Early, Ed. D., Managing Director of Walker Partnerships, has forty-four years of public education experience as a teacher, teaching assistant principal, Massachusetts Department of Education Supervisor, and Acting Regional Special Education Director. Thirty of those years were as Administrator of Special Education for the Watertown Public Schools and Superintendent of Schools for the Watertown Public Schools. Dr. Early has been a Senior Lecturer at Lesley University, Wheelock College and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Massachusetts/Boston. Dr. Early has consulted for numerous educational organizations, participated in a variety of special education task forces and committees, and has conducted over 75 independent program reviews, evaluations, and numerous professional development trainings for school districts within Massachusetts and several other states. Dr. Early has been recognized for his contributions to special education and received a number of awards, culminating with being named the recipient of the national Outstanding Special Education Administrator of 2003 by The Council of Administrators of Special Education.

About Sally Smith

Sally Smith, M. Ed., is currently the Early Childhood Coordinator for Walker Partnerships and the Director of Professional Development for the Educational Collaborative of Greater Boston. Prior to her present professional positions, Ms. Smith has 35 years of educational experience, including four years as Director of Student Services for the Belmont Public Schools following 12 years of involvement with the Early Childhood Program for the Belmont Public Schools as a preschool special education teacher, an inclusion specialist, and the Early Childhood Coordinator. Ms. Smith also has been an elementary and middle school consulting teacher for the Lynnfield Public Schools, and for the SEEM Collaborative. Ms. Smith has conducted numerous professional development trainings for teachers of young children with special needs, as well as directed program evaluations of special education services at all levels for public school districts. Additionally, Ms. Smith has instructed and supervised graduate and undergraduate students from numerous Boston area colleges and universities.

About Walker Partnerships

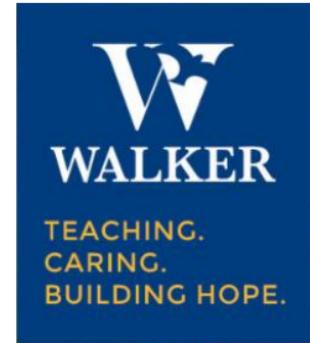
Since 1994 Walker Partnerships has been providing comprehensive services to school districts throughout Massachusetts to help them increase their capacity to include students with serious emotional disabilities. Walker Partnerships' model of service delivery focuses on increasing student participation in general education, reducing barriers, restructuring policies, teaching best practices, and shifting culture. Walker Partnerships is fully committed to finding better ways of including students who are at risk of marginalization or exclusion.

[Learn More](#)

About Walker

Walker is a nonprofit organization that provides supportive environments for children, teens, and families through an array of academic programs and therapeutic services. Each year, Walker directly serves more than 2,000 children on the Needham and Watertown campuses, impacting an additional 33,000 children and families through trainings and consultation services.

[Learn More](#)



Please contact Walker Partnerships to learn more about the organization and the services it provides to assist school districts in serving their populations of students with social, emotional, behavioral needs.

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