



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SPEDWatch gears up for inaugural *Walk for Special Education Rights* in Wakefield
Sign up today by visiting www.spedwatchwalk.org or by calling 978-433-5983**

Calling all walkers! SPEDWatch, Inc. is gearing up for its first Walk for Special Education Rights. The Walk, to be held on Saturday, August 29th, is around Lake Quannapowitt in Wakefield, Massachusetts. There is no registration fee and anyone can participate by pre-registering online at www.spedwatchwalk.org, or by calling SPEDWatch at 978-433-5983. Individual walkers as well as teams of walkers are all encouraged to join in.

Check in on Walk day will begin at 9:45 am on the Wakefield Town Common. The Walk itself begins at 10:30 am. Walk day activities include music, complimentary lunch, and children's activities for all ages and abilities.

All funds raised will support the work done by SPEDWatch, Inc., a non-profit, grassroots, parent-driven organization working to secure the educational rights of all Massachusetts schoolchildren with special needs. The laws that guarantee a child's right to appropriate special education services have been in place for over thirty years but are routinely violated by public schools. Between July 2004 and June 2007 the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recorded 3,247 such violations. The U.S. Department of Education has cited Massachusetts 11 times in the past 19 years for failing to fully meet its legal obligations to these children, most recently in June 2009.

The human consequences are staggering. Students with special learning needs are failing in overwhelming numbers despite possessing the same intellectual abilities as their non-disabled peers. DESE has refused to take any action to help these children. SPEDWatch meets this challenge by targeting the root causes of educational discrimination against schoolchildren with disabilities. The group works as a civil rights, social change movement to pressure government to protect the educational rights of these students.

For more information on SPEDWatch or on how you can join the walk or donate, visit the Walk's web site at www.spedwatchwalk.org or call 978-433-5983.