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Building Confidence and Competence Through Personalized Academic Interventions



HIGH ROAD
SCHOOL/ACADEMY



SIERRA
SCHOOL/ACADEMY

SESI is a leading private provider of specialized schooling for students facing learning, language, social, and behavioral challenges. When we opened the doors of our first school back in 1986, it didn't take long to realize the tremendous impact that an effective education model and a positive learning environment could have on the special needs population. Our successes at one school quickly led to opening another ... then another ... and yet another. In the process, the successes of our students multiplied alongside our company's growth.

Today, SESI serves thousands of students every day at our numerous High Road and Sierra Schools (for ED students) and Academies (for LD students) across the country — each licensed and approved by the states in which they operate — and we're always looking to expand the depth and breadth of our programs and extend our reach, where the need is greatest.

Much has changed since our company's inception, but much more has remained exactly the same.

We remain dedicated to helping children with special needs succeed — in the classroom, at home, and in the community.

We remain at the forefront of the field of specialized private schooling by continuing to develop innovative programs and support services, by hiring exceptional educators to implement them, and by incorporating the latest educational findings and guidelines into our diverse curriculums.

We remain loyal to a multifaceted model with a proven track record that we institute in each of our schools while maintaining the belief that the culture of genuine warmth and ceaseless support we create in each school can't be replicated by any other company.

And we remain committed, above all else, to meeting each student at his or her level by individualizing our programs and focusing on the specific learning strengths and needs of each child.

“At High Road, you can be yourself. You get respect by giving respect, by learning self-control, by learning to take responsibility for your actions. High Road helps me be the best person I can be, the person I want to be. They believe in me at High Road and that makes me believe in myself.”

High Road School of Delaware Student

HISTORY

*“What makes [these] schools among the best I've observed in my 42 years in special education is the fact that the students are highly and continuously engaged in important learning activities. ... [The] schools are very **well organized**, very **well staffed**, and the culture is very **warm and supportive**. ... Stressed throughout the day is promoting student **competence** and encouraging **confidence**. ... Rarely have I observed such an effective use of instructional time in schools.”*

Howard Margolis, Ed.D., LLC, Reading and Special Education Consultant

*“Our program works for students because we instruct every young person at his or her **specific learning level**. We never give up on any student and recognize that learning something new can occur in many different ways. Re-teaching is the cornerstone of effectively embedding and stabilizing skills, and our students benefit from a **patient, caring staff** that understands the needs of our special student population.”*

High Road Middle Academy of Washington, DC, Staff Member

*“High Road is NOT just a school; it's an environment where kids are **encouraged to succeed**. The school is great, the program can't be beat, the communication between staff and parents is phenomenal, and the teachers are outstanding. I would highly recommend this school to any parent. My son is a better student, now more confident and comfortable with who he is because of what he's learned here. It was just what he needed, just when he needed it.”*

High Road Student Learning Center Parent

*“From what I have seen in other school settings (all kinds), this **high level of quality** in a program doesn't happen accidentally (and doesn't happen often enough). ... [SESI] has become so well known for its use of **outcomes data for program accountability and improvement**.”*

Professor Guilbert C. Hentschke, Rossier School of Education, Division of Administration and Policy, University of Southern California



Approximately 12% of all students nationwide have been classified by the U.S. Department of Education as needing special education. These students experience a vast array of challenges — including but not limited to ADD/ADHD, autism spectrum disorders, behavioral difficulties, cognitive impairments, communication issues, emotional disturbances, motor skills deficits, neurological delays, and self-destructive patterns — that have led to little or no success in the traditional school setting. The majority of SESI students are classified as having “multiple disabilities” (some combination of two or more of the numerous possible special education diagnoses), making it all the more critical to expertly address the needs of these children and adolescents most at risk for accompanying interpersonal problems and low self-esteem.

With such a profound need to appropriately service and educate these students, our company’s steadfast mission lies at the heart of all we do and informs all of our efforts:

- ✿ To build the confidence and competence of children facing learning, language, and social challenges through personalized academic and behavioral interventions
- ✿ To prepare youth to become responsible adults who are able to participate in their communities and lead fulfilling lives
- ✿ To provide leadership and serve as a role model for improving the education of all students

Every day, SESI strives to maximize our impact on the nation’s most challenging student populations. Our highly individualized approach to each student’s academic and social development ensures that we never stop fine-tuning personalized instructional plans until we find just the right fit, and our talented staff of qualified and experienced teachers, therapists, and counselors is wholly committed to equipping our students with the skills and behaviors that will help pave the way for productive, more promising futures.

“I came to High Road because it offered individual attention, small classes, and a multisensory approach to learning, [since] I learn best with auditory and visual cues. In the beginning, I was very nervous about how well I would do. I found the staff to be very understanding of my special needs, and before long, I was feeling very comfortable with both my academic and social skills.”

High Road School of Norwalk Student

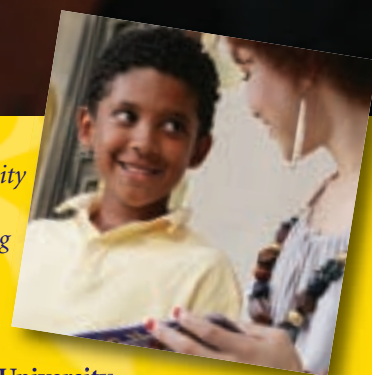
MISSION

*“Visiting your schools was a wonderful experience. We deeply appreciated the opportunity to see **educational theory and research informing practice** [and] we were very impressed with the thoughtful and sensitive approach with which you created a learning environment based on **individualized student-centered learning principles**. The consistency with which these learning principles were infused in the curriculum across the school was unquestionably among the best I have seen.”*

Professor Trevor E. Sewell, College of Education, Temple University

*“Over the years, I’ve witnessed how **lives are changed** when a student enters a High Road School. For example, a couple of years ago, I met a High Road student who was proud to report that he was finally beating years of low self-esteem, failing grades, and the resultant behavior problems. A few weeks ago, he sent me an e-mail with an invitation to his high school graduation and news that he’s going to college!”*

Sharon Robinson, Author & Educational Consultant, Major League Baseball



*“I cannot say enough good things about this school. The staff is exceptional: **helpful, understanding, compassionate, and appreciative of all parental input**. . . . My son has been there five months and has made more academic progress than in two years of public school; at the same time, he is learning how to deal with his intense frustrations appropriately.”*

High Road School of Wallingford Parent

*“Overall, my impression of the High Road School . . . was very positive. The staff and students we met appeared **happy with their environment** and what they were doing at the school. I was most favorably impressed by the **emphasis on academics** to reach social/behavioral goals.”*

Ronald E. Repps, Ed.D., Coordinator, Unique Alternatives, Christina (DE) School District

SESI is a results-oriented company — results in the classroom, in regulatory compliance and policy adherence, in the skills acquisition and career advancement of our staff, and real, observable results in our students' lives. We actualize these results by following a four-pronged company model that both characterizes our corporate identity and sustains the foundational values that guide our business principles and practices.

GROWTH To thrive and excel in an increasingly competitive and demanding field, SESI consistently works to grow on all fronts. We regularly enrich our course content, expand our vocational training offerings, and furnish our classrooms with up-to-date learning tools and modalities. Our campuses constantly enhance our established curriculums with innovative programs and methodologies, and our offices keep current with state-of-the-art technologies and software. Great emphasis is placed on the personal and professional growth of all staff members, so we're always seeking ways to increase job satisfaction and extend continuing education opportunities.

IMPACT Our overarching goal is to make the largest possible positive impact we can in the field of special education. To accomplish this, we foster strong, mutually supportive relationships with the public school districts, communities, and families we serve. We participate in

many state and national associations and conferences to exchange lessons learned with our colleagues, and we sponsor special events in our regions to stay abreast of local needs and promote goodwill. By being as vocal and visible as we can be on the special education landscape, SESI aims to raise the bar across our entire esteemed industry, always holding ourselves to the very highest standards so that we can reach more and more students with a time-proven model that improves their prospects and better their lives.

LEADERSHIP Clear direction determines the course of a company, so SESI expends great energy on augmenting the leadership acumen of our current upper-management tier as well as identifying and grooming future leadership stars from among our own ranks. Quarterly trainings devoted exclusively to leadership building are held every year, supplemented by regular one-to-one mentoring sessions for all members of the leadership team. The company advocates a unified vision, holds fast to its longstanding "Values Manual," and consistently practices people-oriented concepts such as "emotional generosity" and "empathy with accountability." By actively engaging the leadership team in the orientation and evolution of their own company, we've created a nurturing atmosphere of very high morale and very low turnover.

QUALITY OF SCHOOLS

Each of our state-approved facilities is committed to excellence. This level of quality results from a potent combination of factors, including an emphasis on highly individualized, research-based instruction; an effective tutorial-based classroom model; a unique company-wide behavioral system founded on positive reinforcement techniques; and a stable set of practical transitional services. We maintain a steady interface with school districts to ensure that all of our students' needs are being met, and our highly structured, positive learning environment staffed by compassionate, accomplished professionals builds self-esteem and encourages achievement for all of our students, in all of our schools.

"School has given me the knowledge I need and the ability to accept that I am different and to love that I am different, for I have used this to make positive and everlasting peace with myself."

High Road School of Wallingford Student

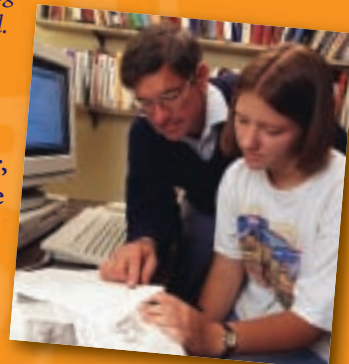
MODEL

*"I was thoroughly impressed by your program. ... As soon as I walked into your centers, I could sense that your students were being effectively served. I noticed elements of the state's Core Curriculum Standards being incorporated into the program. Your **one-on-one instructional model** was truly individualized. You effectively **integrated technology** into your classrooms. The outcomes data I was shown was powerful. Every student exhibited appropriate behavior. Most importantly, these at-risk students were on-task and eagerly learning."*

Leo Klagholz, Ph.D., Distinguished Scholar, Institute for Educational Policy Studies, Richard Stockton College

*"My [time] at High Road has been like no other job I've ever held. I've seen firsthand how the program and the model work and benefit each student. ... You always know you are **making a difference** and that you are appreciated. I only wish the services provided here could be available to all students in a school system."*

Transition Specialist, High Road Academy of Washington, DC



*"[My grandson] has made **excellent progress**. Before attending High Road, he was having problems in school. He is now maintaining an A/B average ... and his behavior has turned around completely. ... [At an] open house at the school, my eyes could not believe the atmosphere and surroundings. It was so overwhelming, it brought tears of joy to my eyes. To see this impression and progression of ... all the students was breathtaking. The children presented themselves with intelligence and manners. Everyone from the director down to the teachers ... take their time with these children and show them so much **love, care, and support**."*

High Road School of Prince George's County Grandparent

*"Our goal is to serve students in the **least restrictive environment** in programs that are in close proximity to their home schools. Cecil County Public Schools is, therefore, in support of the High Road School program to address the social/emotional/behavioral needs of students who require a **highly structured intensive therapeutic environment** with a **small student-to-teacher ratio**."*

Carl D. Roberts, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools, Cecil County (MD) Public School System





What distinguishes SESI as the premier provider of privatized special education in the country is a comprehensive instructional program that is as unique as each student it serves. Our program consists of six key components, all of which are customized per each student's aptitudes and abilities and all of which vitally contribute to the student's reentry into the public school setting or post-graduation employment and independent living.

1. Emphasis on Academics

The cornerstone of SESI's educational model is our academic program, featuring:

- ✓ **Small class sizes** – with at least one certified special education teacher and one qualified special education teacher's assistant in each classroom of 8–10 students, on average
- ✓ **Low staff-to-student ratios** – (ranging from 1:3 to 1:9, depending on a school's enrollment), which allows teachers to provide a great deal of individualization, feedback, and support
- ✓ **Personalized interactive instruction** – invites creative teaching strategies, encourages children to proceed at their own pace, and builds trust between student and teacher
- ✓ **Flexible curriculum within the basic skill domains** – utilizes 20 different reading programs and 10 different mathematics programs to accommodate each student's cognitive abilities and learning styles
- ✓ **Full subject area coverage** – morning courses in reading, writing, math, and language arts; afternoon instruction in science, social studies, health, art, physical education, technology education, occupational preparation, and social skills
- ✓ **Consistent academic structure** – 20-minute rotations among (1) teacher-directed tutorials; (2) independent seatwork; (3) computer workstation sessions
- ✓ **Fulfillment of all government regulations** – strict adherence to No Child Left Behind and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) legislation, with curriculums that meet all state and local standards and testing requirements and district-mandated IEPs (Individual Education Plans)

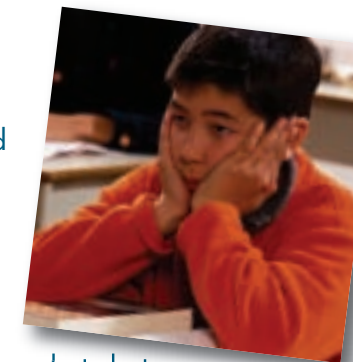
3. Behavior Management System



Students with special needs thrive best in safe, predictable, structured environments that afford them a strong sense of security, a positive attitude toward learning, and incentives for appropriate behavior. Our educators therefore steadily use positive reinforcement as the primary tool for motivating model behavior and goal attainment throughout the day, awarding students with praise, points, tokens, and advancement along color-coded levels — all of which earn

them desired on- and off-campus privileges, like school money to buy goods or snacks and participation in field trips and fun activities.

This rewards-based system promotes self-control and self-esteem while demoting the negative emotional consequences that research has shown often accompany special ed diagnoses. Like our individual academic plans, behavioral intervention plans are customized to address the particular issues each student faces by offering incentives that most appeal to them, and whenever possible, we



work with parents and guardians to sustain this behavioral model at home. In this way, students experience firsthand the correlation between acceptable, desired behaviors and the rewards that come from displaying them.



4. Clinical Support Services

To meet every student's individual educational program goals and to enable every student to make the most of his or her learning opportunities at our specialized schools, SESI provides various on-site support services according to assessed needs:

- ✿ Speech & Language Therapy
- ✿ Psychological Services
- ✿ Occupational Therapy
- ✿ Physical Therapy
- ✿ Counseling (Individual, Group & Family)
- ✿ Social Skills Training
- ✿ Adaptive Physical Education

PROGRAM DETAILS

2. Computer-Enhanced Instruction

Familiarity with computers and communication technologies is now an essential part of any child's education. We outfit all of our schools with state-of-the-art technology to supplement, but never supplant, traditional academic learning. The multiple individual computer workstations in our classrooms feature CompassLearning's research-based curriculum and assessment software, which offers students content-rich, multimodal instructional packages that prompt them to work independently and flexibly as they receive immediate interactive feedback. Furthermore, the computer programs we employ allow teachers to tailor lesson plans to the student's current comprehension level and particular interests as they simultaneously monitor student performance.



"My life is doing great here. I like when we get new computers, when we get new books. I have new friends. I have new work."

High Road Middle Academy of Washington, DC, Student

"A student's placement at Sierra Academy is often an intervention that will right past wrongs and ensure a child will experience greater independence and a better quality of life."

School Psychologist, Poway (CA) Unified School District

"There are truly no words in the English language that can describe how blessed I am to have my son attending High Road Academy. It was a miracle the first time I heard my son say he loves going to school! [Nothing] comes close to the value of a mother hearing her son say that one sentence. This is only possible with the passion and commitment to make a difference in a child's education that comes with the staff at High Road Academy. Thank you! I know for certain that each one of the staff has saved a child's life."

High Road Academy of Howard County Parent



5. Transitional Services

SESI's transitional services provide our students with vocational and life skills training in real-world contexts, exposing them to the economic forces, workplace expectations, and community values that govern society. Depending on the student population served, some of our schools have formal School-to-Work programs, some have dedicated Transitional Services staff, some feature a "Micro-Community" (reproducing a true-to-life town/marketplace on the premises) or a school retail S.T.O.R.E. (Student Training Opportunity for Rewarding Employment), but all share the same goal of preparing students to work and live productively and self-sufficiently following graduation.

Our transition programs begin in the classroom, with industry-specific elective courses, classes in daily living (e.g., opening a bank account, using a checkbook), and instruction in basic work preparation (e.g., appropriate attire, job interviews). Students then advance to on-campus internships, where they apply what they've learned to reality-based work environments that include on-the-job training in the use of relevant machinery, equipment, or technology. Once the in-school program is mastered, students can proceed to off-campus internships and job placements, where they are supported by job coaches, transition coordinators, and outside agencies as they garner actual work experience, become qualified for long-term employment in select trades, and build their resumes in those areas.



"High Roads is the best of the best. ... This school has brought me to very good points in my life. This school has brought me to believe that you can make a difference."

High Road School of Wallingford Student

"At High Road, we work individually with each child using a unique individualized academic model. This gives me the opportunity to create a successful school experience for every student."

High Road School of Southern Maryland Teacher



"Sierra has benefited many students. We have seen a rise in individual confidence and academic performance among our student body."

Sierra School at Edison School Counselor

"Our daughter has been at the school for only six months, but it has been a great relief to have a school that did not take her struggles as an inconvenience, but rather just part of the landscape of providing her with an education."

High Road Student Learning Center Parent

"This program is a good place because I learn a lot of new things each day and I come here with a smile on my face. I love all the staff because they make sure I'm okay."

High Road Middle Academy of Washington, DC, Student

"I really enjoy working here because I feel equipped for the task to drive students. There is a plethora of ideas, dreams, and goals circulating throughout the hallways."

High Road Middle Academy of Washington, DC, Staffer



"It is nice to see how well students are progressing on their goals, and I am impressed with the positive social interactions between our students."

Sierra School at El Camino Teacher

"The teachers here are nice. They teach us all kinds of things. When I first came here, I did not know anything, but now I know how to do science, social studies, and painting."

High Road Middle Academy of Washington, DC, Student

"I LOVE MY JOB!! Coming from a public school and prior to that a Catholic school, I feel qualified to say that High Road has a model for success. Aside from loving the students, my coworkers have a huge impact on my high morale. The teamwork, camaraderie, and broad spectrum of personalities, added to a director with an open-door policy, equals a workplace full of smiles and laughter, along with teaching and learning."

High Road Primary School of Washington, DC, Teacher



"Our students advance at their own pace with encouragement from all staff and social workers. We adjust to how our students learn by using different styles to reach their academic ability. Introducing our students to many different experiences is key to their emotional and social success. They enjoy meaningful trips during the academic day and take from them tools to be used as they become functional adults for the future. Being part of the collective unit of High Road Schools, I am proud to say that I know we are making a difference in the way our students are learning daily."

High Road Academy of Washington, DC, Lead Teacher

"As a sixth-year SPED teacher, it has been my goal to grow with a school program that utilizes my strengths and abilities. Not only do I feel essential to the school, [but] the possibilities to expand my educational experience are endless. My approach to teaching is for my students to experience success. [During my time] at High Road, there has been visible progress from my students. My love for teaching gives them confidence to continue to celebrate themselves."

High Road Primary School of Washington, DC, Teacher



6. Focus on Results: Assessments & Outcomes

In the end, all of our programs and services aim to produce observable positive outcomes, so SESI has adopted a results-driven approach to education. We use a variety of assessment tools — such as Lexia Learning Systems instruments, Computer Curriculum Corporation software, Sylvan tests, and the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale — to monitor performance. Academically, we track student progress along numerous parameters (like testing scores, achievement rates, grade-level functioning, time on task), and we evaluate social development via such means as attendance records, parent/district surveys, emotional status indices, and intervention frequency. A series of in-house procedures regularly observe student incidence of disruptions/distractions, rates of participation, and grasp of specific and multiple subject areas; and at the corporate level, we gauge our success according to client surveys, number of referrals, enrollment statistics, and direct input. Year after year, in school after school, we keep our focus on qualitatively and quantitatively measuring the effectiveness of SESI's comprehensive instructional model.

Notes from Educational Consultant Report: "Parents felt that their children's school had made tremendous efforts to accommodate their children's particular needs, extoll[ing] the teachers, aides, directors, and other staff for going above and beyond the efforts expected of a school. Parents attributed their child's unprecedented progress to High Road's holistic approach and these extraordinary efforts."

"The one constant in [parents'] responses [in my study] was self-esteem. Parents marveled over the improvements in the children's view of themselves since attending High Road. ... [What I took from these] responses was that their children finally found an environment in which they could learn and could feel good about themselves."

The overwhelming majority of parents surveyed said that the school "provided their children the least restrictive environment in which they could learn and find a positive future for themselves socially, emotionally, and vocationally."

Ila A. Keiner, M.Ed., JD, MSW, LCSW