

Therapy Dog Board Policy

The school district supports the use of therapy dogs for the benefit of its students, subject to the conditions of this policy. Benefits from working with a therapy dog include reduced stress, improved physical and emotional well-being, lower blood pressure, decreased anxiety, improved self-esteem and normalization of the environment, increasing the likelihood of successful academic achievement by the student.

Animal Assisted Therapy is a goal-driven intervention, which is directed and/or delivered by a health, human, or education service professional and is meant to improve physical, social, emotional and/or cognitive function of an individual.

A therapy dog is a dog that has been trained, evaluated, and registered, by a certified therapy dog organization, with his/her handler to provide animal assisted activities, animal assisted therapy, and animal assisted interactions within a school. Therapy dogs are not the same as “emotional support animals” or “service animals.”

School therapy dogs are approved by the district, are treated as a member of the faculty, reside with a member of the school's staff, and create a sense of community within the school environment.

The following information will be kept current and submitted to the Board of Education:

- The proof of registration as a therapy dog handler with the individual therapy dog to be used.
- Proof from a licensed veterinarian that the therapy dog is in good health and has been immunized against diseases common to dogs. Such vaccinations shall be kept current and up to date at all times.
- Proof of licensure from the local dog licensing authority.