

ANIMALS AT SCHOOL AND IN THE CLASSROOM

I. INTRODUCTION

The Board will make reasonable accommodations for qualified persons with disabilities in accordance with state and federal law and applicable board policies. A qualifying individual with a disability is eligible to be accompanied by his or her service animal on school property when required by law, subject to the conditions of this policy. Animals may also be at school for therapeutical or educational reasons. The superintendent shall establish any necessary administrative regulations for the use of animals on school property in accordance with this policy.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. A “service animal” or is any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, fetching dropped items, or other tasks that are directly related to the individual’s disability or necessary to mitigate a disability. The animal must be a dog or in limited circumstances, a miniature horse.
- B. A “professional therapy dog” is a dog which is selected, trained and tested to provide specific physical or therapeutic functions, under the direction and control of a qualified handler who works with the dog as a team. The term does not include dogs, certified or not, which are used by volunteers for pet visitation therapy. Professional therapy dogs are not service animals.

III. USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS BY VISITORS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS OR AT SCHOOL-SPONSORED EVENTS

Topeka Public Schools complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and state laws permitting the use of service animals by individuals with disabilities. When the need for the service animal is not readily apparent, school officials may make inquiries as allowed by K.S.A. 39-1111 and regulation 2840-01 or 2840-02. School visitors shall not be asked about the nature or extent of their disability.

For students, the use of a service animal at school shall be considered by a student’s IEP or Section 504 team.

IV. PROCEDURES FOR USE OF ANIMALS BY STUDENTS OR STAFF

Staff members do not have right to have professional therapy dogs or other live animals at school, but may obtain permission from their building supervisor to bring a professional therapy dog or other live animal to school. School staff involved in the use of live animals in schools, including their acquisition and disposition, care and feeding, housing and security, will adhere to local and state laws and regulations.

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The Superintendent shall develop procedures for the use of service dogs by students or staff, the use of professional therapy dogs by staff and the presence or use of service animals, therapy dogs and other animals at school.