

## **Medical Therapy Dogs**

### **Belief Statement**

Medical therapy dogs are specifically trained dogs that will be allowed in the school, on school district property and on school district buses when it has been determined that the medical therapy dogs helps the student to have equal access to the services, programs and/or activities offered by the district, and when the school district's requirements have been met to the satisfaction of the Board of Education.

Medical therapy dogs are trained to provide a service to others working for a handler and who may not have a disability at all. Medical therapy dogs do not share the same public access rights as guide and service dogs and therefore may be denied admittance to public places which deems the importance of school district policy. Medical therapy dogs are not guide dogs or service dogs.

### **Definitions and Terms**

"Medical therapy dogs" as described by Canadian Service Dog Foundation are social interactive dogs trained to work for a handler to provide service and comfort to other people, such as in hospitals, retirement homes, nursing homes, libraries, rehabilitation units, for children with learning disabilities or difficulty with literacy or they may be trained to support people/children in stressful situations.

Therapeutic Visitation Animals are the most common type of medical therapy dog and often lift the spirits of residents/students and have a way of improving moral and can act as a motivator for therapy, treatments and recovery.

Testing and certification for medical therapy dogs is offered through various organizations in Canada.

### **Approval for Use**

Use of medical therapy dogs must be in accordance with Administrative Procedure 301 - Animals in Schools.

**Date of Board Approval: December 15, 2015**

**Date Amended:**