Auburn-Washburn USD 437
Procedures for Professional Therapy Dogs in Schools

Rationale for a therapy dog in an educational program:

- It is designed to promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional, and/or thinking and intellectual skills.
- The process is documented and evaluated.
- It is goal directed; there is a specific end in mind, such as improvement in verbal skills, attention span, etc.

1. A ***professional therapy dog*** means 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, and as a part of the handler's occupation or profession. Such dogs, with their handlers, perform such functions in institutional settings, community based group settings, or when providing services to specific persons who have disabilities. "Professional therapy dog" does not include dogs, certified or not, which are used by volunteers for pet visitation therapy (legal definition from K.S.A. 39-1113). CHECK STATUTE
2. ***Dog Handler*** – a person who is a certificated staff member within Auburn-Washburn USD 437 school system who has been trained and tested as part of a therapy dog team by an organization.
3. ***Therapy Dog Team*** – a dog handler and a therapy dog; both of which have been trained and tested as a therapy dog team by an organization.

Clarification of Rights – Many people are under the mistaken impression that therapy animals and their handlers have the same rights of access as people with disabilities who use service animals. Service animals are vitally important to those people with disabilities who have one. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a person with a disability is entitled to take a service animal with him or her wherever it is needed. A therapy dog performs its tasks by permission or invitation.

Auburn-Washburn USD 437 requires the following information for a therapy dog to be on-site within one of our facilities:

- A request for the therapy dog to be used in a school building should be made in writing to the building administrator at least ten (10) days prior to the dog entering the school.
- The building administrator is responsible for notifying the Superintendent (or designee) of the request.
- The Superintendent may notify and/or seek approval of the Board of Education.
- The building administrator is responsible for making student and employee accommodations for allergies related to the dog.
- The dog must have current vaccinations and be free of internal and external parasites. A health certificate, current within the last year and signed by a licensed veterinarian, must be on file in the school office.
- The dog must complete and pass a training and certification process test with written documentation of this certification on file at the school.

- The dog must pass and obtain certification of Public Access developed by Assistance Dogs International.
- The dog is owned by a school employee or a student's parents or guardians and is not the property of the school district.
- The employee assigned to the dog must be trained by the same organization which trains the dog.
- The dog must be accompanied by its dog handler when on site unless in its crate or a locked office for rest and respite.
- A dog handler is responsible for any property damage caused by the therapy dog.
- The owner of the dog must take full responsibility for the care arrangements (sanitation, health care, food, and boarding).
- Zero bite policy – any therapy dog that bites a person or an animal will not be allowed back on any USD 437 premises.
- Always needs to be on a leash and/or under control of the handler.
- Injured or sick dogs (within the last 24 hours) will not be brought to school.
- Dogs should be clean and well groomed, including teeth and nails.
- Females in heat are not allowed at school.

Liability

The staff member or student/parent is liable for any damage to School District or personal property and any injuries to individuals caused by their service animal or professional therapy dog. The staff member or student/parent who uses a service animal on School District property will hold the School District harmless and indemnify the School District from any such damages. Further, the staff member, student/parent will be required to submit a certificate of liability insurance covering the service animal and identifying the School District as an additional insured.