



Policy II-52 Student Use of Service Animals in Schools

Summary of Stakeholder Feedback

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Introduction

This report summarizes feedback from Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) stakeholders about the amendments to Policy II-52 Student Use of Service Animals in Schools. At the May 14th, 2019 Policy Meeting, staff advised the Board of Trustees that amendments were required to both the policy and procedure in order to update the relevant privacy references and records management processes to ensure processes are aligned with the relevant acts. As per *Recommendation P#41/19*, passed by Trustees, staff sought feedback on the draft policy from HCDSB stakeholders, between May 15th and June 5th, 2019.

All feedback analyzed by Research and Development Services for the purposes of this report was submitted via online form. The following sections provide a description of the method of data collection and analytic procedure, followed by a data summary.

Feedback

On May 15th, 2019, the Director of Education invited all HCDSB stakeholders to provide input regarding the Student Use of Service Animals in Schools policy, via an online form on the HCDSB website. Parents were also directly invited via email on May 16th to provide their feedback on the policy amendments.

The data received were reviewed to obtain counts of the number of responses in different categories. The following limitations should be considered:

- The online form was anonymous (aside from a field to include name voluntarily), and not password protected, so it was not possible to:
 - prevent duplicate names and duplicate comments
 - ensure that the responses came from authentic HCDSB stakeholders who reside, work, or study in Halton (i.e., HCDSB ratepayers, parents, students, staff, trustees)
- The online form did not include a close-ended question to quantitatively collect number of votes for/against the amendments, so all comments had to be coded and analyzed qualitatively

However, care was taken to keep track of duplicate names/comments. As described later, the duplicate names were not included in the analysis of the data.

A) Who Responded?

Number of responses submitted by the feedback form

In total, 209 responses were submitted using the online form on the HCDSB website. All responses can be found in Appendix A, below. Seven comments were removed due to duplication, resulting in a total response count of 202.

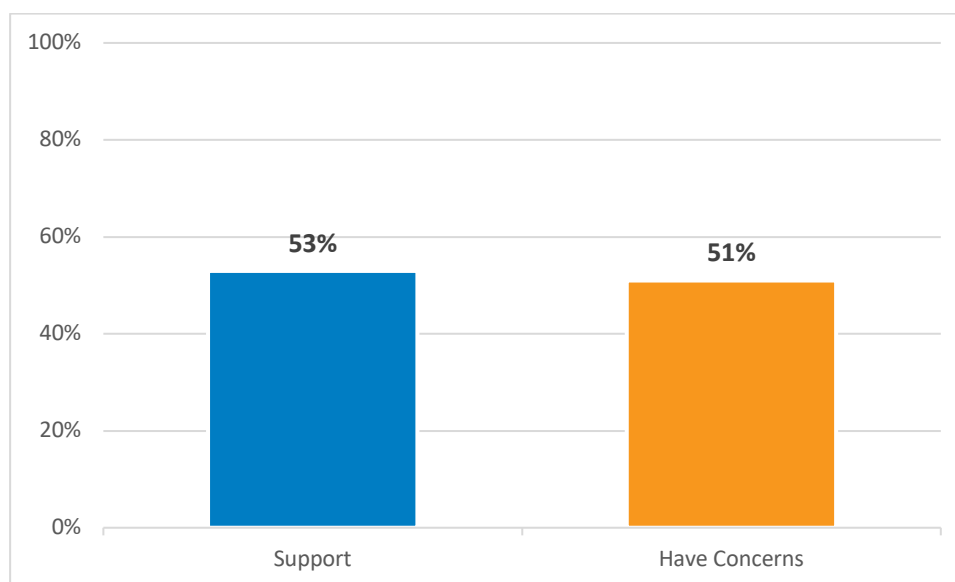
B) Position on the Policy Changes

There were 202 responses included in the thematic analysis of the stakeholder data; as noted above, all duplicate comments or names were deleted and therefore excluded from the analysis. Of the ten different stakeholder groups identified on the online feedback form, six were represented in the thematic analysis. Of the roles selected on the form, the majority were HCDSB parents (88%, n = 177), followed by HCDSB Staff (6%, n = 13).

Role	Count
HCDSB Parent	177
HCDSB Staff	13
Catholic School Council	5
Halton Catholic Ratepayer	3
HCDSB Student	3
HCDSB Union	1
TOTAL	202

The data from the online form were reviewed and coded based on whether the respondent's comments indicated that they (a) support the policy, and/or (b) have concerns about the policy. Note that one comment may be coded as both (a) and (b).

Coding Breakdown (n = 202):



As shown in the chart above, slightly more than half of respondents (53%; n = 107) indicated that they support the policy, agreeing with allowing service animals in schools. Fifty-one percent (n = 103) of respondents indicated that they had concerns about the policy. The nature of such concerns will be discussed below.

C) Common Themes Found within the ‘Have Concerns’ Comments

The responses that voiced concerns with the policy (n = 103) were analyzed and coded by common themes. The most frequent themes are discussed below:

Note: The percentage provided with each theme refers to the proportion of stakeholders who were coded as having concerns with the policy. The theme/topic counts are greater than the number of responses to the question, since some responses reflected multiple themes. These themes do not account for all opinions expressed but provide a summary of the most frequent comments.

Theme 1: Allergies. Respondents were concerned about the staff and students who suffer from allergies due to animals (62%, n = 64). Examples:

“...If another student has a severe animal allergy, I don’t think the service animal should be allowed. Allergies to animals can be a trigger for some asthma patients and could pose a serious health threat the these students, already afflicted with a chronic lung condition.”

“What happens to the children that are allergic to the animals”

“...my primary concern about implementing this policy is the risk that a service animal presents to children who have allergies to animals. My son has allergies to both cats and dogs. The dander and saliva from

dogs causes rashes, hives, sneezing, running eyes, and coughing for my son...even when he does not touch the animal."

Theme 2: Fear. Respondents were concerned about the staff and students who are afraid of animals (33%, n = 34). Examples:

"...But what about the kids in the class who do not like or are afraid of the animals that are brought in. Or any staff members??..."

"My children are terrified of dogs and other furry friends, seeing animals in schools would then make them terrified, making them anxious about going to school. Then what will we do for my children? Will the animals be segregated or will my children?"

"...Many children are afraid of dogs (as I am). Even though these dogs are specially trained, they still could hinder other students from learning because of their fear and/or anxiety about dogs..."

Theme 3: Distraction. Respondents were concerned that service animals would be a distraction in the classroom (22%, n = 23). Examples:

"I think bringing animals into a classroom would be too disruptive to the rest of the class. Kids already have short attention spans and have hard time paying attention to the teacher and dont need another thing to keep their mind off learning."

"I think this is an excellent idea but how all those kids will stay away from dogs and let them focus on work? Every kid will want to pet them and distract them."

"I do feel a service animal could become distracting for students in a classroom, and would trust proper accommodations be implemented for the student with the animal that does not distract from other children's learning."

Theme 4: Regulation. Respondents mentioned the need for regulations and restrictions surrounding the allowance of service animals in schools to minimize possible impacts from this policy (21%, n = 22). Examples:

"...I think it would be a great idea to allow some students to have support animals however I think it would have to have very strict guidelines in place as I feel it will be very popular choice for parents and children. Is this for elementary or high school students? Or both? The children should be of an age to be able to care for the animal themselves without relying on teacher or EA as it should not become part of their job."

"There needs to be distinction between a service animal and a therapy animal. Is there any direction provided to schools and parents as to what would be allowed? The admission of therapy animals would open a whole other scope of potential concerns. Even though decisions are made on a case by case basis, decisions need to be made based on accurate data and the best interests of the student, not the emotions of a parent."

“What provisions would be in place for service animals that are not hypo-allergenic and fellow students that may have pet allergies?”

Theme 5: Care. Respondents were questioning who would care for the service animal (i.e., take it to the bathroom, clean up after it, feed it, etc.) (17%, n = 18). Examples:

“...Who takes the service animal for a walk to go to the bathroom at lunch? Who cleans up after the animal? Who supervises the student walking the dog off school property? Is the animal tethered to the student at all times?...”

“And what measures are in place to guarantee that the schools are going to be properly cleaned on a daily basis to remove animal fur/dander in the schools?”

“How will cleaning of school change with the introduction/integration of a service animal that sheds its fur?”

Theme 6: Safety. Respondents were concerned about staff and students’ safety in the presence of service animals (17%, n = 18). Examples:

“...another big issue is related to safety. How students, specially the youngest ones, staff, volunteers, etc will be protected in case something goes wrong with the service animal reactions? Who and how the service animal will be controlled during recesses? And during class time? Who will be responsible to keep students and staff safe? Will insurance cover any expenses related to injuries/damages cause by the service animal? Wouldn't this be a potential risk for increasing law suits??”

“Safety comes first, and service animals are trained to perform specific tasks. They are not trained to be around 700 students running around, yelling at reassesses, maybe "too close" to their owner. So, how safety for the non-owners will be guaranteed? I'm very concerned with safety, even worst with younger kids (JK, SK, grades 1 t 4).”

“...Lastly, it is an animal with animal instincts - always an increased risk of noise, biting or scratching”

Appendix A:

<p>As the council chair and a parent in the HCDSB I would like to provide my input on this policy. While I understand that there are students who can benefit from service animals in the school there are also other students who have allergies to these very animals, my son being one of them. My son is allergic to ALL dogs as he's allergic to the saliva, dander and urine of cats and dogs. He has asthma and severe anaphylactic reactions to these animals. It would be detrimental if an animal was not only in his classroom but in the school environment that he uses: examples being, The library, the gym etc. I already struggle with animals that come on to the playground and may come into contact with him. I believe that children's health has to be the first priority. And although my son's allergies are very severe I know there are many more students who also have mild allergies to animals. It would be much too difficult to control this environment. He has even had mild reactions to students' clothing in the cubbies. Especially as a JK when they're so close to their peers in the classroom. I would have to vote against this policy and ask the trustees to please consider this in any decisions regarding bringing dogs or cats into the school environment.</p>
<p>I approve</p>
<p>While I applaud the board for incorporating the needs of special students.... I do raise the concern of bringing animals into the school setting. There are other children with allergies or serious fears and phobias of those animals. What does the board expect to do in those situations? The children with allergies or real phobias should be taken into consideration before these policies are put into play. If they have been and the board has a solution that should also be made public to the community. I hope there will be further communication about this subject and addressing these concerns</p>
<p>Thank you</p>
<p>When considering whether or not a service animal will be allowed in the classroom allergies must also be taken into consideration, including whether or not the teachers who work with the child have allergies.</p>
<p>In support of this</p>
<p>Children that require service dogs should be permitted to have a service dog without being discriminated against. This should go without say.</p>
<p>Please consider, some students have severe allergies to dogs, Please note, hypoallergenic dogs don't exist.</p>
<p>absolutely necessary for students that require a service animal to be able to have access to them in their school setting, allows for students to be integrated into a classroom which is very beneficial to their growth</p>
<p>I think it's a wonderful idea</p>
<p>No service animals. Other students may be allergic or afraid of them.</p>
<p>I am 100% in favour of service animals to be used by any student or teacher at any time.</p>
<p>I am in support of this policy.</p>
<p>As a teacher I would not feel comfortable having a service animal in my classroom. I am quite afraid of animals and can imagine that there are students who are as well.</p>
<p>I believe that at very least, the classroom teacher should get to make a final decision about what would work in his/her classroom.</p>
<p>Absolutely! if a child can grow and learn on a different level with a therapy animal I am all for it. A dog, or whatever it may be, can offer relaxation, focus, love and health and wellbeing of the student. It gives them the opportunity to grow and learn while having their best friend next to them. This is what the school system should support as well. I have no issues with this at all.</p>
<p>I am not in favour of service animals in schools for two main reasons:</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many children are afraid of dogs (as I am). Even though these dogs are specially trained, they still could hinder other students from learning because of their fear and/or anxiety about dogs.

<p>2. With the many cuts by the Ford government, I am worried that service animals could take the place of SERTs for students with "mild" special needs that can be "taken care of" with a service animal. All students with special needs deserve the support of a trusting adult who is in tune with their needs. Special education staff should not be cut to save money or to help balance the increased class size averages the Ford government is imposing.</p>
<p>It's a good idea... particularly for children with mental health issues.</p>
<p>This has been proven to be helpful and has been adopted in areas of the public and schools already. Our airports have service dogs to go around and comfort travellers. Animals are taken into the seniors residences as well as colleges/universities bringing them in for the students.</p> <p>We are at a point in time were things are changing for these kids and if the service animals can benefit (well anyone can benefit) it needs to be looked at and addressed.</p> <p>I think it is awesome :)</p>
<p>The use of service animals is an important step in ensuring students with disabilities or medical conditions have full access to education in an inclusive environment. Schools will need to ensure appropriate service animal relief areas are provided and maintained. In schools where a service animal does accompany a student, the school staff need to provide the other students with orientation on how to manage themselves around a working service animal.</p>
<p>Inclusion is one of the main concerns for education. Being accessible to all kind of special needs is extremely important for Schools. Service animals should be allowed.</p>
<p>I think that this is a good step towards providing a good learning environment for all students. Just as long as the service animals are fully accredited, trained and certified as a service animal then these animals should have full access to the school for those individuals in need.</p> <p>What would be a problem is if you open the door to any animal under the heading of "support animal" that is no more than a pet being brought for comfort.</p> <p>I have seen what training true service animals must go through and know that they do provide a vital service for those in need.</p>
<p>I am for service animals being allowed anywhere and everywhere. The only issue I have is that my daughter has an extreme allergy to dogs. I want to keep her safe and healthy. I do love dogs and love to see them helping someone in need.</p>
<p>How do we accommodate both?</p>
<p>We are totally opposed to the use of service animals in schools. This will be a huge distraction to most students and yet another thing for teachers to manage. Students must be accommodated in other ways as they have been for decades.</p> <p>Our schools can not be all things to all people.</p>
<p>What if there are children with allergies to animals? How will their needs be accommodated?</p>
<p>There are many students who are allergic to dogs therefore I don't think service animals in classrooms would be a good idea.</p>
<p>I welcome and definitely agree with this service offering and wondering why it has not been offered before. The people with disability and special needs do have the right to enjoy school environment and every other place just like those who do not go through this.</p> <p>It's never too late.</p>
<p>Yes, trained service animals should be allowed in schools.</p>

I support the use of service animals in school
Who takes the service animal for a walk to go to the bathroom at lunch? Who cleans up after the animal? Who supervises the student walking the dog off school property? Is the animal tethered to the student at all times? Can other students or staff touch the dog or take the dog to the bathroom when the student needs quiet time? Are there times that the animal sleeping, away from the student during the day e.g. gym class, and administrators or teachers are supervising the animal? How is the animal transported during field trips? Who checks for ticks, mud, water on the animal's fur? Does the student with the service animal remain inside the school? How will a service animal distract other students in the classroom? How will a service animal impact student learning in the classroom? How will an animal affect others who have an allergy to fur or hair? Thank you!
Has any thought been given to children with severe allergies to animals? How will they be accommodated.
I agree with and support this policy.
I agree
I am in favor of the use of service animals. Anything that provides support for a child and an opportunity to succeed has my vote.
The problem with allowing a few animals in school is how to stop bringing in all sorts of different types. I think it would be best if no animals were allowed in to the classroom. I understand it could calm one child, but inadvertently cause staff or other children anxiety due to the presence of an animal in the classroom. I think that once you make an exception, it will be a slippery slope and you will have all sorts of "service animals" being brought forward. (Rats, snakes, birds for example) I just don't see how this will work. Also, what if the animals don't get along and begin fighting? I think the class room should be an animal free zone for all. I would welcome therapy dogs to visit the school on a more routine basis so those that are need for calming, could visit accordingly in a separated area.
This should be allowed and accepted
I would love to see this policy approved as there are so many students who depend on their service animals.
We absolutely support the use of service animals to assist students with medical or behavioural needs.
I support service dogs for those who need it
This is a non-issue. Children deserve the best, most inclusive and all-encompassing learning environment that we can provide to them. Most especially those who require the special attention and comfort that a Service Animal can provide. Jesus is often referred to as a shepherd who tended to His flock. His flock included—and His love extended to—animals as well. Children who are afraid of certain animals (like my daughter) can use this as an opportunity to learn that there are others in our world with different and sometimes greater difficulties than our own which require compassion, love and special care. Those children are deserving of the help they need to reach their full potential. As an ancillary benefit, children with a Service Animal in their environment can learn a respect for animals not only as pets, but as valuable contributors to society as a whole.
I'm 100% on board with this opportunity. Students with a disability deserve to have any kind of assistance they require in order to succeed like any other student.
As service animals provide care and comfort in every aspect of life why would they not be allowed to accompany a child in school? Seems long over due. I fully support this policy.

I do not support this. After dogs for the blind, it will be rabbits for the overly emotional. If they have problems enough that they can't attend school on their own, then they should be segregated. Stop pandering to noisy minorities and overly entitled parents.
Although I do believe service dogs are a valuable tool for people with disabilities, I don't believe there is a place for them in schools. Mainly for the reason that we already struggle to give enough support to kids in need and don't have enough EA support. Having service animals in schools would require a lot of assistance. The animals would need to be monitored, taken to the bathroom etc. A young child is not capable of being responsible on their own which would mean some type of paid support would be needed to supervise the animal and meet its needs as well.
What if a student/students are highly allergic to animals? There is nothing that states the animal needs to be hypoallergenic
I do not support the integration of service animals in the school/classroom.
I support the use of service animals in schools.
All children and adults have the right to learn in an environment that they feel comfortable and secure . If they feel anxious or scared, they will not flourish or develop to their potential. Service animals are amazing supports to children and adults with physical disabilities, mental health issues, and special needs. My family supports this 100%.
Students should be allowed to use service animals in schools as it is an accessibility issue and a human rights issue for disabled people. Service animals are not a luxury, they're necessary for some to obtain education. As long as the animals are trained and do not audibly disturb children learning, they should be non-negotiable.
Hopefully this does not become a mess like pets aboard airplanes. I hope the "certified" pet isn't just some doctor giving a note. People will take advantage of this.
I completely support the use of service animals by students in the school. Even though thankfully none of my children have a need for one I understand it is crucial for others.
I agree that service animals may be of great benefit to those students (handlers) that require them, but not at the expense of other students.
If another student has a severe animal allergy, I don't think the service animal should be allowed.
Allergies to animals can be a trigger for some asthma patients and could pose a serious health threat the these students, already afflicted with a chronic lung condition.
If there are no severe allergies, I would be fine with a service animal.
What about people with allergies? Severe allergies at that. How will those people be accommodated? Or, what about foil odours, due to household smells, such as smoke or foods. Or what about unbathed/wet smelling dogs? This is a VERY slippery slope! There are other therapy tools that can be utilized whether trios is for sight seeing or calming purposes!
What provisions would be in place for service animals that are not hypo-allergenic and fellow students that may have pet allergies?
I am a parent and also a teacher in our school board My only concern lies in the fact that many staff and students suffer uncomfortable, if not life threatening, allergies to animals. I, for one, cannot be in the presence of a dog or cat without being heavily medicated, which would impede my ability to teach. How does the Board propose guaranteeing ALL staff and students in each building that an animal won't be allowed to enter the premises thus guaranteeing a comfortable and safe learning environment for all, not just for those that are disabled and require a service animal. On the other hand, I do recognize the right of these individuals to have access to learning that is otherwise disabled without the use of a service animal, as is the case for some blind children that require their service animal at their side. However, it is not practical to assume that all other children, and staff, in the vicinity of this animal will be able to tolerate its presence. I think it would stand to cause suffering for more than it would ease suffering for a few. My concern is that behaviour issues are escalating in schools and so, should parents insist that their child needs to bring a service animal to school to help them stay calm and learn, all they would need is a doctor's note indicating this need and before you know it, we'll be having to let not just one but several or many service animals into our schools. Then,, there are many

children with anxiety already so why add to their anxiety if they are anxious around animals? Is this permitted in other parts of the world or just here? In addition, I can easily see how students that are easily distracted under normal circumstances would be even more so when they have a dog in their classroom. I'm not sure I'm liking this idea...

I believe that this is ABSOLUTELY NOT A GOOD IDEA.

It is a GUARANTEE that someone is going to bring in some animal that is going to ATTACK OR BITE a student that inadvertently gets too close to it. This also leaves the school board in a position to get SUED! We are becoming more like our American friends, whereby you look at someone wrong and they want to file a lawsuit.

In addition, WHO is going to have the pleasure of cleaning up after these animals? What happens when they have accidents in class? I do NOT want my child in a class that smells like feces and urine, which is exactly what will happen when these animals have accidents day, after day! Our kids EAT in these classes.

There is also a concern when there is a lot of activity in the halls or classes and if one of these animals gets dropped or a child trips and falls over an animal.

In addition, since I'm assuming, it's various animals, what happens if someone wants to bring a PIG or a SNAKE? We are opening ourselves to a lot of SERIOUS ISSUES AND PROBLEMS.

This is a school, not a ZOO!

Service animals are now everywhere, assisting people during their travels, coping with life events, as well as, their mental and behavioural needs. If a student needs them for the betterment of their learning and overall wellbeing, then, service animals should be allowed in the school environment.

Animals are frequently used in university for emotional support, however it works because there aren't many university students with support animals, I think it would be a great idea to allow some students to have support animals however I think it would have to have very strict guidelines in place as I feel it will be very popular choice for parents and children. Is this for elementary or high school students? Or both? The children should be of an age to be able to care for the animal themselves without relying on teacher or EA as it should not become part of their job.

Both of my kids are very allergic to cats and dogs.

Furthermore, they are extremely scared of dogs.

My kids could not be placed in a classroom with a service animal.

It should also be noted that dogs tend to carry ticks that often go unnoticed. Once the tick falls off a dog, the tick would be in the school and could possibly bite a child and give the child Lyme disease.

Do parents of other children in the school/class get advanced input into a service animal being a part of his/her child's class BEFORE the service animal comes to school? When does this happen and by what means? Many children have allergies and some have significant fears of animals, not all of which may be known by a classroom teacher as typically these may not come up in a conversation between a child and a teacher. I hope that parents are consulted fairly early in the process to be able to advocate for their children also. I would like to see the process for 'approval' outlined more clearly in this policy.

How will allergies be dealt with. Many staff and/or students are allergic to dogs. How will they be expected to work or be in the same classroom as a student who requires a service animal?

What happens to the children that are allergic to the animals

Agree with it as long as it is following the safety rules and.

There needs to be distinction between a service animal and a therapy animal. Is there any direction provided to schools and parents as to what would be allowed?

The admission of therapy animals would open a whole other scope of potential concerns.

Even though decisions are made on a case by case basis, decisions need to be made based on accurate data and the best interests of the student, not the emotions of a parent.

I fully support service animals in schools. This is the type of innovative programming we need to see more of in our schools. Bravo!
Fully support service dogs
Service animals provide emotional and social support for students with special needs. I believe the students should require a recommendation from therapist and or Dr before allowing animal to accompany student to school, obviously, but I support this policy.
Good idea to bring animals for kids with special needs. Even the other kids can learn from caring for an animal.
Great idea!
What is the consideration for children who have severe or anaphylactic allergies to animals? With an animal being in the school, this can cause a severe reaction to the children.
My son is very allergic to dogs. Consequently, he can never visit the homes of family or friends with dogs. We accept that without question or complaint. Now you're trying to tell me he won't be able to freely walk around his own school because a special needs child will have their dog inside the school!!!??? This is absolutely unacceptable and I will use every legal avenue to prevent my child from having to be either withdrawn from his school or have his activities and free movement within the school limited. This is outrageous and unacceptable to our family. Where does "accommodation" end and common sense begin?? My son won't be the only one with a common dog allergy. We're not talking about an allergic reaction after a peanut is consumed (i.e. oral contamination). We're talking about an air born allergy. How will my son be protected from the air in his school? And please don't give me a line about hypoallergenic dogs. He's allergic to the dander on ALL dogs, and especially to their saliva and the dampness on their noses. My son has had allergic reactions to dogs who visited a non dog house and long after the visiting dog was removed. You cannot possibly ensure the safety of my child and all the other children with dog allergies. I am telling you now, that if a service dog enters my son's school, I will legally challenge it.
I disagree with the proposal for the following reasons: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My kids are allergenic to certain animals. 2. Students not requiring animals will be distracted. 3. Animals have eating and washroom needs that would be difficult to accommodate in a 7 hour school day. 4. Teachers are already challenged with providing stellar teaching in a very challenging environment of different student needs. Adding animals I view as complete disrespect to their ability to deliver a curriculum that continues to meet those high standards. <p>A wise man once said: The needs of the many, outweighs the needs of the few. This statement would be applicable to this proposal.</p> <p>I vote no.</p>
Excellent
Wonderfully inclusive
Would the student population have to be trained not to touch the service animals?
My boys absolutely love when the service animals come to school .
I think bringing animals into a classroom would be too disruptive to the rest of the class. Kids already have short attention spans and have hard time paying attention to the teacher and dont need another thing to keep their mind off learning.
I totally disagree with this proposal.
Health issue: <p>There are several children allergic to pets' hair. Most of them are medicated when parents know that they will be in contact with dogs and cats. But this is occasionally since they do not have animals at home.</p> <p>Security issue: <p>Dogs, even service dogs, have the instinct to defend their masters. Kids tend to play "physically" several times. What happens if a service dog bites a student? Not only from the insurance/money side... but also could create</p> </p>

a psychological trauma in the kid.

Cleaning issue:

Who will be in charge of cleaning the dog's waste? A Grade 1 student?

Who will clean dog hair leave it in the classroom every single day?

These are the first issues coming to my mind, but I am sure there are more.

Best Regards.

Hello,

With regards to allowing service animals at school, I disagree with this policy for many reasons:

1) my son is allergic to dogs and cats hair and therefore his health will be compromised. He will have to be medicated to assist to school and will be at high risk. Like peanuts are not permitted at school due to potential allergic reactions, same should be considered with animals that can cause a similar severe allergic reactions as this will be the case of my son.

As stated in the policy first point, my son has the right to receive education and to enjoy the life of the school, unfortunately that won't be possible if he has to be constantly medicated or sick due to his allergies to animals.

2) another big issue is related to safety. How students, specially the youngest ones, staff, volunteers, etc will be protected in case something goes wrong with the service animal reactions? Who and how the service animal will be controlled during recesses? And during class time? Who will be responsible to keep students and staff safe? Will insurance cover any expenses related to injuries/damages cause by the service animal? Wouldn't this be a potential risk for increasing law suits?

3) who is cleaning up the service animal' s farces/ waste? This could be a health hazard as well since this can transmit deseases as well.

4) What about students with fear or fobias to animals? They won't be able to assist to school and we will be denying them the right to education and enjoyment at school.

In my particular case, I will be obligated to take my kids out of school/ HCDSB and/ or move to another region/ board. Not sure which legal actions could I pursue, to be protected, need to further investigate this matter.

Per the reasons mentioned above, I strongly disagree with allowing service animals inside the school. I think it has more drawbacks than benefits and can cause more problems than benefits.

I think this is an excellent idea but how all those kids will stay away from dogs and let them focus on work? Every kid will want to pet them and distract them.

This is not a good idea to the welfare of most students and staff. There are students who fear these animals and it should not be allowed in school premises.

1. In the case where the Service Animal has been permitted to be taken into school premises, will the school and the board be liable if the Service Animal harms any students or school staff?

2. Has the school board conducted a poll what percentage of the student population will likely require Service Animals and whether it is due to being legally blind or due to comfort needs?

No i do not agree with service dogs in the schools.

Hi

Do not agree with service animals at school

My son is highly allergic to dogs. I'm afraid exposure to a or several dogs in the school will cause him to have an asthmatic episode.

<p>I think it is fundamental to help students building independence inside their own school environment, and the introduction of a service animal can absolutely help those people in need of particular support. I agree with this kind of initiative, since it could also be an educational and cultural experience for everyone. Children should grow together in an inclusive, respectful and supportive community and schools in particular are the place where children spend most of their time for many years.</p> <p>However, as you properly said, everybody health and safety must be guaranteed, so my first concern goes for example to those who may suffer from allergies and have to share quite some time with the presence of a service animal. Also, in my experience, I knew people who are afraid of dogs, due to past traumas. As usual finding the right solution respecting everybody needs won't be easy, but I appreciate the fact that the School Board is doing this kind of action and is opening a dialogue on this matter.</p>
<p>As a parent I would support the implementation of a service animal for any student who would benefit and trust that each school would do their own assessment on the impact of other students or staff who may have allergies or other considerations that may apply.</p>
<p>If a student or board employ require a service animal it should be allowed.</p>
<p>Amazing, great idea!</p>
<p>Good morning,</p> <p>Make sure to include in your budget the additional costs related to long term allergy drops treatment that are not currently covered by OHIP, for all the children in Halton that are allergic to animals fur. I'm assuming you do not expect parents to cover them, eh?</p> <p>Thanks</p>
<p>On Service Animals:</p> <p>The obvious concern is allergies and hygiene. I know many children who have allergies to pets, are fearful of them, and so this would be a consideration and could also be a distraction in the school and classrooms.</p> <p>Also, I think the obvious hygiene concerns do not need to be stated, but are significant, as any messes become not only a custodial issue, but a safety issue.</p>
<p>I absolutely believe that service animals should be allowed in our schools. This is a necessity of life for many people. This should not even be a debate. But it must be a legitimate service animal not a therapy pet chosen by the child / parents.</p>
<p>This policy supports the modernization of schools in the board. This will increase the well being of students and families that rely on this type of requirements for the success of their children within the school environment. This policy will allow improvements in student performance in the learning environment</p>
<p>Although I appreciate the assistance that a service animal provides children; my primary concern about implementing this policy is the risk that a service animal presents to children who have allergies to animals. My son has allergies to both cats and dogs. The dander and saliva from dogs causes rashes, hives, sneezing, running eyes, and coughing for my son. He has experienced these symptoms around all types of dogs even when he does not touch the animal. We do not have pets at home so that my son does not experience these symptoms daily. If the service animal was present in my son's class then I am very worried that he would start experiencing these symptoms and we would have to have him take allergy medicine daily to control the reactions. This is the last thing that I would want my son to have do just to go to school to complete his education. We do not send certain foods to school because of serious food allergies so I do not see a difference with having animals in the classroom daily that also cause allergic reactions for children. Please reconsider this proposed policy for the risk that it will present to those children who have allergies to animals.</p>
<p>A step in the RIGHT direction! I approve of the student use of service animals in schools 100%.</p>
<p>I'm totally for it.</p>
<p>Overall in disagreement with implementing this policy due to health and student safety concerns. Thanks.</p>
<p>I don't see how this could be safely implemented in the current school(s) layout and infrastructure. Plus health concerns for some students. Regards.</p>

In disagreement with this initiative. Safety and health of many other students is also important.
Once again, finally! But too late for the child of mine that needed the service/spec ed, but has not been adequately served by HCDSB.
Concern regarding students and staff that may have allergies / asthmatic conditions related to animals and their learning/ability to do their job being negatively impacted. Would not see the need for a service animal in elementary school. Possibly for secondary for student with vision needs to facilitate independence and transition. Would not support to address anxiety or related reasons.
It is not right because not everyone loves animals. Children have been schooling without the use of service animals and they have been surviving and successful. What has changed? Moreover, children that do not like animals who were coping with their studies before might not be able to cope because they are scared of the animal thereby getting distracted from studies.
II-52 is an excellent idea! Service animals provide much comfort and confidence to people who benefit from them. I am fully supportive of this policy. It also teaches other students the importance of service animals and in an environment where they are taught to give them respect and space.
Dear HCDSB, Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this survey. I totally agree with the use of service animals in school, whenever necessary. I believe not only the kid with special needs will benefit from it.
If a service animal is essential to the needs of a child, I have absolutely no objections. I believe the presence of animals, especially dogs, benefit all by bringing a sense of calm and comfort to those around. I support this initiative.
I am agree with this program
If the correct guidelines are put in place for who can have a service dog and handler has specific protocol to follow I think this is a good idea. Things to consider: Would the service dog be allowed on the bus? In the cafeteria? Would there be a designated area outside for the service dog to relieve itself? What if there were accidents inside the school, who would have to clean up?
I am a parent of three as well as a member of the catholic school council. My two eldest children have already graduated college but I also have a third child who is in Grade one. As well, I am legally blind and my middle child has the same degenerative eye disease and is visually impaired progressing to legally blind. We will be testing our youngest in a few years for the genetic disease (she is still too young to test now). That being said, I am very interested in the use of service animals at the school. In the workplace/"real world", the use of service animals is never "considered", it is a human right. The fact that the school board puts the word "considering" in its policy "This policy outlines the expectations and process for schools to adhere to when CONSIDERING admittance and integration of a service animal into the school environment for the benefit of a student" raises great concern with me. The Province of Ontario is striving towards "accessibility" and educating employers and residents on providing accessibility in work places and communities. Through this education, our province is becoming a place where individuals with physical and neurological challenges can integrate and contribute equally within society. I feel that the HCDSB policy on the use of Service Animals is not following the "Province's lead" but instead trying to "skirt" around the rights of accessibility. The policy states that the School/School Board will make the decision if service animals are allowed for students "Requests for the use of a service animal should be approved when school/board staff have determined that it is the best accommodation to support the student's demonstrated disability or medical related needs". This again is a concern. If medical doctors and service providers have already approved this service as one that is required for the student, the school boards policy should be only to accommodate – not have the option to deny – just as in "the real world".

Also, the "Clear, timely and appropriate communication must be provided to school communities when service animals are approved to accompany students in schools" although considerate is retroactive. Why wait until the school community has "to deal with" before educating everyone?. This clause in the policy leads to singling out individual(s) that require special needs with in that community (more like an inconvenience to warn the community about). The "clear and timely communications" should be "educate the community on the need for service animals services within the education system". That is what the Province of Ontario is doing with the Accessibility Act.

I strongly believe that the HCDSB is one of the best school boards in the province and I believe that they will eventually develop a policy regarding service animal services within the education system that is more proactive, realistic and accommodating to all. But this current policy is far from that. It is my hope that the school board will focus its energies on educating the communities, staff and administration about the service animal services instead of "reacting" to it. As an individual requiring special services, business owner, employer and most importantly, Mother of three, I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the policy and hope that my comments (proactive and educate approach) can be used to help with the further development of this policy.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like more information.

If the use of a service animal is necessary for the student to obtain an education, I feel it is acceptable. No child should be left out of receiving an education due to a disability

I do not want my child exposed to animals while at school.

If my child is bitten by an animal I would take action.

The animal also brings dander and other parasites into the school. I also don't want an animal around My child's food.

I do not think it's good Idea and service animal people already abuse for own advantages also many other students could have allergy and issues with animals .
not in favor of it .

I am in agreement with the proposed policy.

Concerning... because I have life threatening allergies to all Cats and dogs, even if the dog is hypoallergenic. With this thought in mind are they considering other students who may have the same type of allergies? My twins have life threatening allergies to cats and dogs as well. It would very disappointing to know that someone loses their life or being forced to use their epi-pen everyday at school. These are things that should be considered.

This is wonderful news. Due diligence is in place and it should provide all the checks and balances. Please implement this policy with optimism and natural cultural encouragement/understanding.

Thank you for asking for input!

We feel service animals are not appropriate within a school settings. With a vast amount of children with allergies, this is putting those children at unnecessary health risks. The children with disabilities, behavioural challenges, etc. are currently provided with the help of professionals stationed in the school currently. As well, there is a great possibility that service animals could pose a distraction to the learning environment for other children. Also, the hygiene of the animal is a possible unnecessary health risk to other children. Not to mention if a service animal bites or attacks a child.

The policy on service animals seems reasonable so long as the student and animal are trained. There are kids in schools who are afraid of dogs but a well trained animal should be ok.

I agree that the students with special necessities use of service animals in schools. It going to be very useful.

There would have to be strict rules for who would be eligible.

My concern is that it would be a distraction in the classroom for both the students and the teachers.

If we were to give an animal to every student who has anxiety, stress, depressed, having a rough time at home etc.. the classroom could look like a petting zoo and not a classroom.

Children have a hard enough time to stay focused, this would just be another distractions taking them away from the task at hand.
I think this is a great idea and I support the use of service animals in schools.
This is a great way to promote inclusion and provide these students with the support they need to be successful with their education.
I agree that registered service animals should be allowed as supports for students.
<p>Service Animals</p> <p>I think the use of them is a great idea if helpful for students as long as it is not a distraction for others (which I am sure it would only be at the beginning and then the service animal would simply become part of the class). The only issue I would have with it would be if other students in the class are allergic....wouldn't want that to impact the health and safety of other students in the class.</p>
How are you going to address students and staff with severe allergies to animals who are in the same classroom/space as the service animals? As a parent of a child with allergies, simply giving my child Benadryl before school on a daily basis is not the answer. What measures are you going to take to ensure that those students with extreme allergies are not placed in the same classroom as the service animals? And what measures are in place to guarantee that the schools are going to be properly cleaned on a daily basis to remove animal fur/dander in the schools?
<p>I feel its important to support a child's learning in school, whether this means having a service animal in the classroom.</p> <p>I do feel as a parent, this might foster a better understanding that animals can be safe, and respectful boundaries of a service animal be learned - this will only help children to understand the importance of not touching an animal without consent from its owner.</p> <p>I do feel a service animal could become distracting for students in a classroom, and would trust proper accommodations be implemented for the student with the animal that does not distract from other children's learning.</p> <p>As a parent of a child with allergies, I would hope that all aspects be considered such as children's health should animal hygiene and allergies become problematic for other children in the class.</p>
<p>Sounds good in theory.</p> <p>But what about the kids in the class who do not like or are afraid of the animals that are brought in. Or any staff members??</p> <p>The policy sounds good but it will turn into a nightmare. Have you seen the "support animals" that are now on airplanes.</p> <p>This policy will be taken advantage of, and the Board will do nothing. The person who makes the most noise, regardless if they are right or wrong, but mostly wrong, will get their way. Just so there child can bring a pet to school.</p> <p>Where does the animal eat, drink and defecate?</p> <p>IF approved, it is going to be a disaster.</p>
I am in total support of II-52 Student Use of Service Animals in school. Animals provide a sense of calming and can be a very helpful tool for many children - with and without special needs. This should have been in affect long ago.
<p>I support this policy. It has been proven successful. Part of implementation should include instructions to students and faculty on how to treat a service dog while he/she is on duty.</p> <p>Also consider therapy dogs during traumatic times and stressful periods such as exams.</p>

Use of service animals would require a lot of resources, what is the current need? How is the school going to implement and monitor success? What are the implications to other students e.g. those with allergies, fear or other distractions a dog can create. I am not certain it is a good policy to implement
<p>Hello,</p> <p>I have reviewed the proposed Policy II-52 Student Use of Service Animals in Schools. It is lacking in detail. I wish to express my understanding of this policy for those whom it may assist but I also need to express the concern of animals in the school on behalf of my children.</p> <p>I have one child who is allergic to animals with fur.</p> <p>My other child is scared of all animals, in particular dogs. She would be unable to concentrate knowing there is an animal in the classroom and would likely want to leave. She would be afraid and distracted by the animal's presence.</p> <p>This policy would not be conducive to my children's learning environment. Animals, although an aide to some, would be a distraction to others.</p> <p>Please consider the needs of ALL children in the learning environment.</p>
Service Animals should be allowed in schools. Children with exceptionalities that require service animals should not be prevented from receiving a wholesome and full Catholic education.
I do not agree with the student use of service animals in schools. I believe it could pose a danger to the other students. there are many other concerns such as allergies, fear of animals, and even distractions to the other students.
Service animals should be allowed in school
I think that the use of the service animals and the program they offer to the students is a wonderful and helpful experience with the children. I know my 2 children in the elementary school dog therapy program has helped them tremendously and they look forward to the days where they get to have visits in the program.
Support this policy.
<p>As a parent of children who have severe allergies to pet dander I would like to emphasize that ALL student needs must be considered. I am hopeful that ALL students will be accommodated, including those with other health conditions.</p> <p>Pet dander is composed of tiny, even microscopic, flecks of skin shed by cats, dogs, rodents, birds and other animals with fur or feathers. These bits of skin can cause reactions in people who are specifically allergic to these triggers.</p> <p>"The proteins found in a pet's dander, skin flakes, saliva and urine can cause an allergic reaction or aggravate asthma symptoms in some people. Also, pet hair or fur can collect pollen, mold spores and other outdoor allergens.</p> <p>An allergen is a normally harmless substance that triggers the immune system to overreact in people with allergies. This response can cause allergy symptoms such as sniffing, sneezing and itchiness and watery eyes. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no truly "hypoallergenic breeds" of dogs or cats. Allergic dander in cats and dogs is not affected by length of hair or fur, nor by the amount of shedding." ~</p> <p>https://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/allergies/pet-allergy</p>
I am scared of dogs
This is what inclusion and integration is about. When we adapt the school for children with special needs we are teaching the other children to open their mind and stand for others, we are teaching them Christian principles of love and respect to others.
All students should have access to whatever tools they require to access the curriculum. If it's technology to a service animal. The students in the school will need direction in how to behave around these service animals. We also need to be mindful of students that may have issues with service dogs. They may create anxiety to some. I believe the policy is a positive one to support students in schools.
<p>I would never think of depriving a blind person of their dog but this latest initiative seems like a slippery slope I'm reluctant to support. This decision has to be thought out thoroughly and MUST require parents to jump through a lot of hoops or you will be inundated with animals. Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -allergies -who will be responsible for fecal cleanup

-some students (and teachers) have a real phobia when it comes to dogs and other animals
-what kind of restrictions? Pets for anxiety? seizures etc?
-what kind of consequences if the stipulations aren't met?

Think LONG and HARD and make sure expectations are laid out clearly.
Please let's not make it an easy process so that the serious applicants will filter through.

I think this would be a fantastic opportunity for those that require a service animal to achieve success in a school setting. It could make a world of a difference to a child with special needs.

Totally agree! Thanks

When does the "accommodating" end and who determines what child and how severe their disability is? I mean, is this the can of worms that the board wants to open? Before you know it, you will have kids with allergies to animals that need a special room to hide in when the animals are in the school. Stop accommodating for every, single disability and start teaching again. No wonder parents want their tax dollars to fairly go to a private school of their choice. So happy this upcoming year is my third child's final year in this Liberal ideology system. We are thankfully done with the system !!

In elementary schools, young students will not understand and be able to differentiate between a service animal and a regular dog, and why some students are able to bring a dog, not others. I do not believe that is equitable. The answer may be to have an influx of students getting the certification and having more animals in the school, which then poses a risk for students with severe allergies and hygiene, especially in the classes where students eat. I do not know, but would ask the question if all service animals entering the school have up to date vaccinations- including an up to date certificate.

Also, my daughter has a fear of dogs. In kindergarten that would be a significant barrier for a young student getting to school that has a fear of dogs.

I have seen first hand the benefits that service dogs provide to clients' health-physical and mental, as well as the benefits that extend to the community. I am all for certified service dogs doing what they are trained to do, and all that extra goodness that they also provide.

Good morning,

Safety comes first. How can we ensure that our kids are safe? Are service animals trained to be around 600 kids? Don't think so.

I disagree with this policy

Thanks

Fully support both programs. The use of service animals in Schools and Long term care facilities should be adopted it can make a significant impact on ones mental health and over all well being. Optional Extended French makes sense not making it mandatory to those uninterested or whose children struggling with English language or other core subjects. However giving the option to those with keen interest is great to see not only to maintain our culture but it may provide future opportunities for children that would be possible otherwise. Yes, I Fully support Use Of Service animals in schools!

It should be adopted in both schools and in Long term Facilities (some have been doing this for many years) . It has significant positive impact on certain anxiety and depression and other mental health Disorders,. It also can improve ones overall well being. Not to mention many different important life lessons can be learned from service dogs.

My kid is phobic to dogs, so not sure how to measure which mental health issue should prevail. Which one is more important? I believe my kid has the same right to enjoy school and she won't be able to attend it if animals are around.(per her condition she is not able to separate service dogs from other dogs).

Therefore, I disagree with this policy

Thanks

Safety comes first, and service animals are trained to perform specific tasks. They are not trained to be around 700 students running around, yelling at reassesses, maybe "too close" to their owner.

So, how safety for the non-owners will be guaranteed?

I'm very concerned with safety, even worst with younger kids (JK, SK, grades 1 t 4).

I'm concerned about health issues like allergies, as well. I'm sure there are a lot of kids allergic to animals fur.

How this allergy is less important than peanuts?

Allergic kids do not have a choice, is there immune system reacting, they can not do anything about it unless coming to school medicated for the ENTIRE YEAR which is not the best option considering sides effects of these type of medications.

Therefore I disagree with this policy as I understand safety would be very difficult to ensure for the non-owners of the service animal and allergies cannot be prevented.

Thanks

I support the use of trained and certified service animals in Bishop Reding for the success of the individual's needs.

A well thought out policy that captures the importance that accommodations are considered from the least intrusive lens. The student as the handler allows for compliance within budgetary responsibilities as it relates to human resources.

Agree with the use of service animals when extenuating circumstances are required.

I believe in a very few cases, this would be appropriate, but in most cases it would not be. I am now seeing "service dogs" of all sizes and types on airplane, where it appears there is no need. The human has gone to the trouble to make their dog a "service dog" so they can fly, also seeing this in stores and restaurants. Like many things in this PC society, just ridicules.

Will there be a review period to see how it's working out e.g. after 3 months do an impact survey

Will a doctor's certificate be required

How will pet waste be handled?

What if other kids allergic to service animals or have phobias?

My children are allergic to fur. Their wellbeing is now at risk.

Understanding the hard ban on peanuts due to allergies, what protocols are going to be in place to protect my children.

Absolutely animals calm the kids and bond. Special needs program is outstanding. Mans beat friend

My son has a strong Dog Allergic and must to be in a free animal area.

How is he going to be safe of allergics an Asthma?

I think this a great thing for those who need support of service animal

Very bad idea.

Absolutely disagree

You can hire more people to support and help

As some people are allergic.

Some kids still don't feel comfortable in the presence of pets.

Some kids will just play with pet & not concentrate on working hard with teachers.

I am not keen on the idea of having service animals in the school. While I can appreciate that they serve a purpose, there are many children with allergies and fear of animals. I feel that the support provided by the animal would be better offered by a teacher or TA.

Very well done- its about time they get this in schools it will help with kids with anxiety - stress- they will feel better about themselves once they see a dog
I feel more clarification is needed with regards to who will take care of the the animal, in particular at the elementary level. Students cannot be unsupervised. Also where will the animal be during recess? Will staff and student fear of animals be taken into consideration?
This would be way too distracting to the whole student body. I see it on airplanes every week. Now there are people suggesting other types of animals as well - other than dogs. What's next? Snakes and chickens?
What about the students and teachers with allergic reactions to animal hair or fur?
What about the fleas and or shedding?
What about students that have fear of all types of animals?
I support service dogs for those that need it.
Agree with the use of service animals to assist children in need
Service animals are great BUT how would it impact children with a phobia for animals? Eg some children with autism
What will you do with these service animals if their presence causes harm to another child (i.e. allergies)? Creating accessibility for one child at the expense of another is a zero sum game!
How will cleaning of school change with the introduction/integration of a service animal that sheds its fur?
What if the animal attacks a student (there is zero guarantee of this not happening); how do you stop something like this from happening, what are the insurance implications ?
What about children who are allergic to dogs and dog dander ?
I understand the need but want to make sure students who have allegeries are supported too.
I assume that there will be some agreement on a list of animals that qualify as service animals in this setting. 'Exotic' animals may comfort the handler but may alarm everyone else. The school community must be clearly informed that these animals are to be treated as 'working animals', there singularly for the benefit of the handler in much the same way as guide dogs are to the blind. The constant approach of students to see and touch the animals may be alarming to both the animals and the handler students. Rules of approach must be crafted. There should be included in the policy an 'animal rights' provision that assures the safety and welfare of the animals allowed into the school. The reasons for the service animal policy, and its basic framework, should be introduced to the high school community months before actual implementation. And morning reminders of its phasing-in should be frequent as the date approaches. This should not be sprung upon everyone without lots of time for student/staff questions. The surprise of animals in the hall should be diffused long before the service animals appear. Thanks for allowing me the input.
I find that animals in school help children to cope with stress. I did not get a dog until five years ago and i will not part with him. My daughter is leaving for University and wants to take him with her. I am also training my dog to become a therapy dog so that I will be able to take him to schools and senior homes.
I think students that require the service animals should be approved!!
I think that having animals work with children can be beneficial to some. I do not feel that all children should have to participate and do not approve of having these animals brought into a class given allergies and animal fears that children may have. Children that are identified as receiving some sort of benefit from interacting with animals should do so outside of the classroom environment. Children should be brought to therapy...not therapy brought to children. The more that is done within the school the more parents will continue to expect the school to do. Schools should focus on education and providing better..safer and more inclusive learning environments as well as teaching resiliency rather than constantly trying to treat this epidemic of anxiety.

I don't think that the service animals should be in the class room I think this be a distraction. If allowed the service animal should be in a designated room just for those kids.

I believe having animals in school will be a distraction for both teachers, students and parents. There's still some of us that are afraid of some animals. Regulating the type of animal will pose another big challenge. Various people have various types of animals for pet. How does the school plan to house and take care of these animals during school? What about case of some animals escaping and frightening students? Then these cases of allergies etc. I believe this is a huge endeavor and should be thought through very carefully if at all. But my opinion let's keep the pets at home and do the schooling.

I love the idea and am a huge animal lover but I would find it too distracting

Fabulous idea. My son said it was very helpful to calm his nerves before exams.

I am a parent and a teacher with HCDSB and my only concern is with children who have severe allergies to animals. How will the schools ensure that students with these allergies are protected from exposure to these animals. My son is in SK and is severely allergic to dogs and cats. How will this be handled at a school level to protect students like him? Thank you.

I do not agree with services animals in schools/classrooms and very opposed to it.

Reasons are listed:

- It dismisses the children with allergies and ones who may have a fear of animals.
- Teachers have the added responsibility insuring these animals are not tripped over, kicked or items/objects being dropped/spilled on them.
- If the child is not old enough to handle the responsibility of the animal, it should not be allowed in the school or in a classroom without a more mature handler
- They are distraction to other class mates.
- More interruptions with the needs of eating/drinking water/washroom breaks .
- It requires additional training on the staff so they know how to handle service animals in a school.
- More cleaning and maintenance of a school should animals be allowed
- Lastly, it is an animal with animal instincts - always an increased risk of noise, biting or scratching

Who will take care of these animals ... feeding... walks, popping... are the teachers expecting to do this to. Barking?? Also people are afraid of dogs both adults and children. Where are the service dogs coming from. How do we identify that the dog is actually a service dog and not a pet. Some people are also allergic to dogs. The teachers are struggling as it is never mind adding dogs into the mix. Maybe open a school specifically for children that require this accommodation and stop imposing accommodations on everyone else. Let's get the basics working first and focus on the numerous issues at schools and for our youth this will just compound the bullying problems that already exist in schools. School should be the safe spaces. Also who will groom these dogs, what are the expectations of the owner... if the dog hurts someone ... who do we sue?

Animals at school may help outside of schools. What about allergies of others, potential bites, and frightening of those who fear animals ? Do'tfind it a good idea inside schools.

My only concern would be other students having allergies to dogs

I think that students in need having service dogs is school is a good idea. and an early french immersion and extended french is a good idea.

Yes, service dogs should be allowed.

Service dogs should absolutely be allowed in school classrooms.

My son in grade 5 did a speech on service animals and the important role and impact these animals provide for people with different disabilities.

Dogs have a way in connecting with people and providing comfort, reducing stress and anxiety and increasing socialization skills. There are so many studies on this.

I am in support of this 100%.

Any child that has a medically approved need for a service animal must be supported by the board and allowed to bring the service animal everywhere, this includes school bus or any school approved transportation, classrooms and all other school room including outdoor facilities
I agree to both new policies. I absolutely want my daughter to be introduced to French classes. Yes for policy #II-51 and #II-52. Thanks
Service dogs should be allowed in schools for students who have needs. A placement meeting should be arranged between the students' family, agency who provides the service dog and the school to set up procedures when the service dog is at school.
Is there something put in place for those who have allergies and for those who have fear of pets?? Specifically dogs for both questions.
I am fully in agreement with allowing trained service animals in our schools to assist with the needs and learning of a child identified with special needs. As a teacher with a Special Education Specialist who has worked as an I-SERT for our school board, I have had the opportunity to learn about and observe how wonderful both the trained service animal and the child can do at school. Thank you for understanding how trained service animals can help our children become more inclusive in our schools and be an integral part of our Board Mission Statement.
What do you do if a student has severe allergies like I do? Do they have to go to a different school?
Christ calls us to love lavishly on others as He has loved us. By our love for one another the world will know Him and know that we are His disciples. Service animals in schools demonstrate love and compassion, pillars of the Christian faith.
I think the policy cannot prioritize the needs of one student over another, a balance must be met over the needs the therapy dog meets and if they can be met through other means and also the other students and staff needs. Including allergies, fears, level of comfort and distraction. Also how is it measured to determine the child is the sole dog handler and not impact staff or other students?
I work with Special needs children and I feel it is very important for a person to be with their service dog, just like a person needs their wheelchair. As long as people are aware that a service dog is in the school.
Having service animals at the schools is a great idea and I'm so happy my son is benefiting from the program. He talks about his experience with the dogs and it's always positive, and at times makes him feel special. He really enjoys his time with the therapy dogs, it's a positive experience at school, when normal school is seen in a negative light.
Access to all means to help students to achieve their goals are necessary. I agree with the the Policy for use of service animals in schools for students in need.
While I appreciate that Service animals help disabled people and may make them more comfortable, there are many people who have allergies to animals, and allowing them into the school with make those people very uncomfortable. also some people have a fear of dogs. service dogs are generally big non hypoallergenic animals as well.
The board needs to take into account the medical issues for the many students who have allergies to animals as its not fair to them to have to suffer with itchy eyes, itchy skin or respiratory issues
I think this is an excellent idea. My daughter had therapy dogs when she was at sick kids and it was the highlight of each week. For students who require or would benefit from a service dog, I see it only as a positive for making their school experience a successful one. It would be important to teach the students how to behave around service dogs as they are now used to therapy dogs and the approach is very different.
I think this a great idea to have service animals to help relief special needs students with medical related needs, stress, anxiety, nervousness, learning disabilities, etc. It would benefit a lot.
Great motion! Many kids are benefiting from their animal companions and should be allowed to be with them while away from home and safe environment.
I do not agree to student use of service animals in schools.

I feel the use of service dogs is a great way to help students with special needs. It can also work well for students with high anxiety and mental health issues. This is a great policy!

What if my child is allergic to the service animal how do you guys handle in that

I am pleased with the policy and that the Board is moving forward with the introduction of service animals for students in need. I just wanted to take this opportunity to make sure that the staff and students who will be around the service animal will also be trained properly. It is absolutely crucial that staff and students do not interfere with the relationship between the animal and its handler for this to be successful. If everyone is clear about how they can and cannot interact with the animal when it is working and in the school, this will be a benefit to all.

I love this idea! As a Catholic Teacher I believe that we should accommodate the needs of our students and I do recommend that classmates be properly trained on how to handle the service animal.

My children are terrified of dogs and other furry friends, seeing animals in schools would then make them terrified, making them anxious about going to school. Then what will we do for my children? Will the animals be segregated or will my children? This is an unfortunate situation that Doug Ford put us in.

Extended French Program:

You need to have the capacity to place French Immersion teachers in these french programs or else it will not be successful! My daughter had a core french teacher for a full year to my dismay(no Immersion teacher available!) then a maternity leave teacher leaving a gap of 2 months-hence her french is by far inadequate!

Service Animals:

I am torn with this as my child is allergic to dog hair and severely allergic to cat hair.

Considering a dog in school to assist with learning is VALUABLE however like peanut allergies how will you control the environment?

Schools need to treat Service Animals as a reasonable accommodation to a disability. They can no longer assume that having a human aide as part of an IEP renders a Service Animal superfluous. Service Animals are working animals with duties. They are not pets. Moreover, Service Animals have very specialized training to perform duties. With these facts in mind it would be my strong recommendation that Policy No. II-52 be modified in some key areas. # 1. Under the heading PURPOSE- remove the words "at times" as this is unnecessary and completely undermines the purpose. # 2. Under PRINCIPLES- the last bullet which discusses requests for the use of a Service Animal and subsequent approval by the school/board staff if determined the best accommodation completely negates family and other outside professional supports that need to be included in collaborative decision making. It is seriously troubling that any school board official would paternalistically claim to know the appropriate accommodation without consulting and consideration from the student, parents/caregivers and other professionals. Policy II-52 needs to be implemented in a manner that is inclusive, otherwise schools are leaving students vulnerable and parents facing challenges to support their children. Every family in this province should feel supported when it comes to ensuring their child has access to meaningful education including inclusive accommodations.