



BOARD POLICY

# 718 Service Animals in Schools

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## **Purpose**

The Board adopts this policy to ensure that individuals with disabilities are permitted to participate in and benefit from district programs, activities and services, and to ensure that the district does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

## **Definition**

**Service animal** - any dog individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.[\[1\]](#)

Miniature horses may be utilized as **service animals** if:[\[2\]](#)

1. The miniature horse is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.
2. The facility can accommodate the type, size and weight of the miniature horse.
3. The presence of the miniature horse does not compromise the safe operation of the facility.

The work or tasks performed by a **service animal** shall be directly related to the individual's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing nonviolent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing

physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.[\[1\]](#)

The provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship does not constitute work or tasks for the purpose of this definition.[\[1\]](#)

### **Authority**

The Board shall permit individuals with disabilities to use service animals in district buildings; on district property; and on vehicles that are owned, leased or controlled by the school district, in accordance with this policy and applicable state and federal laws and regulations.  
[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)[\[6\]](#)

### **Guidelines**

#### Admission of Service Animals to Schools

A student or an employee with a disability may submit a request to bring a service animal to school for educational or employment purposes. A student or employee seeking to bring a service animal to school must comply with the requirements as set forth in this policy and any administrative regulations governing this issue.

Parents/Guardians of students with disabilities may submit a request to the building principal for their student to bring a service animal to school. The building principal shall forward the request to the appropriate Section 504 or IEP team. The team shall gather the necessary information and evaluate the request to bring a service animal to school. **The student's IEP or Section 504 Service Agreement shall be updated to reflect the use of the service animal.** Any service animal accompanying a student with a disability to school or school activities shall be handled and cared for in a manner detailed in the student's IEP or Section 504 Service Agreement. **The team shall develop appropriate plans for integrating the service animal into the educational environment.** [\[7\]](#) [\[8\]](#)

Before **approving a request for** a service animal, the district **may only ask:** [\[6\]](#)

1. **If the service animal is required due to a disability.**[\[2\]](#)
2. **What work or tasks** the service animal is trained to perform.[\[2\]](#)

**The district may not:**

1. **Request documentation of the need for a service animal.**
2. **Request documentation regarding training of the service animal.**
3. **Request a demonstration of the animal's abilities.**
4. **Inquire about the nature of the individual's disability.**

#### **Reasonable Modification Considerations for Miniature Horses**

**If a miniature horse qualifies as a service animal by having been trained to do work or perform tasks for a student with a disability, the school must make reasonable modifications in policies, practices or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse.**[\[2\]](#)

**The district shall consider the following factors to determine whether modifications to policies, practices or procedures are reasonable:**[\[2\]](#)

1. **The type, size and weight of the miniature horse and whether the facility can accommodate those features;**
2. **Whether the handler has sufficient control of the miniature horse;**
3. **Whether the miniature horse is housebroken; and**
4. **Whether the miniature horse's presence in a specific facility compromises legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operations.**

#### **Admission of Service Animals to Public Events**

Individuals with disabilities may be accompanied by their service animals while on district property for events that are open to the general public. This right of access does not extend to the schools generally or to other activities that are not open to the general public.[2][3][9]

School administrators may inquire of the owner or handler of **a service** animal whether the animal is required because of a disability and the specific **work or** tasks that the animal has been trained to perform, but shall not ask questions about an individual's disability.[2]

### **Surcharges**

**The district shall not ask or require an individual with a disability to pay a surcharge, even if individuals accompanied by pets are required to pay fees, or to comply with other requirements generally not applicable to individuals without pets. If the district normally charges individuals for the damage they cause, an individual with a disability may be charged for damage caused by their service animal.**[2]

The district shall not require an owner or handler of a service animal to pay an extra charge for the animal to attend events for which a fee is charged, **such as at a football game or school play.**[2]

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and disseminate administrative regulations to implement Board policy and accommodate individuals with disabilities requesting use of a service animal in district buildings and on district property and vehicles.

The designated administrator shall ensure that all individuals involved in a situation where a service animal will regularly accompany an individual in district buildings or on district property or vehicles are informed of the Board policy and administrative regulations governing this issue. Involved individuals can include administrators, appropriate employees, **the** student and **their** parent/guardian.

The owner or handler of a service animal shall be solely responsible for:

1. Supervision and care of the animal, including any feeding, exercising, clean up and stain removal.[\[2\]](#)
2. Control of the animal at all times through the use of a harness, leash, tether or by other effective means.
3. Damages to district buildings, property and vehicles caused by the animal.
4. Injuries to students, employees, volunteers and visitors caused by the animal.

The building principal shall receive and forward to the

☒ (X ) Director of Exceptional Children

☐ ( ) Supervisor of Special Education

☐ ( ) Section 504 Team

☐ ( ) Superintendent

each completed request by an individual with a disability to be accompanied by a service animal. The \_\_\_\_\_ shall respond to the request.

District administrators may exclude a service animal from district buildings, property and vehicles under the following circumstances:

1. Presence of the animal poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others.
2. Owner or handler is unable to control the animal.
3. Animal is not housebroken.
4. Presence of the animal would require a fundamental alteration to the program.

Any individual with a service animal who is aggrieved by a decision to exclude, limit or remove a service animal may appeal that decision in accordance with applicable Board policy. The appeal must be in writing and provide detailed information regarding the basis of the appeal. [\[7\]](#) [\[10\]](#) [\[11\]](#)

**PSBA Revision 4/25 © 2025 PSBA**

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**Legal Footnotes**

|                                                                                                      |                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>[1]</b> 28 CFR 35.104<br>LEGAL REFERENCE                                                          | <b>[2]</b> 28 CFR 35.136<br>LEGAL REFERENCE                                          |
| <b>[3]</b> 43 P.S. 953<br>LEGAL REFERENCE                                                            | <b>[4]</b> 29 U.S.C. 794<br>LEGAL REFERENCE                                          |
| <b>[5]</b> 42 U.S.C. 12101<br>LEGAL REFERENCE                                                        | <b>[6]</b> 28 CFR 35.130<br>LEGAL REFERENCE                                          |
| <b>[7]</b> Pol. 103.1 — Nondiscrimination - Qualified Students With Disabilities<br>POLICY REFERENCE | <b>[8]</b> Pol. 113 — Special Education<br>POLICY REFERENCE                          |
| <b>[9]</b> Pol. 904 — Public Attendance at School Events<br>POLICY REFERENCE                         | <b>[10]</b> Pol. 104 — Discrimination/Harassment Affecting Staff<br>POLICY REFERENCE |
| <b>[11]</b> Pol. 906 — Public Complaint Procedures<br>POLICY REFERENCE                               |                                                                                      |

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**Legal References**

No additional references listed.