



Dear Oakley Park Families,

During the 2022-2023 school year, Oakley Park Elementary will welcome Oakley, our therapy dog to school! We are so grateful to the generosity of our PTA and the fundraising efforts of our school community as our PTA was able to purchase Oakley last October.

Oakley is a purebred black labrador retriever, bred specifically to be a therapy dog in schools. Research has shown that therapy dogs within a school setting not only enhance skills such as reading, but also improve emotional development. Just the presence of a therapy dog can decrease anxiety and enable students to work through issues such as anger management and other social difficulties. Introducing a non-threatening therapy dog into our school will be a key tool for forming social interactions for many of our students. Reading skills are often associated with improved academic performance and positive attitudes about school in children. Research has found that animal-assisted intervention in the form of reading aloud to a dog in a classroom setting contributes to improved skills and attitudes. There are so many benefits for a school to have its own therapy dog! We have been fortunate to witness these benefits at Mary Helen Guest Elementary, Glengarry Elementary, Meadowbrook Elementary and Walled Lake Western High School. Each of these schools have very successful therapy dog programs.

For any new Oakley Park families, please make us aware if your child has a fear of or allergy to dogs by completing the form below. We will contact you so that we can collaborate and develop a proactive plan to meet your child's needs.

[Oakley Park Therapy Dog Survey](#)

We are so excited for this incredible opportunity for our school community!

Sincerely,  
Kristin Froning, Principal