

October 19, 2018

Dear Tahanto Families,

This school year, the Berlin-Boylston Regional School Committee approved a Therapy Dog Policy that allows for Tahanto to utilize a therapy dog during school hours. I am pleased to welcome Hannah, a 4-year-old non-shedding Golden Doodle as Tahanto's therapy dog. Dr. Trainor, Tahanto's School Psychologist and Hannah's handler, adopted Hannah from a rescue and together they have passed the Canine Good Citizen and Pet Partners Therapy Animal Team evaluations. They currently volunteer several times a month visiting patients in a local hospital, and have previously volunteered at Special Olympics events and in a hospice home.

Hannah is a therapy dog, not a service or emotional support animal. Research supports numerous physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and environmental benefits to interactions with therapy dogs in school settings, including improvements in reading, attendance, social skills, empathy, self-esteem, problem-solving skills, overall school environment, and reduction in reported anxiety symptoms.

Hannah will be at Tahanto working with Dr. Trainor on an as needed basis, with increased frequency around stressful times of the year, such as holidays, before vacations, mid-term and final exams, as well as during MCAS and AP testing.

During visits, Hannah will wear appropriate identification stating she is a therapy dog. Understanding that some staff and students may have an aversion or allergy to the therapy dog, Dr. Trainor will remove Hannah to a separate area when there is a known aversion or allergy present.

Attached is a release form that needs to be filled out and returned to the counseling office by Monday, October 29th if you would like your child to be able to interact with Hannah. If you have more than one child at Tahanto, you may put all children's names on one form. No students will be permitted to interact with Hannah if a parent signed release form has not been received.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the use of a therapy dog at Tahanto, please feel free to contact Dr. Kim Trainor via email at ktrainor@bbrsd.org .

Thank you,

Diane Tucceri
Principal



Therapy dog Hannah during Refresh Day with Sophia Morena and Matt St. Denis