July 2022 Policy - Second Reading Packet								
Policy Number	**Policy Title**	**Explanation**	**Adopted BOCES Update**	**Revised by SH**	**Keep Current Policy**	**Deleted**	**Date of Vote**	**Not voted upon**
3230	Use of Assistance Animals	**BOCES sample policy** **Policy Committee recommends adopting this policy.**						
3260	Use of Service Animals	**Current Policy regarding service animals.** **Policy Committee recommends deleting this policy as it is embedded in the new more comprehensive policy 3230.**						
3430	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in the District	**Suggested revision(s):** Customization required. New policy titled "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the District." It was developed in response to the approval of a policy statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at the May 2021 NYS Board of Regents meeting. Although a DEI policy is not required by law or regulation, the NYS Board of Regents expects that all districts will develop and implement policies and practices that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion and that they will implement such policies and practices with "fidelity and urgency." The NYS Board of Regents affirms that effective DEI policies must consider the entirety of the schooling process and expects districts to include the following elements in their policies: Governance (including the establishment of a district DEI Committee that is representative of all stakeholders, including students); Teaching and Learning; Family and Community Engagement; Workforce Diversity; Diverse Schools and Learning Opportunities; and Student Supports, Discipline, and Wellness. **Reviewed by DEI Committee. Policy Committee recommends adopting this policy with minor customization (highlighted).**						

Sweet Home Central School District
Policy Committee Meeting
June 8, 2022

Minutes
Present: Mike Ginestre, JoAnn Balazs, Don Feldmann, Scott Johnson, Brian Laible, & Sherry McNamara.

1. Reviewed the following policies for June first reading:

3230	Use of Assistance Animals	**BOCES sample policy –** Review for possible addition to our policy manual. **Policy Committee recommends adopting this policy.**
3260	Use of Service Animals	**Current Policy:** Review along with 3230 to ensure there is no conflict between the two policies. **Policy Committee recommends deleting this policy as it is embedded in new policy 3230.**
3430	Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in the District	**Suggested revision(s):** Customization required. New policy titled "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the District." It was developed in response to the approval of a policy statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at the May 2021 NYS Board of Regents meeting. Although a DEI policy is not required by law or regulation, the NYS Board of Regents expects that all districts will develop and implement policies and practices that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion and that they will implement such policies and practices with "fidelity and urgency." The NYS Board of Regents affirms that effective DEI policies must consider the entirety of the schooling process and expects districts to include the following elements in their policies: Governance (including the establishment of a district DEI Committee that is representative of all stakeholders, including students); Teaching and Learning; Family and Community Engagement; Workforce Diversity; Diverse Schools and Learning Opportunities; and Student Supports, Discipline, and Wellness. **Reviewed by DEI Committee. Policy Committee recommends adopting this policy.**

SUBJECT: USE OF ASSISTANCE ANIMALS

The District recognizes the importance of service animals and affirms its commitment to allowing the use of these animals by individuals with disabilities on school grounds to facilitate their full participation in and equal access to District services, programs, and activities. Service animals are distinguished from emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals. The District will comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations related to service animals.

Additionally, the District permits the use of therapy dogs on school grounds subject to the conditions of this policy. The use of therapy dogs can have many benefits including reduced anxiety and increased mental stimulation, as well as decreased depression, feelings of isolation, and boredom.

Service Animals

A service animal is defined as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals.

The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition. Psychiatric service animals that have been trained to take a specific action to help avoid an anxiety attack or to reduce its effects, however, may qualify as a service animal.

Where reasonable, the Board also allows the use of miniature horses on school grounds by individuals with disabilities. This use will only be permitted where a miniature horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks to benefit an individual with a disability. The use of miniature horses by individuals with disabilities is subject to the considerations and restrictions permitted by federal and/or state law.

The Superintendent or designee may create procedures, regulations, and/or building-specific rules regarding the use of service animals and miniature horses on school grounds by individuals with disabilities.

Therapy Dogs

For purposes of this policy, a therapy dog is defined as a dog that has been trained, evaluated, and certified to work with a handler to provide affection and comfort to individuals in a variety of settings including schools. A handler is defined as an individual that has been trained, evaluated, and certified to work with a particular therapy dog. Therapy dogs are not covered by the same laws that protect service animals.

(Continued)

SUBJECT: USE OF ASSISTANCE ANIMALS (Cont'd.)

Although there is no formal identification or certification for therapy dogs, the District requires that any therapy dog and accompanying handler permitted on school grounds to be certified by an American Kennel Club (AKC) recognized therapy dog organization such as Therapy Dogs International. Further, the therapy dog must not pose a health and safety risk to any individual on school grounds. In order to use a therapy dog in the District, a written request must be submitted to the Superintendent or designee. The request must include the following:

a) General information about the proposed use of the therapy dog including when and where;

b) Personal information about the therapy dog and handler including name, address, and phone;

c) Copies of the therapy dog's:

1. Current licensure from the local licensing authority;

2. Vaccination and immunization records from a licensed veterinarian;

d) Copy of a certification from an AKC recognized therapy dog organization;

e) Copy of an insurance policy that provides liability coverage for the work of the therapy dog and handler while on school grounds and names the District as an additional insured.

f) Certification from the handler that, while on school grounds, the therapy dog, will:

1. Be clean, well-groomed, and free of parasites, illness, or injury;

2. Remain under the handler's control through the use of a leash or other tether unless the use of a leash or other tether would interfere with the therapy dog's service;

3. Be supervised and accompanied by the handler;

4. Wear a therapy dog ID and/or a bandana;

5. Not disrupt the educational process by excessive barking or any other behavior;

6. Only go to locations that have been authorized by District administrators;

7. Be fed, exercised, and cleaned-up after by the handler.

Additionally, handlers who are not employed by the District must comply with all requirements for volunteers in the District. Volunteers will work under the supervision of appropriate staff and are expected to comply with all District rules and regulations.

(Continued)

SUBJECT: USE OF ASSISTANCE ANIMALS (Cont'd.)

A new request must be submitted for each proposed use of a therapy dog. There must be one request for each dog. In no case will a request for the use of a therapy dog be valid for more than one school year.

The District reserves the right to deny a request for the use of a therapy dog for any reason. Once a request has been granted, the District reserves the right to exclude a therapy dog from school grounds for any reason including, but not limited to, the therapy dog:

a) Presenting a direct and immediate threat to others;

b) Not being under the handler's control;

c) Interfering with the educational process;

d) Going into a location in the District that has not been authorized by District administrators.

If any individual suffers an allergic reaction while in the presence of a therapy dog, the District will require the handler to move the therapy dog to a different location designated by a District administrator.

The handler of a therapy dog is solely responsible and liable for any damage to school property or any injury caused by the therapy dog. Further, the District bears no financial responsibility for the required training, care, or feeding for the therapy dog.

The Superintendent or designee will ensure that parents are notified prior to any therapy dog being permitted on school grounds.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 USC § 12101 et seq.
28 CFR §§ 35.104 and 35.136
Civil Rights Law §§ 47, 47-a, and 47-b
Executive Law § 296

NOTE: Refer also to Policy #3150 -- School Volunteers

Adoption Date

SUBJECT: USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS

The Board of Education allows the use of service animals on school grounds by individuals with disabilities, subject to restrictions permitted by federal and/or state law, and procedures established by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

For the purpose of this policy, a service animal is defined as any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, will not be considered service animals.

The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or tasks for the purposes of this definition. Psychiatric service animals that have been trained to take a specific action to help avoid an anxiety attack or to reduce its effects, however, may qualify as a service animal.

Where reasonable, the Board of Education also allows the use of miniature horses on school grounds by individuals with disabilities. Such use will only be permitted where a miniature horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks to benefit an individual with a disability. The use of miniature horses by individuals with disabilities will be subject to the considerations and restrictions permitted by federal and/or state law.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee may create regulations and/or building-specific rules regarding the use of service animals and miniature horses on school grounds by individuals with disabilities.

28 CFR Sections 35.104, 35.136, 35.139

Adopted: 3/15/16
Revised: 8/22/17

SUBJECT: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE DISTRICT

Overview

Research shows that all students benefit when schools implement strong diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies and practices. These benefits include academic, cognitive, civic, social-emotional, and economic. This is true regardless of a school's geographic location or the demographic composition of its students and staff.

This policy provides a framework as to how the District will foster DEI in its schools. This policy considers the entirety of the educational process by addressing the following essential elements: governance; teaching and learning; family and community engagement; workforce diversity; diverse schools and learning opportunities; and student supports, discipline, and wellness. It is just one component of the District's overall commitment to maintaining a diverse, equitable, and inclusive educational and work environment.

The District may develop a DEI plan to manage and coordinate the execution of this policy.

Inquiries about this policy may be directed to the District's DEI Coordinator.

Defining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

For purposes of this policy:

a) "Diversity" includes, but is not limited to: race; color; ethnicity; nationality; religion; socioeconomic status; veteran status; education; marital status; language; age; gender; gender expression; gender identity; sexual orientation; mental or physical ability; genetic information; and learning style.

b) "Equity" includes, but is not limited to, seeking the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of all groups.

c) "Inclusion" includes, but is not limited to, authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power and ensures equal access to opportunities and resources.

These descriptions are not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, they are meant to be foundational and provide clarity to the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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SUBJECT: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE DISTRICT (Cont'd.)

Governance

DEI Committee

The District has established a DEI Committee that meets periodically throughout the year. The purpose of the DEI Committee is to assist the District in creating and implementing plans that advance the District's commitment to maintaining a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment where all individuals feel valued and respected. As needed, the DEI Committee will also review District policies, practices, and programs and provide suggestions as to how they could potentially be modified to better promote DEI.

The District will actively seek members for the DEI Committee through the use of email, newsletters, the District's website, the District's social media page(s), and/or advertisements.

The DEI Committee will be representative of all stakeholders, and may include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to, representatives from the following groups:

a) Students;

b) Parents and persons in parental relation;

c) District/building administrators;

d) Teachers;

e) Guidance staff;

f) Other District staff;

g) The Board; and

h) Community members.

*DEI Coordinator

The Superintendent has designated the following District employee to serve as its DEI Coordinator:

JoAnn Balazs, Assistant Superintendent for Talent & Equity, jbalazs@sweethomeschools.org, 1901 Sweet Home Rd. Amherst, NY 14228, (716) 250-1417

The DEI Coordinator will be a member of the DEI Committee and convene and coordinate the activities and plans of the DEI Committee.

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SUBJECT: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE DISTRICT (Cont'd.)

Teaching and Learning

The District will strive to advance inclusive and culturally responsive teaching and learning through, but not limited to, the following means: curricula in all content areas; books and instructional materials; pedagogical practices and professional development; classroom grouping policies and practices; student support systems for all developmental pathways; full and equitable opportunities to learn for all students; and multiple assessment measures. As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

a) Implement a Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) Education Framework that embeds the ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating student-centered learning environments that:

   1. Affirm cultural identities;

   2. Foster positive academic outcomes;

   3. Develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference;

   4. Elevate historically marginalized voices;

   5. Empower students as agents of social change; and

   6. Contribute to individual student engagement, learning, growth, and achievement through the cultivation of critical thinking.

b) Develop curricula that incorporates diverse perspectives, materials, and texts so that students are taught topics not just from one single perspective, but from multiple perspectives.

c) Offer coherent opportunities for students to actively participate in experiences that prepare them for a lifetime of civic engagement and contributions to social justice, including, for example, completing projects that enable them to apply the learning they have acquired within and across subject areas.

d) Encourage academic discussions about racism and bigotry.

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SUBJECT: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE DISTRICT (Cont'd.)

Family and Community Engagement

The District will strive to foster family and community engagement practices that are based on mutual trust, confidence, and respect. As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

a) Encourage participation from all stakeholders in community building conversations.

b) Reduce language barriers through various means, including, but not limited to, providing translated communications when appropriate.

c) Leverage partners such as the county government and local community organizations in developing DEI programs and activities for the District.

Workforce Diversity

The District will strive to create a workforce that is not only diverse and inclusive, but one that recognizes and values the differences among people. As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

a) Recruit and retain a diverse workforce in all areas and at all levels, thereby reducing stereotypes and preparing students for an increasingly global society.

b) Provide staff with opportunities for professional development on cultural proficiency.

Diverse Schools and Learning Opportunities

The District will strive to promote diverse, equitable, and inclusive classrooms in which students have equal access and opportunities to learn and realize their full potential. As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

a) Take creative steps to enhance the level of socioeconomic and racial diversity within District schools.

b) Eliminate the use of terms and phrases within District schools that perpetuate negative stereotypes and minimize student opportunities.

c) Create coursework, programs, and activities that are accessible to all students, regardless of their disability status, native language, income level, or any other basis.

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SUBJECT: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN THE DISTRICT (Cont'd.)

Student Supports, Discipline, and Wellness

The District will strive to focus on the well-being of the "whole child." As part of this effort, the District will seek to:

a) Employ programs and practices that enhance all students' self-identity, self-confidence, and self-esteem.

b) Maintain non-discriminatory discipline policies and practices.

c) Consider and address the full range of student developmental pathways.

Training

To foster DEI in its schools, the District will provide DEI training to staff and students, as appropriate. This training may be delivered in various forms including, but not limited to: workshops; instructor-led classes; webinars; videos; workbooks; pamphlets; and/or emailed information. Although specific objectives will vary from training to training, in general, trainings will be designed to:

a) Increase awareness of the content of this policy and/or various DEI issues; and

b) Promote a welcoming and inclusive environment for all District community members.

Special trainings may be provided to members of the DEI Committee.

Notification

The District will share information about this policy via the District website and/or District-wide communications, as appropriate.

NOTE: Refer also to Policy #8241 -- Patriotism, Citizenship, and Human Rights Education

Adopted: