



Superintendent Report

Sweet Home Central School District

Michael V. Ginestre
July 5, 2022



We Are Sweet Home

Tonight's Presentations

- Recognize Roman Haen, Student Ex-officio
- Kristina Pinkowski, Therapy Dog Program
- Federal Funding Presentation
- Superintendent Report



Sweet Home Central School District

"EVERY STUDENT, ONE COMMUNITY, READY FOR THE FUTURE."



We Are Sweet Home

Therapy Dog/Service Animal Policy Update

- Looking to update policy on service animals to include the implementation of a Therapy Dog Program in the District.
- Vetted by policy committee on June 8.
- Therapy dogs are highly trained and are designed to help ease anxiety and increase focus in the classroom.
- Kristina Pinkowski is here tonight to present to the Board on the program.





Sweet Home Central School District

Therapy Dog Program

Please click link above
to therapy dog
handbook



Introduction

Therapy dogs have a significant impact on:

- the enhancement of a child's psychological development
- can improve social skills, increase self-esteem among other benefits
- can teach responsibility, compassion and respect for other living things.
- can calm fears, relieve anxiety, relieve stress and teach necessary skills





- Can make a measurable difference in terms of gaining various skills such as reading enhancement
- Can contribute to emotional and relational development
- Can decrease anxiety
- Can enable students to work through issues such as anger management, bullying tendencies and other psycho/social problems
- Can serve as a catalyst for forming adaptive and satisfactory social interactions
- Can help with guided activities and group discussions to help teach students learn how to handle interpersonal conflicts and to develop constructive responses.



When a child is able to regulate his/her emotional and relational skills, they are ready to learn; thus they have the maximum ability to benefit from classroom instruction.



Therapy dog programs in the Sweet Home Central School District will be designed to support instructional goals



Description of Program

Therapy dogs in schools is a specific, research-based (academic and mental health) intervention program that is designed to achieve established goals.

The therapy dog intervention is intentionally incorporated in health, education and human service for the purpose of therapeutic gains and improved health and wellness.

The therapy dog is certified and trained, working under the direction of a certified, and registered professional, as part of a larger intervention program.



Program Principles

- Research-based
- Purposeful, based on goals
- Requires district approval and adherence to the Sweet Home Central School board policy and implementation guidelines
- Part of the multi-tiered system of mental health and academic support
- An experiential intervention provided by a professional who is certified as a Therapy Dog handler, working under his/her direct scope of practice
- Provided in systematic, designated areas with progress monitoring and data collection to determine efficacy and efficiency



How Therapy Dog Programs can be Implemented in Schools

- During individual counseling sessions (scheduled)
- During small group counseling sessions (scheduled)
- During small class instruction (planned and scheduled)
- During large class instruction (as planned and scheduled)
- During large class sessions (planned and scheduled)
- In the hallways and other common areas during designated times

At all times when a therapy dog is in the school building, the dog's presence will always be under the strict supervision of his/her Owner/Handler and will work exclusively toward the goals and objectives established.

Progress toward the goals of the program will be regularly evaluated and adjustments may be made to respond to the available data.

The Value of a Therapy Dog Visit

- Animals have long been recognized as a positive addition to the healing process (both physical and mental).
- In facilities, visits from Therapy Dogs have shown an increased happiness, calmness, and overall improved emotional well-being.
- Studies have shown a decrease in blood pressure and stress levels during Therapy Dog visits.
- Therapy Dogs provide a break from the daily routine of school and loneliness for students and staff.



Purpose

- Increase a positive culture and climate within the educational setting.
- Increase the social-emotional well being of the students and staff.
- Increase the sense of belonging for students that could lead to better attendance outcomes.
- Support for student academic achievement.



Goals & Objectives of Program

1. Improve culture and general mood of the school

Therapy dogs provide many healing effects including:

- Reduced stress and anxiety/anxiousness
- Decreased feelings of depression, loneliness and feelings of isolation
- Decrease in aggressive behaviors
- Increase in socialization resulting in a sense of happiness and well-being
- Increase in mental stimulation
- Increase emotional support during crisis situations
- Decrease of blood pressure
- Release of strain and tension
- Can draw out a person from loneliness and depression.



Goals & Objectives of Program

2. Make a connection with at-risk students to improve behavior and attendance

- The emotional well-being of students is a large factor in their success.
- The presence of a therapy dog can give students a sense of happiness that allows them to perform better academically.
- Dogs have been incorporated into schools in order to allow children to discuss issues with a truly impartial listener.
- There are many children who struggle to open up to a mental health provider or teacher about issues that they are facing. Interaction with animals can relieve their anxiety and improve their mood.

The therapy dog will give our mental health staff the opportunities to talk with children that otherwise wouldn't share how they feel about a specific situation. Children may find comfort in talking with the dog, and in turn will be willing to share with a trusted adult.

Many children who experience emotional troubles often lack trust, and using the intervention of a dog may help the child to develop trust. Interacting with animals helps to decrease anxiety, manipulative /abusive behaviors, depression, increase self-esteem, self-worth, expression of feelings and ability to trust. (Chandler, 2001)



Goals & Objectives of Program

3. *Improve attitudes with learning*

- Reading to dogs can eliminate the fear of judgment for many children.
- Many studies have shown that students are able to improve perceptions of learning because of the increased motivation and interest they have in reading with a dog.
- A study of the All Ears Program conducted at the Veterinary School at the University of California-Davis showed that school children who read aloud with a handler/dog team improved their reading skills by 12 percent compared to children who read with only an adult. (Paddock, 2010)



Reading Programs with Therapy Dogs

- Provides a relaxed and “dog-friendly” atmosphere, which allows students to practice the skill of reading.
- Many of the children who have difficulties reading as a result have developed self-esteem issues. They are often self-conscious when reading aloud in front of other classmates (Therapy Dog International, 2022).
- By sitting down next to a dog and reading to the dog, all threats of being judged are put aside.
- The child relaxes, pats the attentive dog, and focuses on the reading.
- Reading improves because the child is practicing the skill of reading, building self-esteem, and associating reading with something pleasant (Therapy Dog International, 2022).



What is Therapy Dog International?

Therapy Dogs International (TDI®) is a well established, nonprofit, volunteer organization dedicated to regulating, testing and registration of therapy dogs and their volunteer handlers for the purpose of visiting nursing homes, hospitals, schools, libraries, other institutions and wherever else therapy dogs are needed.





Therapy Dog Visit to
Glendale's 8:1:1
exceptional classrooms

Mandy Woodward's
exceptional classroom

Alyssa Braun's
exceptional classroom

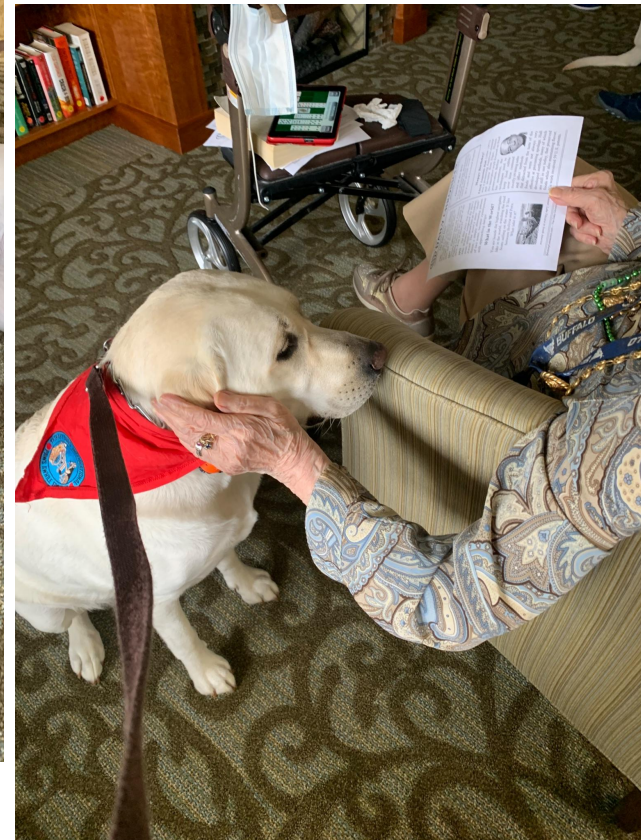
Danielle Kawa's
exceptional classroom







Kaia & Jersey



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is the dog at my child's school?

_____ is a _____, who has completed and been registered with Therapy Dogs International (TDI). The therapy dogs handler is _____.

2. What does a therapy dog do at school?

The dog has many different jobs at school. The therapy dog will be working with students. The dog will also work with their handler to provide assistance for students including, but not limited to, effort, participation, social awareness, confidence, engagement and the belief in their power to succeed.



Frequently Asked Questions continued...

3. I am worried about allergies. Is this concern being considered?

- The dogs are well groomed, well kept.
- The owners have submitted veterinary health records prior to the visit
- All dogs are wiped down with an allergen reducer wipe prior to entering to help reduce dander and allergens.
- Dogs may stay on a designated clean blanket / mat that the handler provides
- The coordinator also coordinates with our school nurse to be aware of students who have allergies. Please reach out if additional concerns are present.
- In all of the classrooms in SHCSD there is a High-efficiency air particulate (HEPA) air filtration / air purifier running 24/7 which helps to reduce allergens. According to [United States Environmental Protection Agency](#), this type of air filter can theoretically remove at least 99.97% of dust, pollen, mold, bacteria, dander, allergens and any airborne particles with a size of 0.3 microns.
- You may also opt out of the visit
<https://forms.gle/Q4Cf6mGtCfyhjUDZ6>



Frequently Asked Questions continued...

4. My child is afraid of dogs. What should I do?

Please contact **Kristina Pinkowski** if your child has an aversion to dogs. There are several rules that our dog and handlers follow at school to ensure that all our students and staff feel safe. Also, please know that therapy dogs are USED in the treatment of overcoming the fear of dogs. If you would like more information on how therapy dogs can help your child with this fear please contact Kristina Pinkowski at 1-716-250-1297 or by email at kpinkowski@sweethomeschools.org

5. Whom do I contact with questions?

Please contact **Kristina Pinkowski** if you are interested in learning more about these programs and how they may help your child. She can be reached at 1-716-250-1297 or by email at kpinkowski@sweethomeschools.org

6. What do I need to do if I do not want my child to work with the therapy dog at school?

If you have any reservations and do not want your child to participate in the Therapy Dog program, please use the link below to access the Opt-out form. If you are unable to access the link, please contact the individual identified above.

<https://forms.gle/Q4Cf6mGtCfyhjUDZ6>



In Closing

There is endless research available on the benefits that animal therapy programs have in schools, libraries, hospitals, prisons, nursing homes, and airports. I am asking that we work together for collective greatness. We have to do more for our students and adopting an animal therapy policy is adding another much needed tool to our toolbox.

I stand before you tonight with the courage, dedication and organizational skills needed to lead Sweet Home's Therapy Dog Program.



Link to Forms

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HpP1FUfnoQ5EVxA_zxwMU0Kgg1diGIVleOUfxi2cHHw/edit?usp=sharing



**Thank you for your time and
consideration**



SWEET HOME

"EVERY STUDENT, ONE COMMUNITY, READY FOR THE FUTURE."

FEDERAL FUNDING PLAN UPDATE

Sweet Home Board of Education

Tuesday, July 5, 2022

Federal Stimulus Funding Plan



1. Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act of 2020 (CARES)
 - Grant Period Covers March 13, 2020 – September 30, 2022
 - \$859,882 – application approved and expended
 - \$49,492 – shared with 21 non-public and private schools per grant guidance
2. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2020 (CRRSA / CARES 2)
 - Grant Period Covers March 13, 2020 – September 30, 2023
 - \$3,223,375 – application approved
3. American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)
 - Grant Period Covers March 13, 2020 – September 30, 2024
 - \$5,795,204 – application approved

CARES ACT - \$859,882



- State Aid cut equal to federal allocation no increase in available budget
- Requirement to share federal aid with non-public schools, resulting in net budget reduction
- Priorities
 - Resume in person learning safely
 - Support remote hybrid learning
 - Work to close any potential learning gaps

What did Sweet Home use the funds for?

- Salaries for cleaning staff
- Salaries for teachers:
 - 10 Elementary Teachers
 - 1 Middle School Teacher
 - 1 Secondary Counselor
- Benefits for all above employees
- Total Expenditure: \$810,390

CRRSA - \$3,223,375



- **Grant Period**
3/13/20 –
9/30/23

- **Priorities**
 - **Combat lost instruction time**
 - **Health & Safety**
 - **Lower class sizes**
 - **Work to close any potential learning gaps**

Sweet Home Funding Plan

- **New student desk to aid in social distancing**
- **Salaries & benefits for teachers over 3- year period:**
 - **ENL Teacher**
 - **K-8 Literacy Interventionist**
 - **School Psychologist**
- **5 Remote Teachers***
- **Stipends for extend days / AIS – teachers**
- **2 years of lease payments for Maplemere Temporary classrooms**
- **Early Literacy Training – Beth Swenson***
- **MERV 13 filters for 3 years**
- **Additional Student Desks**
- **Student iPads (1,000 each over 3 year grant)**
- **Classroom libraries (24 classroom sets per building)**

ARPA - \$5,795,204



- **Grant Period**
3/13/20 –
9/30/24

- **Priorities**
 - **Combat lost instruction time**
 - **Health & Safety**
 - **Lower class sizes**
 - **Work to close any potential learning gaps**

Sweet Home Funding Plan

- **Salaries & benefits for teachers over 3-year period:**
 - **8 elementary teachers**
 - **6 additional literacy specialists**
 - **4 high school teachers**
 - **Pupil Personnel Director**
- **Summer remedial reading teacher stipends**
- **3 additional program aides at each building**
- **Purchase PowerSchool Performance Matters – student data tool; assess learning gaps**
- **4 boiler replacements**
- **Renovation of Buildings & Grounds pole barn to aid in storage**

ARPA Homeless Children

\$20,264



- **Grant Period 3/13/20 – 9/30/24**

- **Priorities**

- **Identify homeless children and youth**
- **Provide homeless children and youth with wrap-around services to address challenges of COVID-19**
- **Enable homeless children and youth to attend school and fully participate in school activities**

Sweet Home Funding Plan

- **Contracted transportation for one of our McKinney-Vento students**
- **\$342.75 per day for 59 days**



FEDERAL FUNDING PLAN QUESTIONS??

SWEET HOME

"EVERY STUDENT, ONE COMMUNITY, READY FOR THE FUTURE."

Questions, comment and feedback
may be directed to Donald Feldmann,
Assistant Superintendent at
dfeldmann@sweethomeschools.org
or (716) 250-1406.

We Are Sweet Home

UPK Update

- Thank you to Scott Wolf and everyone at Central Registry.
- Enrolled approximately 140 students to attend full-day UPK in September.
 - Five classrooms at Sweet Home, including two at Heritage Heights, two at Glendale, and one at Willow Ridge.
 - Four rooms will be operated by Four Seasons and St. Leo's.
 - Class lists finalized by July 6. Letters sent to families shortly thereafter.



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We Are Sweet Home

A Two-Prong Compromise for Moving Forward

1. Ask each elementary building to form a collaborative committee this summer to immediately address:
 - a. What is an ideal lunch experience for all of our students? What are the characteristics? What does it look like?
 - b. How can we create an experience that meets as many of these characteristics as possible? Let's think outside the box.
 - c. Analyze the pros/cons of each possible solutions/ideas.
2. Form a Building Use Committee made up of Admin, Teachers, Parents, Support Staff that will:
 - a. Review data to uncover enrollment trends in the District
 - i. Census
 - ii. Live Birth
 - iii. Historical Enrollment Trends and Predict Future
 - b. Task committee to develop a building usage report.
 - c. In report, ask committee to make suggestions to the Board regarding the most practical, efficient ways to use our buildings while enhancing the student experience.
 - d. Report to the Board in January/February regarding the data and ideas for building utilization. Solicit feedback from our community.



We Are Sweet Home

Community Town Hall Meetings This Summer

- District Office will host a Town-Hall meeting at each building this summer.
- Goal is to engage our community in how we will move the District forward together.
- Working with building principals now to secure dates. Once dates are finalized, we will send communications to families.
- Topics may include but are not limited to:
 - Introduction of Toyia Wilson, new Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction.
 - Building Usage Study
 - Capital Project
 - Strategic Plan Creation
 - Etc....



The Sweet Home Way

Northwest Amherst Community Center

- Community Advisory Board Committee Meeting
 - Met on June 27.
 - Planned initial opening of NWACC in September.
 - Town is hiring an assistant to help plan the opening.
 - Advisory Board will meet again in late July.



TOWN OF AMHERST

5583 Main Street | Williamsville, NY 14221
(716) 631-7000



We Are Sweet Home

Class of 2022 Commencement

- Thank you to our HS administration, advisors, and teachers for planning an incredible event.
- 223 number of graduates.
- XX with honors
- More detailed data available in August



We Are Sweet Home

Questions from the Board?

STRENGTH OF MIND AND BODY

Discipline yourself to be at your best to conquer adversity and challenge.

Preparation * Perseverance * Resilience * Focus * Energy

QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS

Build a support network of people that inspire you and challenge you to thrive.

Honesty * Empathy * Thoughtfulness * Respect * Trust

ACCOUNTABILITY

Take ownership of your life direction and master the sea.

Discipline * Responsibility * Reliability * Independence * Problem Solving

COURAGE TO LEAD

Believe in something that can improve the human condition, and show others the way.

Character * Humility * Communication * Service * Inspiration

