



NORTH EAST SCHOOL DISTRICT

50 EAST DIVISION STREET • NORTH EAST, PENNSYLVANIA 16428
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Dr. Michele Spurgeon Hartzell, Superintendent

Mr. Jeffrey Fox, Business Manager

Mrs. Shelley Allen, Administrative Assistant

January 25, 2021

Dear Parents,

It is with great anticipation that we are once again fortunate at North East School District to offer Therapy Dog services to our students and staff. Beginning in February, we will have a therapy dog team present in the schools for a couple of days each week. These dog and handler teams will be part of positive behavior plans for students who are experiencing anxiety, help students who may be struggling with oral reading fluency, and provide support to students and staff who may be experiencing stress. The dogs will also visit classrooms to offer support and encouragement as students go through their day-to-day experiences.

Please know that both of the dog handler teams that are regularly scheduled for North East School District are not only certified Alliance of Therapy Dogs but they are also HOPE-AACR certified. This is a national Animal Assistant Crisis Response team that has had extensive training in dealing with people in crisis to provide comfort and encouragement. These dog teams are deployed across the country in assisting victims and first responders deal with crisis situations and in natural disasters.

Now more than ever, our students and staff are experiencing isolation, depression, and anxiety. If your family or your child has a special request, please contact your building administration. We will do our best to ensure we are meeting the needs of our students, families, and staff.

If you would **NOT** like your child to have close contact with the therapy dogs for whatever reason, be it allergies or fear of dogs, etc., please log on to the district website and complete the non-consent form at www.nesd1.org, select the parent tab, select the therapy dog non-consent form. If you do not complete the form by February 1, 2021, it will be assumed that you give permission for your child to have contact with the therapy dogs.

If you have any questions regarding the Therapy Dog program, please feel free to contact me in my office at 725-8671 ext. 3907 or by email at mhartzell@nesd1.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michele S. Hartzell
Superintendent