



LAKE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT 65

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Education

From: Tracy Roehrick, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

Date: October 20, 2026

Subject: Implementation of a Therapy Dog Program at Lake Bluff Elementary School

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform the Board of Education of the proposed implementation of a therapy dog program at Lake Bluff Elementary School (LBES) for the 2026–2027 school year. The program is intended to provide an additional means of supporting students' educational experiences, social-emotional well-being, and engagement in school.

The proposed program would introduce Yoda, a trained therapy dog who works with a certified handler, Mrs. Carrera, into designated school activities and settings. Implementation would follow the district's *Guidelines for Therapy Dogs in Lake Bluff School Facilities*, along with parent/guardian notification, consent procedures, and established safeguards for student health and safety.

Program Rationale and Goals

The Therapy Dog Program is intended to complement existing educational and student support services. The program's goals are to:

- Improve student motivation and support academic performance.
- Help students build trust and comfort in the educational environment.
- Provide opportunities for positive interactions and unconditional acceptance.
- Promote positive character traits.





Potential activities include reading to the therapy dog, classroom visits, and participation in selected lessons. These activities would be planned to support instructional or student-support objectives rather than replace existing educational services.

Proposed Program Structure

The program would initially operate at Lake Bluff Elementary School during the 2026–2027 school year. Yoda would remain with Mrs. Carrera whenever on school property and would rest in her office when not providing services. The dog would be identified as a working facility dog.

Students and staff would receive information about Yoda's role and expectations for interacting with him before the program begins. Students would be instructed to ask permission before petting or interacting with the dog to avoid disrupting his work or creating unnecessary safety concerns.

Participation in activities involving the therapy dog would be voluntary. The district would communicate with families before participation and provide an opportunity for parents/guardians to indicate whether their child may participate.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Tracy Roehrick

Assistant Superintendent for Student Services