



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the School Board and Superintendent Holmberg

FROM: Mark Grossklaus - Executive Director of Teaching and Learning

DATE: August 17, 2026

RE: Approval of Policy 521.5 Service Animals

Background

The administration is recommending the adoption of a new School Board policy titled Policy 521.5 – Service Animals. Currently, Centennial School District does not have a standalone policy addressing the rights and responsibilities associated with service animals on district property and at school-sponsored activities.

Federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Minnesota Human Rights Act, require public school districts to permit the use of service animals by qualified individuals with disabilities. While the District has consistently complied with these legal requirements, adoption of a formal policy will provide clear guidance for students, employees, families, volunteers, and visitors.

Purpose of the Policy

The proposed policy establishes district expectations regarding:

- The definition of a service animal and qualified handlers.
- Equal access to District programs, services, facilities, transportation, and activities.
- Responsibilities of handlers for the care and control of service animals.
- Circumstances under which a service animal may be removed.
- Appropriate staff inquiries consistent with federal law.
- Procedures for addressing concerns such as allergies, safety, and the presence of miniature horses.

The policy also clarifies that emotional support, therapy, comfort, or companion animals are not considered service animals under the ADA.

Policy Number Recommendation

Administration recommends assigning this policy as **Policy 521.5 – Service Animals**.

This placement aligns the policy with Centennial's existing disability nondiscrimination policies, specifically **Policy 521 – Student Disability Nondiscrimination**, and follows the District's practice of using decimal numbering for related policy topics. Organizing the policy within the 500 Student Policy series provides logical consistency and makes the policy easier for staff and families to locate.

Fiscal Impact

There is no anticipated fiscal impact associated with adoption of this policy. The policy formalizes procedures and legal requirements that the District already follows.

Recommendation

Administration recommends the School Board approve and adopt **Policy 521.5 – Service Animals**