

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Peter Mau, Assistant Superintendent

DATE: May 19, 2025

SUBJECT: Final Reading of Policy 535, Service Animals in the Schools

**BACKGROUND:**

A review of Policy 535, Service Animals in the Schools, has been performed. A first reading was presented to board members at their meeting on April 21 with a second reading on May 5. The district's current policy was reviewed against MSBA's model policy. Based on this review, several changes were presented at that April meeting.

This optional policy was first adopted in May 2022. One of our sites had a student who used a service animal, and we determined that having a policy to govern service animals in the school district would benefit both families and staff.

Federal and state laws govern the use of service animals. This policy reflects applicable laws. There are a number of changes to this policy. They broadly fall into three categories: rearranging of content, modification of content, and additional content. The changes are made in all cases to align with the MSBA model policy language.

- The purpose statement (section I.) has been modified.
- A general statement of purpose (section II.) has been added.
- The title of section III was modified. In section III., the definition of a handler has been modified. The definition of a service animal has been modified. Old item B.-D., work tasks, was rearranged into new item D.
- Section IV was renamed and content was added in A., B., and modified in C. Previous items D.-H. were rearranged. The new D. and E. were rearranged from the old IX. A. and B. into section IV. The new item F. was added.
- Section V. was added. Old items III. D., E., and F. were rearranged and placed in section V. Items A., B., F., and G. were added.
- Section VI. was added.
- The old section III. G. was rearranged and modified into the new Section VII.
- The old Section IV. is now Section VIII. The old item A. was eliminated. Modifications were made to assessment factors.

- Old Section V., items D. and E. were rearranged into the new section IX.
- Section X. was added.
- Section XI. was added.
- Old section III., item H. was rearranged into the new section XII. A. Item B. was added.
- Several legal references were added. These additional references are reflected in the added and modified language above.

In reviewing the 4-Way Equity test, this policy helps ensure equitable access to our facilities and programs. It also ensures access and opportunities for people with disabilities, who have historically been underserved. While it may have some negative impacts on those with allergies or a fear of dogs, administration will work to mitigate these potential issues.

**RESOLUTION:**

***BE IT RESOLVED*** by the School Board of School District 197 to approve Policy 535, Service Animals in the Schools, as presented.