

THERAPY ANIMALS AMENDMENTS

2021 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Marsha Judkins

Senate Sponsor: Curtis S. Bramble

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill addresses therapy animals in schools.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- ▶ defines terms;
- ▶ requires a local education agency to create a policy for the handling of a therapy animal if a school within the local education agency provides animal-assisted interventions through therapy animals; and
- ▶ makes technical changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

ENACTS:

53G-9-210, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **53G-9-210** is enacted to read:

53G-9-210. Therapy animal handling -- Policy.

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Animal-assisted intervention" means an intervention designed to promote

30 improvement in an individual's physical, social, emotional, or cognitive functioning through
31 interactions with a specially trained animal.

32 (b) "Local education agency" means a school district or charter school.

33 (c) (i) "Therapy animal" means an animal that:

34 (A) provides affection and comfort to an individual for emotional support;

35 (B) is accompanied by a therapy animal handler; and

36 (C) is trained to provide animal-assisted intervention.

37 (ii) "Therapy animal" does not include a service animal or support animal as those
38 terms are defined in Section [62A-5b-102](#).

39 (d) "Therapy animal handler" means an individual who is trained to handle a therapy
40 animal for animal-assisted interventions.

41 (2) (a) If a school within a local education agency provides animal-assisted
42 interventions through therapy animals, the local education agency shall adopt a policy for
43 proper handling of a therapy animal on school grounds.

44 (b) The policy described in Subsection (2)(a) shall include:

45 (i) local or national certification or registration requirements for a therapy animal and
46 therapy animal handler;

47 (ii) guidelines for when a therapy animal and therapy animal handler are allowed on
48 school grounds;

49 (iii) notice requirements for parents, students, and school faculty and staff regarding
50 the use of a therapy animal on school grounds; and

51 (iv) guidelines to prevent students and staff who have an animal allergy or are
52 uncomfortable around animals from interacting with a therapy animal on school grounds.

53 (3) This section does not require a school to allow the use of a therapy animal.