

SENATE BILL 409

F1

11r2005
CF 11r0409

By: **Senator Kramer**

Introduced and read first time: January 15, 2021

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **County Boards of Education – Therapy Dogs – Policy for Handling and Use in**
3 **Schools**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring each county board of education to allow the use of therapy
5 dogs in public schools in the county; requiring each therapy dog used in a public
6 school to be accompanied by a handler; requiring each county board to adopt a certain
7 policy for the use and handling of therapy dogs in public schools in the county;
8 defining certain terms; and generally relating to therapy dogs in public schools.

9 BY adding to

10 Article – Education

11 Section 4–138

12 Annotated Code of Maryland

13 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

14 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
15 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

16 **Article – Education**

17 **4–138.**

18 **(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**
19 **INDICATED.**

20 **(2) “HANDLER” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO PROVIDES CARE AND**
21 **TRAINING FOR A CERTIFIED THERAPY DOG.**

22 **(3) “THERAPY DOG” MEANS A DOG THAT IS CERTIFIED TO PROVIDE**
23 **AFFECTION AND COMFORT TO CHILDREN WHO NEED EMOTIONAL SUPPORT IN A**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 SCHOOL SETTING.

2 (B) (1) A COUNTY BOARD SHALL ALLOW THE USE OF THERAPY DOGS IN
3 PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTY.

4 (2) EACH THERAPY DOG USED IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SHALL BE
5 ACCOMPANIED BY A HANDLER.

6 (C) (1) EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL ADOPT A POLICY FOR THE USE AND
7 HANDLING OF THERAPY DOGS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTY.

8 (2) THE POLICY REQUIRED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION SHALL
9 INCLUDE:

10 (I) LOCAL OR NATIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR
11 THERAPY DOGS;

12 (II) GUIDELINES FOR HANDLERS OF CERTIFIED THERAPY
13 DOGS;

14 (III) GUIDELINES FOR WHEN AND WHERE THERAPY DOGS AND
15 HANDLERS ARE ALLOWED IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS;

16 (IV) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PARENTS, STUDENTS,
17 AND SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF; AND

18 (V) GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS AND
19 STAFF WITH ALLERGIES TO DOGS OR WHO ARE UNCOMFORTABLE AROUND DOGS.

20 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
21 1, 2021.