

Boone County High School is in the process of assessing the viability of having a therapy dog, on campus, throughout the school day. The dog is being trained through Mike Dixon with Tri-State Canine Obedience. He has over a decade of experience in the field and has trained thousands of dogs. Sherrie Mullins, staff member at Boone is the owner and primary handler of Renee. Renee is a Newfypoo, Newfoundland/Poodle mix and she is hypoallergenic and does not shed. Ms. Mullins will work with para educators from her unit to know how to assist and handle Renee, as will other staff in the building as the need arises.

The dog lives with Ms. Mullins who will continue to care for her during non-school hours. The cost for caring for the dog (vet, food, medication, etc.) is being covered through Ms. Mullins and no cost to the school.

There is researched based evidence showing that the presence of a therapy dog on school campuses has helped behavior students or students in general in an otherwise stressful or traumatic situations. Below is a list of benefits that a therapy dog would provide for BCHS.

- Assisting students in the de-escalation process, which in-turn would help to avoid the use of more restrictive consequences.
- Comforting students who have recently experienced a traumatic event.
- Calming students who are sharing information with cabinet workers, which could provide the cabinet worker with important information.
- Helping visitors to de-escalate when they come on campus to discuss an issue that is concerning to them.
- Accompanying students in individual counseling sessions.
- Helpful for students who have autism, or students who are resistant to change in routine.
- Helpful in times of high stress (state testing, before/after long breaks, etc.)
- Reading buddy for students in all grades.
- Could be included in service learning project connected to caring for animals, showing empathy, then creating care packages for local animal shelters.

In addition to the benefits to Boone County High School, the therapy dog could be available to any Boone County school. The dog could travel to those schools for lessons involving service animals, assist grief counselors, and any other need that may arise within the school community.

We request your approval for a therapy dog at BCHS. \_\_\_\_\_



Mr. Schlotman, Principal



Ms. Mullins, therapy dog owner