

August 14, 2020

Joe Rosonke, President
Members of the NHCS School Board
New Hampton Community Schools
710 W Main St.
New Hampton, IA 50659

Dear President Rosonke and School Board Members:

First and foremost, thank you for carving out time from your busy schedules to read through and consider these requests. In these unprecedented times, your plates are overflowing with big decisions that impact our entire community so I appreciate that you are taking time to consider new ideas.

For over a year, I have listened to stories of other school districts and how they have incorporated classroom dogs into their daily routine. I'm hoping that New Hampton will soon be added to that list of schools in Northeast Iowa that utilizes a Therapy dog for students and staff.

For the past six months, Pickle and I have been training together and she is certified as a Therapy dog by Loyal Start Dog Training in Cedar Falls. Coincidentally, Loyal Start was also training classroom dogs for North Butler and Waterloo schools, so we were lucky enough to have a training session focused solely around the school setting. I have also opted to take an additional test, the AKC Canine Good Citizen test, which will be completed on August 22nd.

There are endless benefits to therapy dogs and animals in general. Many of us know the comfort of pets and the joy they bring to our lives. According to the Alliance of Therapy Dogs, bringing therapy dogs into the classroom can reduce blood pressure, boost self-esteem, stimulate problem-solving skills, and support students with mental health conditions. In the school setting, sometimes students that have bad days and just need a break to cool down. Upon approval, there would be a "reset" corner in my classroom, where students and staff can visit Pickle, take a short break, and return to their classrooms to complete their work. After a long period of distance learning and summer, it is safe to assume that returning to school will bring big feelings of excitement, fear, nervousness and joy. I am confident that introducing a classroom dog at the beginning of the year will serve as an outlet for those feelings and provide a comforting distraction for students that are stressed.

If you have any questions or concerns you would like to address prior to the board meeting, please feel free to contact me anytime at (641)-394-2134 or m_good@new-hampton.k12.ia.us. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle Good
New Hampton Elementary
Kindergarten Teacher