

**THERAPY ANIMALS AMENDMENTS**

2021 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Marsha Judkins**

Senate Sponsor: Curtis S. Bramble

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**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

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*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.**



28 (1) As used in this section:

29 (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  
53a animal.