

Continuation Summary for Item FF-2.

District's partnership with the Humane Society of Broward County and Miles for Smiles, Inc. Schools work with EAA, DPI and SAP in the identification and selection of students to participate in the program which targets students who are experiencing stress, anxiety or crisis situations and can benefit from interaction with the therapy dogs. Prior to serving Broward County, SAP delivered programs in Palm Beach County schools and hospitals.

Volunteers representing the organization provide all services free of charge, resulting in no financial impact to the District. Up to 100 certified therapy dogs and trained volunteers are available to deliver pet assisted therapy to Broward County Public School students and staff.

Research on the benefits of animal assisted therapy indicates that children experiencing trauma and low self-esteem are often more willing to interact with an animal than another person and documented physical benefits include lowering of blood pressure and heart rates as well as increased relaxation.

District staff has monitored Share-A-Pet programs to confirm that SAP standards for animal health and training are aligned with the District's requirements for using animals in the classroom.