

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cooperative Agreement	Share A Pet, Inc
Agencies Included	N/A
Status	Approve contract between Share A Pet, Inc. and SBBC
Funds Requested	N/A
Financial Impact Statement	There is no financial impact to the District
Managing Department/ School	Department of Equity and Academic Attainment, David Watkins, Director, 754-321-1600
Project Description	<p>Share-a-pet, Inc. (SAP) is a nonprofit organization committed to providing animal assisted therapy in health care and education facilities. SAP provides an animal assisted therapy program for students and staff at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and additional District schools by request and coordinated through the Equity and Academic Attainment and Diversity, Prevention and Intervention Departments via the 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 rate as well as increased relaxation.</p> <p>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.</p>
Evaluation Plan	Staff and students will complete the Advanced Assist Ed survey at the end of each school year.
Research Methodology	Increasing research supports the physiological, psychological and social benefits of interactions with animals and the therapeutic potential of animal assisted programs in schools (Walsh, 2009).