

HOUSE BILL 713

F1

11r0409
CF SB 409

By: **Delegate Guyton**

Introduced and read first time: January 26, 2021

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **County Boards of Education – Therapy Dogs – Policy for Handling and Use in**
3 **Schools**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring each county board of education to allow the use of therapy
5 dogs in public schools in the county; requiring each therapy dog used in a public
6 school to be accompanied by a handler; requiring each county board to adopt a certain
7 policy for the use and handling of therapy dogs in public schools in the county;
8 defining certain terms; and generally relating to therapy dogs in public schools.

9 BY adding to

10 Article – Education

11 Section 4–138

12 Annotated Code of Maryland

13 (2018 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

14 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

15 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

16 **Article – Education**

17 **4–138.**

18 **(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**
19 **INDICATED.**

20 **(2) “HANDLER” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO PROVIDES CARE AND**
21 **TRAINING FOR A THERAPY DOG.**

22 **(3) “THERAPY DOG” MEANS A DOG THAT IS:**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (I) TRAINED TO PROVIDE AFFECTION AND COMFORT TO
2 CHILDREN WHO NEED EMOTIONAL SUPPORT IN A SCHOOL SETTING; AND

3 (II) CERTIFIED OR REGISTERED AS A THERAPY DOG.

4 (B) (1) A COUNTY BOARD SHALL ALLOW THE USE OF THERAPY DOGS IN
5 PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTY.

6 (2) EACH THERAPY DOG USED IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SHALL BE
7 ACCOMPANIED BY A HANDLER.

8 (C) (1) EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL ADOPT A POLICY FOR THE USE AND
9 HANDLING OF THERAPY DOGS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTY.

10 (2) THE POLICY REQUIRED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION SHALL
11 INCLUDE:

12 (I) LOCAL OR NATIONAL CERTIFICATION OR REGISTRATION
13 REQUIREMENTS FOR THERAPY DOGS;

14 (II) GUIDELINES FOR HANDLERS OF THERAPY DOGS;

15 (III) GUIDELINES FOR WHEN AND WHERE THERAPY DOGS AND
16 HANDLERS ARE ALLOWED IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS;

17 (IV) NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR PARENTS, STUDENTS,
18 AND SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF; AND

19 (V) GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS AND
20 STAFF WITH ALLERGIES TO DOGS OR WHO ARE UNCOMFORTABLE AROUND DOGS.

21 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
22 1, 2021.