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Guardian Dogs School Proposal

Why a Guardian Dog?

School violence has become a prevalent issue that cannot be underestimated by government and school officials. Though carefully crafted, current school safety initiatives are not always effective. There is an evolutionary bond between humans and dogs. This connection, paired with a dog's intelligence and predilection for situational assessment, makes a Guardian Dog a perfect candidate for the school safety platform.

We believe schools can take advantage of a Guardian Dog's therapeutic, protective, and security-driven instincts to improve any existing school safety strategies. Through detection training, K9s identify and locate concealed firearms, whether hidden in a vehicle, locker, backpack, or on a person. As a deterrent, a K9 relies on its species' reputation as a lookout and devoted protector. When action is needed, a K9 does not hesitate. Its only thought is the safety of those in its care.

In addition to the protective and security-focused advantages, a Guardian Dog team can provide therapeutic benefits, including stress relief, informal counseling skills, and an ability to develop rapport with students and staff. The idea of dogs in schools is not a new concept. Therapy dogs are often brought in after traumatic events, while others maintain a daily presence in schools. These dogs bring consistent support and a sense of calm that is endless and indiscriminate. With the constant environment of stress and anxiety, brought on by concerns of school violence, these therapeutic benefits become more essential by the day.

What can a Guardian Dog provide your school?

- Guardian Dogs act immediately. This simple statement can appear minimal or non-important and, while deterrence and preventive measures mean a low likelihood of a violent scenario taking place, if it does, action is essential. Guardian dogs are trained to run toward gunfire or any other active threat, without hesitation. This immediate response alleviates possible concerns of law enforcement response time.

- Guardian Dogs perform threat interference without the concern of friendly fire – a potential risk with all firearm-centric security scenarios.
- Guardian Dogs acts as deterrents. All Guardian Dogs are imported from international breeders, specializing in K9 and protection-dog bloodlines. While incredibly social, Guardian Dogs still come with a reputation – they are dogs that do their job and defend their family pack members. Jeopardizing the safety of those in their care will trigger the dog’s protective instincts – instincts that are not to be taken lightly.
- Guardian Dogs provide the benefit of early detection. All Guardian Dogs are trained to identify and locate a range of firearm and explosive scents. Their alert will allow their Companions and school staff the time to notify authorities about a violent incident.
- Guardian Dogs are able to be assigned to multiple locations for a cost-effective solution for school districts and large campuses. Non-predictive scheduling is an essential and mandatory component of all Guardian Dog team training. This means the Guardian Dog team can appear at each location throughout the week, acting as a deterrent and level of protection for each location in your district.
- Your Guardian Dog team will be a vital component to your school district’s appeal for parents who are looking for a school with a focus on student safety. Robust security initiatives become strong consideration factors when school-of-choice families are considering various districts.

Commonly Asked Questions

As with all new programs, concerned parents or community members will pose questions about the Guardian Dog. To be prepared, here are some of the most common concerns your district may be asked.

1. Students and staff with allergies

- In the United States, researchers estimate that 3 in every 10 people have some sort of allergy to cats and dogs. Two main culprits of an allergic reaction are the dog’s hair (dander) and saliva. However, due to the vast number of people who own dogs and have dog hair on their clothing, dog allergens are found in almost every indoor facility. Thus, dog allergens are most likely in schools regardless of whether a dog is present or not. School administrators should acquire information from parents about student’s allergy concerns and then ensure the dog avoids those students and the students, in turn, avoid the dog.
- Studies have shown with regular grooming, dog allergens are reduced significantly. A dog that is groomed on a regular schedule will have less dander in its coat.

2. Students and staff with dog phobias

- Not everyone loves dogs. Many things can cause this dislike, such as a past traumatic event with a dog. In most cases, non-dog fans simply do not interact with dogs, whether in public or at a friend or family member's house. Much like a student with allergies, the Guardian Dog team and student simply won't interact directly with each other.
- It is also likely that the regular presence of the dog at school could act as a desensitizing mechanism for students or staff, and ultimately lead to a lessening or even elimination of the fear.

3. Concerns of the dog biting students or staff

- There are many factors to consider when addressing the fear of dog bites. Many dog aggression issues stem from a variety of factors which include breed, gender, negative interactions with people, training, home environment, etc. Most dog bites stem from fear from the dog towards the human.
- Guardian Dogs are carefully selected and tested for temperament, extensively socialized, and trained to be comfortable around all ages and types of people.
- All students, staff, and faculty will be educated on how to properly approach ANY dog - not just a Guardian Dog.

4. Concerns of the dog spreading disease

- All Guardian Dogs are fully vaccinated by a licensed veterinary professional. Additionally, Guardian Dogs are tested for parasites at their regular veterinary checkups.

5. The cost of a Guardian Dog VS metal detectors

- a. Physical-security measures, such as cameras, metal detectors, bullet-proof glass, fences, etc, have their place, but they can create an unpleasant, even prison-like setting for students.
- b. Instead of students passing through metal detectors or being subject to the use of detection wands, Guardian Dogs create a far less stressful experience for students. Beyond physical security, the Guardian Dog's therapeutic capabilities can also have a meaningful and positive impact on students and staff.
- c. Dependent on the needs of the school, the Guardian Dog can be trained to detect scents beyond just firearms, such as narcotics or other explosive odors – a task a metal detector cannot do.
- d. Proper use of a metal detector requires a trained staff member at each entrance with the detector, and may cause back-ups due to false readings, as most students will likely have some type of "metal" on them such as cell phones, pens, backpacks with zippers, etc.

6. Implementing a Guardian Dog VS armed security

- a. Guardian Dogs are trained to run toward gunfire, without hesitation.
- b. There is no risk of friendly fire with a dog.
- c. Most working dogs can run at an average speed of 30mph, meaning they can reach an assailant nearly 3 times faster than a human.

7. Determining who will be in charge of the dog

- a. Each Guardian Dog Companion will be a direct employee of the school district and will be selected by both D&D Dog Dynamics and representatives of the Rapid River School Board.
- b. Salary or hourly pay, benefits, etc, will be determined by the Rapid River School District.
- c. As an essential and first step in the process, your Guardian Dog Companion will take part in a thorough background, psychological, and aptitude test, to ensure a good fit for both the dog and your school system.
- d. To build and maintain the essential bond between dog and Companion, the Guardian Dog should reside with the Companion, when off-duty. With both on-duty and off-duty time, the Companion would take on full responsibility of the dog's well-being and health.

8. Program implementation timeframe

- a. All Guardian Dogs are imported from overseas, and can only be flown to the United States during temperate months (approximately April through June and September through November).
- b. Once the Companion takes possession of the Guardian Dog, the bonding process and academy takes approximately 5 weeks until the team is ready for in-school duties.

Additional benefits, provided by D&D Dog Dynamics for the career of your Guardian Dog

- D&D Dog Dynamics will provide continuing education and training of the Guardian Dog and its Companion for the career of the team.
- D&D Dog Dynamics will provide grooming services for the career of the Guardian Dog at a reduced cost to the school district.
- D&D Dog Dynamics will provide boarding services to the Guardian Dog, if needed, at a reduced cost to the school district.
- D&D Dog Dynamics will provide support and guidance in fundraising efforts for your school district's Guardian Dog and Companion.

What is the investment expense to your school district?

Although security should be a number one priority for all districts, the reality is that a budget for school safety is just a portion of a district's overall funding.

Guardian Dogs and their Companions come fully trained and ready to work the first day on-campus, following the training academy. They will require continued education and training throughout their career, to keep their skills sharp. To offset these costs, Rapid River Public Schools' Guardian Dog will be a donation to the school district. D&D Dog Dynamics will include on-the-job team evaluations within the first 90 days of in-school duties.

The cost of food for the Guardian Dog will become the responsibility of the school district. However, there are businesses in the area that regularly provide food at no cost to support community-service working dogs.

Veterinary costs may vary depending on the veterinarian you choose. D&D Dog Dynamics can refer local veterinarians that provide excellent service at competitive prices.

TOTAL COST BREAKDOWN

Direct Guardian Dog Costs

5-week Companion Training Course: \$5,000

Guardian Dog: \$13,000

Medical Maintenance Costs

Approximately \$650 per year

Preventive care is key throughout a Guardian Dog's life. Regular wellness exams, quality food, canine massage, and many other proactive steps greatly contribute to minimizing unnecessary health issues in your Guardian Dog.

Vigilance. Deterrence. Response.
Protecting the pack – It's in their nature.

