



**WASHINGTON
TOWNSHIP
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

BRASS CASTLE SCHOOL
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OLD SCHOOLHOUSE**
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Keith T. Neuhs, SUPERINTENDENT

PORT COLDEN SCHOOL
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Jessica K. McDonagh, PRINCIPAL

September 6, 2023

Dear WTSD Parents/Guardians,

We are excited to share that Brass Castle and Port Colden Schools will be once again welcoming some special visitors to our buildings this year! The district is collaborating with the **Creature Comfort Pet Therapy** organization to bring therapy dogs to our students. For more information regarding Creature Comfort Pet Therapy, please visit <https://www.ccpettherapy.org/>.

What are the benefits of therapy dogs?

Therapy dogs have been working in schools across the nation for quite some time now. Research studies have shown the benefits of therapy dogs in schools, including:

- Cognitive – companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem-solving, and game playing.
- Social – a dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion and encourages responsibility, well-being, and focused interaction with others.
- Emotional – school dogs improve self-esteem, acceptance from others, and lifts moods, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach compassion and respect for other living things, as well as relieve anxiety.
- Physical – interaction with a furry friend reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, and increases motivation to move, walk, and stimulate the senses.

While we appreciate the benefits of pet therapy, we understand not all students/families are comfortable with live animals. Therefore, if you would prefer your student **not participate**/interact with visiting therapy dogs, please email your student's homeroom teacher.

We anticipate Creature Comfort therapy dogs visiting our buildings 1 x monthly, through the end of the school year with a detailed schedule to be determined by building. Therapy dog visits for September have been scheduled on Tuesday, 9/12/2023 at Port Colden School and Thursday, 9/14/2023 at Brass Castle School.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to your student's building principal with any questions.

Sincerely,

Mr. Keith T. Neuhs
Superintendent

Dr. Jessica L. Garcia
Brass Castle Principal

Mrs. Jessica K. McDonagh
Port Colden Principal