



Dear Dora Parents,

I am proud to announce that we will be having a new “assistant counselor” at Dora! This new assistant counselor, who just so happens to have 4 paws, will be a *certified assistance dog*. Holly is a 2.5 year old Landseer Newfoundland! She & I will be a “Certified Canine Assistance Team”. Both Mrs. Menz and Holly have undergone extensive training to be able to come to school to see students, and we are so excited to see your children in August!

You might be asking yourself, “Why would a school counselor be using a dog in her work with children?” I would tell you that there are many advantages, including:

- ✓ A therapy dog is a **natural “ice breaker”**. A dog will help to make a school counselor more approachable to both students & parents.
- ✓ Simply touching or petting a dog can be a comfort to a child who may be upset or has trouble trusting others. Students have the opportunity to spend time with an animal that can give them **unconditional positive acceptance** regardless of their family, academic or social situation. *Studies show that petting a dog actually lowers blood pressure!
- ✓ Children **gain confidence** in finding they can get a dog to do tricks for them & by practicing voice control as they give the dog commands.
- ✓ A child who is impulsive can **learn about & practice impulse control** when he/she follows specific instructions to get the dog to do a task.
- ✓ Students are learning **healthy & respectful relationships** between both people & animals.

The dog’s notebook, which will contain a copy of his/her health records & certifications for therapy work, will be kept in the counseling office at all times. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you might have about the Dora R-III School Counseling Program. I am looking forward to bringing Holly the assistance dog to Dora!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Amelia Menz
Dora R-III School Counselor