

October 2019

Pawsitive Peers Foundation school dog program

Mesa Public Schools is piloting the Pawsitive Peers Foundation school dog program developed by North Shore Animal League America using the Mutt-i-grees® curriculum. The district has partnered with Arizona Humane Society, Arizona Animal Welfare League, and Maricopa County Animal Care and Control to identify compatible shelter dogs for school staff to adopt and have trained. Participating MPS staff and their dogs (care teams) are certified by Pet Partners and are registered with the Therapy Animal Program.

The Mutt-i-grees® curriculum is written by Yale University and will be used to incorporate lessons on social and emotional learning, resiliency, empathy and the human-animal bond. Students may also interact directly with dogs for more individualized learning opportunities. Additionally, these dogs can serve as a trusted companion in the counseling, nurse or administrative offices for crisis intervention, behavioral de-escalation, or simply to address stress, anxiety and/or isolation.

The pilot schools are East Valley Academy, Johnson Elementary, Kino Junior High, Mountain View High School, and Rhodes Junior High.

