

THE PLYMOUTH COUNTY COMFORT DOGS PROGRAM

2025-2026 PROGRESS REPORT



Program Update

The PCCDP received a 3 year COSSUP grant* from the Department of Justice to expand its services. The Plymouth County DA's Office partnered with researchers from Bridgewater State University to evaluate program effectiveness.

Where: Abington, Marion, Pembroke, and Plymouth Public Schools

This evaluation focused on safety and trust with officers, school climate, emotion regulation, focus and attention in classes, and motivation to attend school.

At a Glance

During the 2025-2026 academic year, the research team worked with PCCDP officers, school personnel, and community members to evaluate services provided. We gathered data from students, parents, and school personnel at 10 schools across four districts, and community members from 8 municipalities.

In schools, officer-comfort dog teams greeted students at drop-off, walked the halls, stopped into classrooms, and met one-on-one with students who needed emotional support, tracking their moods before and after. In addition, the teams provided 10-minute classroom visits twice a week to see if the dog helped settle the room, get students ready to work, and keep them on task. Officers serving county municipalities attended community events and meetings, visited schools and area agencies, responded to crises, and included their comfort dog during their daily responsibilities.

Students, parents, school staff, and community members were also surveyed to provide their perspectives on how the PCCDP influenced relationships with officers, school climate, student emotion regulation, focus, and motivation. **Next up: what we found.**

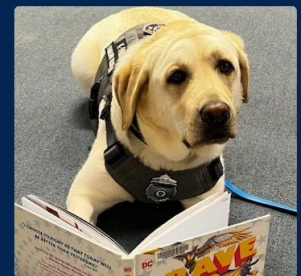
What is the PCCDP?

The PCCDP consists of trained officer-comfort dog teams who work with schools and community partners to create welcoming environments, to provide emotional support and comfort of to community members, and to help connect drug endangered students with trusted adults, including school resource officers.

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By the Numbers

Participation involved 4 districts, 592 students, 170 parents and caregivers, and 54 school staff members.



Results

- Student, parents, school personnel, and community members report **feeling safe with Officers.**
- Participants report the Comfort Dog Teams **Enhance Emotion Regulation**
- Student, parents, school personnel, and community member report that the Comfort Dog Teams help them **feel safe in school and their communities.**
- Improves Student Focus, Attention & Motivation in School



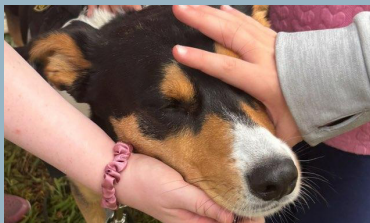
Stronger Relationships with Officers

95% of students reported feeling safe with the officer. Likewise, 96% of Community members agreed that the Comfort Dog Teams helped foster positive relationships with the officer. As one parent put it, *"to see the officer at school as a safe person and someone who can be trusted, that's probably the most important part."*

Supported a Positive School Climate

Over 85% of students reported that the Comfort Dog Team's helped them feel safe in school. The teams ability to create a welcoming environment and bring people together were key factors in creating a sense of safety. Community members also agreed as 90% reported that the teams made the community more welcoming and gave them a sense of pride in their communities. Parents echoed this, agreeing that the team *"creates a welcoming and supportive environment where kids can feel safe and at ease."*

Emotional Support on Rough Days



85% of students who interacted with the Comfort Dog Teams when upset reported improved mood and over 80% reported that the teams helped them feel happy and relaxed.

One parent shared this comment from her child:

"[Dog] comes in to hug me when I'm really, really angry. When I'm sad, I think of her. When I'm mad, [Dog] comes and helps me calm. She's the best calm dog down ever. When I have a day, she turns it into a not-bad day, a good day."

Focus, Attention, and Motivation

Over 58% of students, parents, and school personnel agreed that the comfort dog teams helped students attend school, stay in class and increase their focus while in class. Over 80% agreed that students look forward to seeing the teams in school.

Classroom intervention results suggest that on the days teams visit classrooms, students stay focused 5-10 minutes longer than on days the teams do not visit.

Tying it All Together

Based on these findings, the PCCDP created a safe, supportive school and community environment that helps to **improve learning and build protective factors needed to reduce at-risk behaviors & substance misuse.** It also strengthened relationships between students and officers, and community members and officers, thereby further protecting youth through the development of trusting relationships and strong community policing.

