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### Teacher Grant Program Expands Eligibility

*9<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers are Now Eligible to Apply for the Pets in the Classroom Grant Program beginning August 1st.*

The [Pet Care Trust's Pets in the Classroom grant program](#), which has previously been available to Pre-Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, will be expanding its reach beginning August 1<sup>st</sup>. For the first time, teachers in 9<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms will also be eligible to apply. The grant program will provide Pre-Kindergarten through 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in both private and public schools who desire to introduce a pet into the classroom or already have a pet in the classroom with funding toward a small animal or for pet supplies.

According to Steve King, executive director of the Trust, "We have seen the benefits that classroom pets provide to pre-school, elementary and middle school students and are excited to bring the Pets in the Classroom program into high schools for the first time with this expansion into 9<sup>th</sup> grade. We hope to accommodate other high school grades in the future, but are trying to work within our budget limitations and grow at a sustainable pace."

Studies, [including one completed by the American Humane Association and the Pet Care Trust](#), indicate that classroom pets provide a variety of benefit to students. These studies reinforce thousands of [teachers' experiences](#) that classroom pets: **aid in improving school attendance, encourage nurturing, build self esteem, promote empathy, teach responsibility, stimulate learning, enrich the classroom experience, and become friends.** One little pet can help shy kids open up, slower readers build confidence, rough children develop nurturing tendencies, and uninterested students gain a new desire for learning. And with over 90,000 grants having been issued since the program's inception, nearly 4 million children have experienced these benefits thanks to the Pets in the Classroom grant program.

The program was established by the Pet Care Trust with the knowledge that, while they are a valuable teaching tool, many teachers have very limited resources for the support of classroom animals. Through the grant program, teachers have the option to obtain a pet through one of the program's participating retailers- Petco, PetSmart, Pet Supermarket, Pet Supplies Plus, Petland, and Petland Discounts – or to purchase their pet through a local pet store through a rebate grant. Past grant recipients are not eligible to receive funding for a new classroom pet, but are welcoming to apply for a sustaining grant, which provides up to \$50 to maintain an existing classroom pet. With eight different grant types, each teacher has the opportunity to choose the grant that is right for him or her through a direct, no-hassle application on the Pets in the Classroom website ([www.PetsintheClassroom.org](http://www.PetsintheClassroom.org)).

For more information, visit [www.PetsintheClassroom.org](http://www.PetsintheClassroom.org).