

November 21, 2019

Adrienne Battle, Ph.D.
Interim Director of Schools
Metro Nashville Public Schools

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]

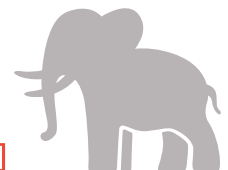
Dear Dr. Battle,

I'm writing from [TeachKind](#), PETA's humane education division, which works with thousands of educators nationwide to bring compassion into the classroom—after having seen [disturbing reports](#) that a teacher faces cruelty-to-animals charges following the death of an emu who had been kept at McGavock High School. It was also reported that an alpaca kept at the school died in March, allegedly of neglect, and that animal control investigators found issues involving various other animals. We've heard from many people in your school community who are understandably alarmed by these reports. **In light of these tragic incidents—which have sadly provided students with a dangerous model to emulate—we urge you to ban live animals from your district programs.** And we'd like to offer you and your staff TeachKind's free resources to help ensure that harmful incidents like these never again occur in your district.

These aren't the first reports of cruelty to animals that [PETA has documented](#) in the Nashville community. Just [this past October](#), a 12-year-old boy was charged with aggravated animal abuse after allegedly beating a cat and throwing her into a dumpster. [Last March](#), a teenager was arrested after reportedly dragging his dog down a north Nashville street while repeatedly striking the animal. In [July 2018](#), a Nashville teenager was charged after allegedly beating her boyfriend's puppy to death, and in [May 2018](#), a Nashville teenager was accused of throwing a rabbit across a room after a video of the event was reportedly posted on social media. As mental-health and law-enforcement experts well know, people who demonstrate a blatant lack of empathy and disregard for life by committing violent acts such as these may be on a dangerous path that could lead to further violence, including toward humans.

In light of this string of disturbing reports in your city, we'd like to work with you to implement humane education in your district and urge students to report cruelty to animals whenever they see it. A trauma-informed approach to education should include humane education, which will equip staff with the resources needed to help prevent further violence.

Given the current focus on addressing the national epidemic of bullying and its often tragic results, it's vital and timely that a standard of respect be set and that students understand that



harming *any* sentient being is wrong. The prevention of violence should be a priority in the classroom, especially considering that, according to [Tennessee law](#), teachers are encouraged to "help each student develop positive values and improve student conduct as students learn to act in harmony with their positive values and learn to become good citizens in their school, community and society." Incorporating humane education into your district's curriculum would give you the opportunity to reach kids before they potentially start to engage in violent behavior.

TeachKind is here to help—we'd like to offer the elementary schools in your district free "[Share the World](#)" curriculum kits along with teacher training. They're perfect tools for teaching young students the Golden Rule as well as the importance of compassion and empathy. We can also provide the middle and high schools in your district with free [anti-violence posters](#) from our youth division. They encourage students to report cruelty to animals whenever they encounter it, for everyone's sake—and displaying them in a prominent location could help save a life. Our staff is always available to send additional materials and suggest lesson plans from [TeachKind.org](#)—all free of charge. We'd like to help ensure that your efforts to teach kindness are successful.

On behalf of PETA's more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide, including many who proudly reside in Tennessee, thank you for your consideration. I hope to hear from you soon.

Respectfully,

Lisbet Chiriboga, M.S.Ed.
Program Manager

Cc: Robin Wall, Principal, McGavock High School (via e-mail: [REDACTED])

