

November 26, 2019

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

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]

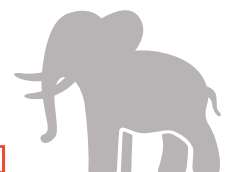
Dear Dr. Battle,

I'm writing from [TeachKind](#)—PETA's humane education division, which works with thousands of educators nationwide to bring compassion into the classroom—regarding the alarming number of reported cases of cruelty to animals by young people and now by a teacher in the city of Nashville.

We've heard from many people in your school community who are understandably alarmed by [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 several alpacas kept at the school died in March, allegedly of neglect, and that animal control investigators apparently found issues involving the care of various other animals as well. In light of these tragic incidents—which have unfortunately set a harmful example for students to emulate—we urge you to ban live animals from your district programs. We would also like to offer to provide your schools with TeachKind's free resources to help ensure that incidents like these never occur in your district again.

The recent reports of cruelty to animals by young people in Nashville, [documented by PETA](#), should be a red flag to the entire community. Just [last month](#), 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 kicking and striking him. 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. And now that a teacher, who is in a position of authority, has been charged, it's even more vital than ever that humane education be implemented districtwide for students as well as for staff.

Research shows that young people who witness animal abuse by someone they know are more likely to commit acts of cruelty themselves. There is also a growing body of research that recognizes that cruelty to animals by young people can be an early indicator of a tendency



toward violence against humans. In addition, cruelty to animals has been a common thread in the prior history of school shooters in recent years. So it's urgent that Nashville students receive empathy-building lessons in order to prevent future violence to all living, feeling beings.

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." In light of this string of disturbing reports in your city, it's critically important that a standard of respect be set and that students be taught that harming *any* sentient being is wrong. 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 can work with you to implement humane education in your district and urge students to report cruelty to animals whenever they see it. We'd like to offer the elementary schools in your district free "[Share the World](#)" curriculum kits along with teacher training. They're the perfect tool 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](http://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 on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Lisbet Chiriboga, M.S.Ed.  
Program Manager

