

November 18, 2022

ShaVon Savage, J.D.
Deputy Superintendent of Academic Services
School District of Philadelphia

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Savage:

I'm writing again from [TeachKind](#), PETA's humane education division, which works with thousands of educators throughout the U.S. to bring compassion into the curriculum. We saw another [report](#) of cruelty to animals involving minors out of Philadelphia. A group of children around the ages of 10 to 13 allegedly attacked a woman who was walking with her baby and her dog by throwing bleach at them, injuring the dog and resulting in what's expected to be thousands of dollars in veterinary fees. The dog's guardian reported that the animal was coughing up blood and may have permanent vision loss due to the attack. In light of this disturbing account and [the distressing incident](#) of cruelty to animals about which we wrote to your district in March, we urge you to equip your staff members with the tools they need to address students' aggressive actions, foster prosocial behavior throughout the entire student population, and help prevent further tragedies. To that end, we're sending you our free resources—including **"[Empathy Now](#)," our step-by-step trauma-informed guide to addressing and preventing youth violence against animals.**

[Salvador Ramos](#), [Payton Gendron](#), [Nikolas Cruz](#), [Ethan Crumbley](#), and many other school shooters (as well as many serial killers) share a history of cruelty to animals, and [Sandy Hook Promise](#) has cruelty to animals on its "[10 Critical Warning Signs of Violence](#)" list. As a leader in education, you're in a position to make it clear to the young people in your community that harming anyone, regardless of their species, is wrong. Many lives could depend on your doing so.

Our "[Rescue Stories](#)" [reading comprehension worksheets](#) are an excellent resource for starting a conversation with students about the importance of treating animals with kindness and respect. They were used in a first-of-its-kind [study](#) that found that students who read texts about having empathy for animals performed significantly better on Common Core-aligned test questions—proving that instructional time need not be sacrificed to instill compassion for animals in students. With several reading passages available for each grade level—each of which includes key vocabulary; questions to promote literal, inferential, and evaluative thinking; and an answer key for busy teachers—these worksheets would be easy to implement throughout your district. Many of them also feature heartwarming videos of animal rescues.

We're sending you another copy of our free "[Share the World](#)" curriculum. It's the perfect tool for teaching young students the Golden Rule and the importance of compassion and empathy. We're also sending you another copy of "[Challenging Assumptions](#)," our free secondary school curriculum designed to encourage empathy toward others regardless of species, race, gender, sexual identity, age, or ability.

Our offer to provide you and your teachers with additional materials and even host virtual presentations for your students, all free of charge, still stands. May I please hear from you as soon as possible?

Sincerely,

Andrew Burton
TeachKind Assistant

cc: Karyn T. Lynch, Chief of Student Support Services ([REDACTED])
Kevin Bethel, Chief Safety Officer ([REDACTED])
Joyce S. Wilkerson, Board of Education President ([REDACTED])

