

February 13, 2024

Denise Pendley
Principal
Southeast Whitfield High School

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]

I'm writing from [TeachKind](http://TeachKind.org), PETA's humane education division, which works with thousands of educators across the U.S. to promote compassion for animals. We were sad to see the [news](#) that eight pigs and five goats, including goats Bambi and Denver and pigs Crash and Edie, died in a barn fire on your school's property. The lives of these animals can never be replaced, but we have an idea we hope you'll like: Southeast Whitfield High School could honor their memory by allowing any remaining animals to go to a reputable sanctuary and by making the compassionate decision to stop using animals in its agriculture program. **PETA is ready to donate \$5,000 to your school to develop a plant-based agriculture program and to go toward repairs to the existing greenhouse if you commit to no longer using animals.**

Times are changing, and agriculture programs need not continue sending young people the harmful message that it's acceptable to exploit animals for awards, accolades, and money or to send their animal friends—even if they've cared for and bonded with them for months—to a violent, terrifying death at a slaughterhouse. Many young people join animal agriculture programs because they're interested in animals—but these programs demand that they develop a harmful disconnect from those very animals, the consequences of which can be detrimental. Each week, TeachKind is alerted to reports of cruelty-to-animals cases involving young people. Given the rampant bullying and youth violence in schools as well as the alarming cases of young people who abuse animals that regularly appear in the news, fostering empathy for all sentient beings is vital and timely.

We urge you to do so by adopting 21st century programming, which recognizes that the future of agriculture relies on growing crops instead of raising and killing animals for food to combat the climate catastrophe. Raising animals for food requires massive amounts of land, food, energy, and water. It's estimated that animal agriculture is responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions than all the world's transportation systems combined. According to the United Nations, a global shift toward a vegan diet is vital to combat the worst effects of the climate change. Your agricultural program could easily focus on helping young people grow into compassionate, responsible individuals who will make the world a better place for *everyone* by growing healthy fruits and vegetables.

At TeachKind, we're [former teachers](#), so we know that educators have the best intentions and want to build on students' natural interest in animals to cultivate qualities like responsibility and caring for other sentient beings as well as helping them develop career skills. But we can share these



essential lessons in ways that teach students that animals are *someone*, not *something*. Extending respect and kindness to all animals would be a great way to expand on your school's belief that everyone deserves to be "treated with dignity and respect." **Will Southeast Whitfield High School commit to ending the use of animals in its agriculture program?**

Our staff would be happy to discuss this issue with you and to assist with this compassionate change.

On behalf of PETA and our many members and supporters who live in Georgia, thank you in advance for your consideration of this important matter. I look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Julie Everett (she/her)

Correspondence and Project Administrator

[TeachKind](#) | PETA's Humane Education Division

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