

December 2, 2024

Andrew McRae
Chief Executive Officer
Breakthrough Public Schools

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. McRae:

I'm writing from [TeachKind](#), PETA's humane education division, which works with thousands of educators throughout the U.S. to help bring compassion for animals into their curricula. We saw a [report](#) out of Cleveland that authorities had arrested a pair of teens, ages 14 and 17, suspected of carjacking a woman at gunpoint while she was walking with her two dogs. The violent attack was captured on [surveillance video](#), and the disturbing footage appears to depict the teens ambushing the woman and one of them forcefully kicking one of her dogs as they attempted to steal the vehicle. The assault was the mere beginning of a "daylong crime wave."

While there is no indication that either of these individuals attends Breakthrough Public Schools, it's clear that [your community is grappling with the news](#), and your students have likely heard the reports as well. TeachKind is dedicated to providing free resources to help young people process such information and to assist leaders like you in the weighty task of preventing future acts of hostility and aggression.

As teachers and parents are increasingly aware, [an epidemic of youth violence is surging](#) throughout the U.S., and **your community is far from alone**. Whenever a case of a child who has abused an animal is reported, we reach out to area schools, offering free humane education tools to help them be proactive against future violence and build a kinder future for us all. Because, as we see in the surveillance video, [cruelty to animals and violence against humans are inextricably linked](#). So much so that it's even included in Sandy Hook Promise's list of "[10 Critical Warning Signs of Violence](#)".

Thankfully, that link works both ways: A recent [study](#) on the connection between violence against animals and violence against humans concluded, **"Teaching children to be more humane, compassionate, and respectful towards living beings can help reduce all types of violence."** Considering that communities across the country continue to experience violence with staggering frequency, it's vital that schools take every opportunity to encourage compassion and consideration in their students. Plus, research indicates that incorporating humane education can [help students academically](#), meaning there's no need to sacrifice teaching time.

To support this meaningful work without burdening your budget, we're sending you a selection of our free resources, including [Empathy Now](#), our step-by-step guide for schools to address and prevent youth violence against animals. This tool was developed with trauma-informed principles at its core as a direct response to frequent similar instances that have occurred nationwide. We're also sending a copy of our



[Elementary](#) and [Secondary](#) school programs, which are designed to encourage empathy and compassion, and assorted [books](#) about kindness to animals. And to remind kids that they have the power to help others by reporting abuse when they see it, we're sending a set of our [Empathy for All](#) posters, which can be displayed throughout your schools. We would be happy to send additional copies for your students and staff.

On behalf of PETA and our many members and supporters in Ohio, thank you for considering this important matter. I look forward to connecting with you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Julie Everett (she/her)
Correspondence and Project Administrator
[TeachKind](#) | PETA's Humane Education Division

cc: Dr. Ami Rudd, Chief Learning Officer ([REDACTED])
Marc Johnson, Managing Director of Schools ([REDACTED])

