

February 25, 2025

Pedro Martinez
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public Schools

Via e-mail: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Martinez:

I'm writing from [TeachKind](#), PETA's humane education division, which works with thousands of schools throughout the U.S. to help bring compassion for animals into the learning experience. We saw a [report](#) out of Chicago that four teens, ages 16 and 17, face charges for their alleged involvement in the killing of a coyote pup on January 11. A witness [reportedly](#) observed the teens repeatedly kicking and stomping the coyote before confronting the minors and calling the police. When authorities arrived, they found the pup's lifeless body, with an apparent puncture wound from an arrow; investigators allege the teens shot the canine with a bow and arrow before stomping them to death and fleeing the scene.

Whether or not these individuals attend Chicago Public Schools, it's clear that [your community is grappling with the news](#), with neighbors reportedly "[disgusted and dumbfounded](#)," and many people expressing concern for potential future violence. Your students have likely heard the news as well and TeachKind is dedicated to providing free resources to help them process such information and to assist leaders like you in the weighty task of preventing future hostility and aggression.

[An epidemic of youth violence is surging](#) throughout the U.S., and your district is far from alone. In light of this disturbing trend, we urge you to equip your staff members with humane education tools to address students to foster prosocial behavior and help them be proactive against future violence. Because, **as mental health and law-enforcement experts know well, [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, this 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.**" Research indicates that incorporating humane education can [help students academically](#), and doing so would support your district's compliance with [Illinois' mandate](#) requiring teachers to provide character education instruction that includes "kindness," "respect for others, and moral courage."

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, a set of our [Empathy for All](#) posters 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 Illinois, thank you for considering 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

Cc: Bogdana Chkoumbova, Chief Education Officer ([REDACTED])
Nicole Milberg, Chief of Teaching and Learning ([REDACTED])
Charles Mayfield, Chief Operating Officer ([REDACTED])

