No-Idling Resolution for Schools

WHEREAS, idling of motor vehicles contributes to global warming and is linked to asthma, decreased lung function, cardiac disease, cancer, and other serious health problems; and

WHEREAS, asthma is the most common chronic illness among children, the largest cause of school absences, and is the third leading cause of hospitalization among children under the age of 15 years; and

WHEREAS, hospitalizations for several common diseases—including septicemia (serious bloodstream infection), fluid and electrolyte disorders, renal failure, urinary tract infections, and skin and tissue infections—have been linked for the first time with short-term exposure to fine particulate air pollution (PM2.5), according to a comprehensive new study led by Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; and

WHEREAS, asthma severity is higher in certain racial groups, making children of these ethnic groups more susceptible to other respiratory problems when idling is present, creating an environmental and social injustice; and

WHEREAS, in Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health series, “Take 2,” Douglas Dockery, chair of the Department of Environmental Health, speaks about how air pollution can reduce people’s life expectancy and why it’s a global problem. We must protect the students, teachers, parents, grandparents, stakeholders and the community from the effects of car exhaust due to unnecessary idling, or running of the engine while the car is parked; and

WHEREAS, according to a study from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, “Air pollution within legal limits may increase risk of early death. Current limits on fine particulate matter in the air set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may not be sufficient to protect elderly people from the risk of premature death from air pollution”; and

WHEREAS, as increasing numbers of the population suffer from respiratory illnesses, viruses such as COVID-19 affect those with lung conditions and related respiratory diseases at substantially higher rates than those without; and

WHEREAS, one minute of idling puts more carbon monoxide into the air than smoking 3 packs of cigarettes, as stated in California resolution ACR-160 Motor Vehicle Idling: Children; and

WHEREAS, children’s lungs are still developing and are especially at risk of developing health problems when they are exposed to elevated levels of pollutants. Monitoring at schools has shown higher levels of benzene, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, and other air toxics during the afternoon hour coinciding with parents picking up their children; and

WHEREAS, emissions from gasoline and diesel powered vehicles contribute a multitude of potentially harmful pollutants that can trigger an asthma attack and other ailments; and

WHEREAS, vehicle idling occurs on school drop off and pick up locations and parking lots where children are more highly exposed to air pollutant emissions; and

WHEREAS, emissions from gasoline and diesel powered vehicles contribute significantly to air pollution, including greenhouse gases, ozone formation, and fine particulates; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children’s exposure to diesel exhaust particles should be decreased and that idling of diesel vehicles in places where children live and congregate should be minimized to protect their health; and

WHEREAS, diesel vehicles emit numerous carcinogenic chemicals, including benzene and

formaldehyde, and; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that all vehicle emissions account for as many as half of all cancers attributed to outdoor air pollution; and

WHEREAS, we can avoid producing unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions and exposure to air toxics by reducing or eliminating wasteful vehicle idling; and

WHEREAS, a car idling for 10 minutes uses as much fuel as it takes to travel 5 miles and uses more than 27 gallons of fuel a year; and

WHEREAS, for every gallon of gasoline used, the average car produces about 20 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO2), the largest contributor to greenhouse climate change, with one-third of greenhouse gas emissions coming from the transportation sector; and

WHEREAS, idling more than 10 seconds uses more fuel and emits more pollutants than turning a warm engine off and on again; 4 and idling is not generally beneficial to a vehicle’s engine because it wears engine parts; and

WHEREAS, at least 27 other states and the District of Columbia have laws imposing restrictions on idling at schools; and

WHEREAS, all of the problems associated with idling as mentioned before pose threats to social, racial, climate and environmental justice; and

WHEREAS, social, racial, climate and environmental justice must be preserved through the implementation of a no-idling resolution;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the ----- Unified School District supports the adoption of Idle Free Zones on school grounds, including a pledge by school bus drivers, school employees and parents to:

● Turn off vehicles when parents are parked and waiting to pick up and drop off children.

● Staff and delivery drivers to turn off vehicles when parked.

● Installing Idle Free Zone signs at school drop-off and pick-up locations.

● Adopt goal for the use of zero emission buses for all bus routes depending on funding availability.

● Maintain existing buses properly to reduce exhaust.

● Complete school bus driver training on eliminating idling.

● Conduct and/or support broad education of school employees, parents, students and the public about the health, environmental and economic impacts of idling and ways to reduce idling.

● Develop and enforce regulations to allow only limited idling as needed for health and safety, such as to operate equipment to accommodate students or vehicle occupants with disabilities.

● Study the feasibility of relocating school building air intake systems away from parking areas when practical and shall consider other measures to reduce intake of vehicle exhaust where relocating intake systems is not feasible.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, copies of this resolution be shared with PTA organizations, VTA, CSEA, and other school related organizations.