

CALL TO CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

Calling on Congress and State Legislatures to Act on Climate to Protect Students

WHEREAS, we believe America is a great nation and has proud heritage of addressing humanity's most pressing problems;

WHEREAS, we believe it is important to advocate for climate action leading to climate restoration to curtail one of the greatest threats facing communities throughout the world; and,

WHEREAS, we believe that climate change is not a partisan issue and that local, state, and national policies should be guided by the best available science; and,

WHEREAS, there is a broad scientific consensus among climate scientists that human activities, contributing to increases in greenhouse gas emissions, are the dominant cause of climate change. 97% of climate scientists; and,

WHEREAS, children represent a particularly vulnerable group because greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere will continue to accumulate over the coming decades and will profoundly impact our current students throughout their lives, as well as the lives of future generations; and,

WHEREAS, in the aftermath of the climate-related 2017 Tubb's fire which destroyed the homes of more than 1400 students in Sonoma County, the Sonoma County Office of Education has encouraged school districts to engage in non-partisan climate advocacy; more than 50 school boards and student councils in California, Colorado, New York, Virginia, Oregon, New Mexico, Ohio, North Carolina, and Nevada have passed non-partisan climate action resolutions;

WHEREAS, in 2015 the California PTA has declared climate change a children's issue;

WHEREAS, the _____ School Board recognizes climate change as a generational justice and human rights issue; and,

WHEREAS, climate change is a social justice and equity issue. While climate change impacts *all* people and disproportionately impacts *all* young people and future generations, it disproportionately affects people of color and people in poverty, thereby exacerbating existing inequities and limiting equality of opportunity which is a foundational aspiration for modern America;

WHEREAS, 21 youth claimants are currently asserting a constitutional right for a livable climate in the *Juliana v. U.S.* case currently in federal courts and dozens of other youth claimants are making similar claims in state courts around the country; and

WHEREAS, the global impact, urgency, and magnitude of the challenge of addressing climate change calls for leadership in all sectors of society, all institutions and all elected leaders; and,

WHEREAS, national and state elected leaders working in a bipartisan fashion to enact carbon pricing policies could quickly substantially reduce human-made greenhouse gas emissions; and,

WHEREAS, we work to ensure that all _____ students graduate as _____ (link to mission statement/LCAP of school district)

WHEREAS the _____ School Board celebrates existing district sustainability initiatives such as:

a. *Enumerate existing district initiatives*

WHEREAS, the _____ school board recognizes and understands the significant negative impact that rapid and ongoing climate change has on America's schools, students, and their communities.

LET IT THEREFORE BE RESOLVED THAT, _____ shall direct the Superintendent to establish a Climate Change Committee to develop recommendations for taking action on climate change that are within the purview of the District, such as:

- a) curricular and educational opportunities such as climate literacy, climate advocacy, and climate justice curriculum and graduation requirements;
- b) facilities and operational priorities and projects including transportation, purchasing, maintenance, landscaping, and construction;
- c) climate-friendly food service: including initiatives to increase plant-based and lower meat recipe menu planning and food waste reduction programs;
- d) targets for reducing District greenhouse gas emissions and carbon budgeting; and,
- e) engagement and non-partisan advocacy with local, state and federal jurisdictions for commonsense climate policies that protect current and future students.

The Committee shall be open to participation by board members, administration, staff, parents, students, and community members, and shall provide quarterly reports of its activities to the Board of Trustees.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the _____ Board of Education calls on Congress and our State Legislature to swiftly enact common sense state and national climate policies, such as:

- +revenue-neutral carbon-fee-and-dividend;
- +100% clean energy transition plans that include safety nets and training for transitioning workers;
- +green infrastructure and technology investments that meet the urgency, scope, and scale outlined in the [IPCC's Special Report, "Global Warming of 1.5 Degrees Celsius,"](#)
- +investments in forestry and regenerative agriculture to drawdown CO2 from the atmosphere and sequester in soils and biomass;

in order to restore the climate to protect young people and future generations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education directs the district clerk to transmit official copies of this resolution to the following: the Superintendent of County Schools, the school boards of all school districts in the County, all student councils in our district, the district educators' unions, all district PTA's, all California county Superintendents of Schools, the State

Superintendent of Education and the California State Board of Education, the Congressional Climate Solutions Caucus, the California School Boards Association, the National School Board Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, all California members of Congress, and the Schools for Climate Action campaign.

Rationale

Research demonstrates that climate change adversely affects students' physical and mental health and negatively impacts student achievement.

The damages caused by natural catastrophes and extreme weather events devastate local economies and therefore schools.

In 2017, the Government Accounting Agency reported that the impact of climate change to the United States was approximately \$350 billion for the preceding 10 years, and is projected to cost at least \$35 billion annually from now until 2050 when it will increase to as much as \$112 billion annually by the end of the century.

A report by the Universal Ecological Fund places the annual cost at \$240 billion. These figures did not include the devastating California wildfires of 2017/2018, the destruction caused by Hurricane Harvey in South Texas, loss of Alaskan permafrost and coastal land mass, significant droughts in the western United States, increases in insect population growth leading to destruction of crops, and projected loss of low lying land in Florida, Virginia, Texas, California, and Louisiana.

Research by the World Meteorological Organization concluded that 80 percent of natural disasters between 2005 and 2015 were in some way climate related.

The insurance industry has recognized the impact of climate change. In 2010 the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) adopted an Insurer Climate Risk Disclosure Survey in response to The Potential Impact of Climate Change on Insurance Regulation white paper released by the NAIC in 2008. "The disclosure of climate risk is important because of the potential impact climate change can have on insurer solvency and the availability and affordability of insurance across all major categories."

In addition to the projected costs due to major flooding affecting coastal schools, there will be increased electricity demands due to heat and air quality for inland schools requiring increasing amounts of air conditioning and possible indoor gyms for physical education and athletics.

The specific costs to school infrastructure including the loss of buildings and lands as well as declines in tax revenue and increases in insurance rates has not been determined, however it is expected to be billions of dollars. It is vital that climate change be slowed so that school districts and their communities can spend precious dollars in classrooms to support the students of today and for future generations.

Climate Change Impacts on Mental Health References (from E. Haase, MD yet-to-be published):

Suicides increase when there is an increase in temperature. Rates of suicide increase in different studies have been variable, but averaged 1% per 1C in one recent meta-analysis,

separate from other meteorological variables that have been linked to suicide risk (Gao et al 2019). Climate explained up to 37.6% of the variance in suicides in another study, more than economic distress (Fountoulakis et al 2016). If climate change continues on its current course, Burke et al estimated 14,020 additional temperature-based suicides in the United States alone by 2050, equivalent to the impact of all current suicide prevention programs (Burke et al 2018).

Another psychiatric consequence of heat is its impact, directly and indirectly, on aggressive behavior. With every 1C increase in temperature, there is a 4% increase in interpersonal and intergroup violence. This can be seen in behavior in a wide range of circumstances, from aggression on the baseball field, (Larrick et al 2011) to homicide and violence rates in domestic settings (Hsiang et al 2013). Projections indicate nine excess violent crimes per 100,000 people per 2 degree Fahrenheit temperature rise (Anderson, 1989). They suggest that by 2099, the USA will have seen 22,000 murders, 180,000 rapes, 1.2 million aggravated assaults, 2.3 million simple assaults, 260,000 robberies, 1.3 million burglaries, 2.2 million cases of larceny, and 580,000 cases of vehicle theft in excess of what would be expected at current temperatures (Ransom 2014).

The most obvious and immediate health impacts of air pollution are on the respiratory system. Fuel-based irritants increase rates of asthma and other respiratory illness and also inhibit lung development in children. The resulting smaller total lung volumes are associated with poorer overall health and brain health (Perera FP, 2016). The psychosocial impacts of respiratory illness, particularly for children and families, also significantly stress those impacted, leading to hundreds of dollars per year in costs, lost work and school days, and impaired capacity to participate in exercise and social activities, both vital for mental well-being and development. The total burden of particle and ozone pollution has been estimated at about four million premature deaths per year (Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network, 2017). Air pollution has been estimated to add \$100 billion per year in health costs for seven first world countries.

The magnitude of cerebral damage associated with this carbon-based air pollution cannot be overstated. Starting in utero, and progressing through childhood and the adult life span, this neuronal damage has been associated with greater rates of intrauterine growth retardation, smaller brain volume, increased rates of autism and behavioral disorders such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, decreases in childhood and adult IQ scores, adult depression, and earlier onset of dementia. Compared to those raised in clean air environments, children in highly polluted environments such as Mexico City, have relatively smaller brain volumes beginning in utero and reaching a volume deficit of twenty-five percent by teen years (Perera 2016, Calderon-Garciduenes et al, 2016).