

November 4, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

The Climate Psychiatry Alliance is a group of psychiatrists that works to understand the mental health impacts of climate change and to raise awareness of these impacts in the general public and our profession. We work to protect human mental health through advancement of scientific information, actions that foster resilience, collaboration and advocacy. Our goals are both to mitigate negative impacts of global warming and to provide strategies for adaptation to these difficult conditions.

The Climate Psychiatry Alliance provides this letter in current and future support of the work of S4CA and all allied student and teacher groups.

We support any and all initiatives to make students and schools better able to:

1. Understand and educate about the science of global warming.
2. Mitigate the impacts of global warming
3. Help children and parents adapt to the impact of global warming.

The rationale for taking action related to climate change in schools is as follows:

1. The burning of fossil fuels and the effects of global warming have numerous negative effects on the ability of children to develop mentally and emotionally. These include:
  - a. Marked increase in neurodevelopmental and behavioral disorders associated with childhood exposure to fossil fuel particulates in the air.
  - b. Marked declines in cognitive development associated with air pollution and heat impacts on children's developing brains.
  - c. Emotional risks to children that impair learning from exposure to the indirect consequences of global warming that impair learning, including the development of PTSD, depression, bipolar disorder, increased risks of suicide, and others associated with exposure to fires, extreme weather, poorer nutrition, and loss of exposure to healthy outdoor environments.
  - d. Emotional, practical and educational risks to children associated with consequences of global warming, including disruptions in schooling from displacement, security and violence risks associated with higher temperatures and other stresses associated with global warming such as lesser nutrition.
  - e. Lack of future opportunity for children to maximize the benefits of school education due to negative impacts of global warming as above.
2. In the face of desperate and obvious need to act to slow climate change, lack of action on climate change by institutions, teachers, parents and governments to mitigate global warming has multiple traumatic effects on children, including demoralization, development of hopelessness and defiance, and experiences of neglect and abuse that are associated with poor long term educational and emotional outcomes.

The goal for schools should be to create an environment that maximizes student outcomes. This should include:

1. Carbon neutrality
2. School and community measures that draw down local carbon to create optimal health conditions including clean air, water, and optimal nutritional conditions as well as gradual improvement of local and global natural conditions.
3. Educational curriculae that educate children about global warming, its impacts, and measures to mitigate and adapt to these impacts on the levels of care of the natural world, scientific advancement, public policy, and emotional and physical self-care.
4. Modeling and training for responsible informed behavior by adults charged with stewardship of the students' learning environment that demonstrates concern for student short and long term welfare and actively opposes actions associated with bullying, abuse and neglect of valid concerns and emotional distress.

Psychiatrists associated with the Climate Psychiatry Alliance are available for consultation and educational programs for students, parents, teachers, and school officials in order to implement these goals.

We stand with S4CA and all allied school districts in encouraging the adaptation of initiatives to enact these measures.

Sincerely,

The Steering Committee of the Climate Psychiatry Alliance

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