



Schools for Climate Action

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Empowered by Youth Activist, Fifth Local School Board Speaks Up for Climate Action to Protect Current and Future Students

Sonoma County School Board Members Lead Nation in Non-Partisan Call for Climate Action to Protect Current and Future Students

On Wednesday, February 28, 2018, the Trustees of the Santa Rosa City Schools (SRCS) unanimously and enthusiastically passed [Resolution #2017/18-034: Commitment to Climate Change Action](#).

Modeled after the Sebastopol Union School District resolution of 12.4.17, the SRCS “Commitment to Climate Change Action” recognizes climate change as a “children’s issue” and states that the urgency and magnitude of climate change requires leadership from “all leaders and all institutions”. Furthermore, the resolution commits the district to “work collaboratively with the school community to develop recommendations for taking action on climate change that are within the purview of the District, such as: curricular and educational opportunities; facilities and operational priorities and projects; targets for reducing District greenhouse gas emissions; and engagement with local state and federal jurisdictions.”

Before the board voted, Schools for Climate Action youth leader and Montgomery High School sophomore, Celeste Palmer urged school board members to consider that, “school board members are the only elected officials whose primary focus is to ensure a good future for youth, and therefore it makes sense that you take the lead on mitigating climate change.” While grateful for the board’s consideration of the resolution, Celeste also encouraged the board to “consider releasing a carbon pricing resolution in the future.” Celeste explained that carbon pricing “is a crucial tool for mitigating the effects of climate change.”

Schools for Climate Action Co-Founder, Park Guthrie, thanked the board for considering this resolution and urged them to pass it because “our nation needs reminding of our great heritage and our present greatness...Our national inaction on climate change is a betrayal of our great heritage.” He continued, “this is not who we are; it is not the



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American way to run from this great problem; to turn our backs on our children and future generations. We are better than this.” Furthermore, he urged educators everywhere to be silent no longer because as mandated reporters “we are bound by law to speak up when we suspect neglect or abuse...we can be silent no longer. Inaction on climate change is, at best, intergenerational neglect on a massive scale. We can be silent no longer.” Guthrie suggested that by speaking with an organized, non-partisan, respectful and patriotic voice, educators could help break the logjam on common-sense climate policies in DC.

There are 14,000 school boards in the country with roughly 90,000 school board members. To date, Schools for Climate Action has found [ten school boards](#) consisting of about 50 school board members who have spoken up for action to address climate change as a children’s issue or to protect students. Schools for Climate Action notices a disconnect between school board discourse about climate change and the magnitude of the lifetime risk of harm due to climate change that current and future students will face. Schools for Climate Action believes there may be a [spiral of silence](#) effect at work.

“School board members like those brave Trustees of Santa Rosa City Schools, Sonoma Valley Union School District, the Sonoma County Office of Education, the Sebastopol Union and Ross Valley school districts help break the spiral of silence on climate change and drive a paradigm shift that may help build public will for science-based climate policies to protect all children. Conversely, silence about the fact that climate change is a generational justice issue may be dangerous and may diminish the possibilities and quality of life of current and future students. As the only elected leaders with a singular focus on the well-being and future success of children, all 90,000 school board members in the nation can speak up,” explained Park Guthrie, a 6th grade teacher and Schools for Climate Action co-founder. “Passing climate change resolutions helps close feedback loops between those who nurture our children (schools and school leaders) and those who create climate policy (Members of Congress and state legislatures). If enough school boards speak up about generational climate justice like Sebastopol Union School District, Ross Valley School District, Sonoma County Office of Education, Sonoma Valley Unified School District, and now Santa Rosa City Schools have done, this great nation may yet be able to muster our creativity, knowledge, and resources to address the issue in a swift and effective manner.”

Schools for Climate Action is a non-partisan, grassroots, volunteer, youth-adult, patriotic campaign started by a group of students, parents, and teachers in western Sonoma. They have a mission to empower school communities to speak up for climate action in order to protect current and future students. Currently, there are Schools for Climate



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Action supporters working on local school board and student council climate resolutions in more than 14 public school districts and independent schools in California. In addition, there are Schools for Climate Action supporters working on climate change resolutions in public school districts in Ohio and Colorado.

Please join the Schools for Climate Action campaign at our Working Summit on Sunday, March 11th from 2-4 at the Sebastopol Grange. We also hold monthly virtual meetings on the 2nd Thursdays from 5:30 to 6:30 Pacific Time. Details on our website.

For more information about [Schools for Climate Action](#), please contact Park Guthrie at park.guthrie.jr@gmail.com or (510) 691-5051 or visit our website at www.schoolsforclimateaction.weebly.com
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