



# Schools for Climate Action

## For Immediate Release

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**Caption:** Youth climate advocates celebrate passage of WSCUHSD's Commitment to Climate Change Action outside the El Molino Library on Wednesday, March 7th, 2018. Kai G. (9th grade, second from left), Roman G. (8th grade, third from left), Gavin R. (8th grade, fourth from left), and Kaya W. (12th grade, far right) gave statements in favor of the resolution during the board discussion. Also in support were Tosh S. (8th grade), Madelyne R. (9th grade), and Lila W. (9th grade). Kaya W. was the youth leader on the Schools for Climate Action advocacy team working with WSCUHSD. Kai G. and Kaya W. are Co-Founders of Schools for Climate Action along with several other local youth, parents, and teachers. "We will NOT be silent on this issue," explained Kaya W.

### **Empowered by Youth Advocates, Sixth 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**

**West Sonoma County Union High School District (WSCUHSD): Strongest Climate Action Resolution by Any School Board in the Nation?**

On Wednesday, March 7th, 2018, the Trustees of the West Sonoma County Union High School District (SRCS) unanimously and enthusiastically passed [Resolution #15.MARCH.2017-2018: Commitment to Climate Change Action](#). (Note: The resolution was amended during the board meeting. The passed version includes the section at the end of the press release).

Modeled after the Sonoma County Office of Education resolution of 2.1.18, the WSCUHSD "Commitment to Climate Change Action" recognizes climate change as a "human issue" and states that the urgency and magnitude of climate change requires leadership from "all leaders and all institutions". Furthermore, the resolution states that "elected leaders working in a bipartisan fashion to enact carbon pricing policies could substantially reduce or eliminate net human-made greenhouse gas emissions, thereby



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protecting our current and future students.” This may be the 3rd official mention about carbon pricing as a policy tool by any school board in the nation. Furthermore, the Trustees of WSCUHSD urge “local schools to engage in non-partisan advocacy and engagement with local, state, and federal jurisdictions advocating for reducing the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions.”

The amendment to the resolution adds language creating a school district climate change committee to make quarterly board reports with follow-up recommendations the school district can make. This echoes the language in [Sebastopol Union School District’s Climate Change Resolution](#) of 12.4.17.

Before the board voted, Schools for Climate Action co-founder and Analy High School senior, Kaya Weber thanked the Superintendent and Trustees for considering the resolution. She urged Trustees to pass the resolution explaining, “tonight, we have a chance to show our students, teachers, parents, and community members that we mean business, and we will NOT be silent on this issue.”

Schools for Climate Action co-founder, Kai Guthrie (9th grader), also thanked the board for considering this resolution. He explained that we already have the technology, scientific understanding, and economic incentive to solve climate change. “What we need is public will for common sense national climate action.” Kai urged Trustees to, “raise your voice and lead the growing chorus of local community leaders driving out the silence and demanding large scale national climate action.” He closed by explaining this resolution would help “protect current and future students.”

Board President Dave Stechter explained that normally he does not support resolutions which do not directly relate to issues in the schools. He explained his exception in this case by comparing climate change to a 10-mile wide “meteor heading straight for Earth. . .we know it’s coming.” Superintendent Steve Kellner stated that there is no debate about climate science, calling climate change a “scientific fact”. Trustee Lori Bruhner explained that she was “proud” her board was considering this resolution. Support for this resolution was unanimous and enthusiastic.

There are 14,000 school boards in the country with roughly 90,000 school board members. To date, Schools for Climate Action has found eleven [school boards](#) consisting of about 55 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



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students will face. Schools for Climate Action believes there may be a [spiral of silence](#) effect at work.

“School board members can break the spiral of silence on climate change and help drive a paradigm shift that may help build public will for science-based climate policies to protect all children. Silence about generational climate 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 the Trustees of West Sonoma County Union High School District 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. There are leaders from across the political spectrum, [Republicans and Democrats](#), who support bipartisan climate solutions but they need the American people to demonstrate public will for bold action. No one, liberal or conservative, has to sacrifice their political identity to speak up for climate action. The educational sector across the country can follow Sonoma county educational leaders and speak with one non-partisan and respectful voice; educational leaders can help unite all Americans who love our great country and our country’s great children to break the logjam on climate action in DC.”

Schools for Climate Action is a non-partisan, grassroots, volunteer, youth-adult 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 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.

\*Amendment added to text of resolution during Board Meeting:



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*LET IT THEREFORE BE RESOLVED THAT, the Board 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;*
- (c) targets for reducing District greenhouse gas emissions; and,*
- (d) engagement and non-partisan advocacy with local, state and federal jurisdictions for science-based 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.*

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

[www.schoolsforclimateaction.weebly.com](http://www.schoolsforclimateaction.weebly.com)

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[Schools for Climate Action Working Summit](#) at the Sebastopol Grange on Sunday 3.11.18 from 2-4