

Student Government Climate Action Resolution

The Asheville High School Student Government Association recognizes and understands the significant negative impact that rapid and ongoing climate change has on America's schools, students, and their communities, and recognizes the following:

1. There is consensus among scientists that human activities which create greenhouse gas emissions are the dominant cause of climate change.
2. We believe that climate change is not a partisan or political issue and that local, state, and national policies should be guided by the best available science.
3. The global impact, urgency, and magnitude of climate change calls for leadership and action in all sectors of society, all institutions, and all elected leaders.
4. [Research](#) demonstrates that climate change adversely affects students' physical and mental health and negatively impacts student achievement¹.
5. The damages caused by natural catastrophes and extreme weather events devastate local economies and schools.
6. In 2017, the Government Accounting Agency reported that the impact of climate change to the United States was approximately \$350 billion for the past 10 years, and is expected to reach \$112 billion annually by the end of the century. These figures did not include many recent events, such as the devastating California wildfires of 2017/2018 or the destruction caused by Hurricane Harvey in South Texas and Hurricane Florence throughout North Carolina. Research by the World Meteorological Organization concluded that 80 percent of natural disasters between 2005 and 2015 were in some way climate related.
7. 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.
8. Young people are disproportionately impacted by national climate inaction. Greenhouse gases will continue to accumulate over the coming decades and will create a profound burden throughout our lives, as well as the lives of future generations.
9. In October 2017, [Buncombe County Commission](#) adopted a resolution calling for a county-wide transition to 100% renewable energy by 2030.

¹ Climate Change and Mental Health Connections. (n.d.). Retrieved December 3, 2018, from <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/climate-change-and-mental-health-connections>

10. In April 2018, [Asheville City Council](#) adopted legislation for a carbon fee and dividend policy to address climate change².
11. In October of 2018, [Asheville City Council](#) adopted a resolution calling for an city-wide transition to 100% renewable energy by 2030³.
12. In 2018 more than 25 school boards have passed non-partisan resolutions building political will for national climate action to protect students.
13. The American Federation of Teachers, on February 3, 2017 passed “A Just Transition to a Peaceful and Sustainable Economy.” “The resolution outlines the broad consensus on the need for climate action and affirms AFT’s commitment to climate justice, including support for legislation that places a fee on carbon pollution”⁴.
14. 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.

Due to these facts, the AHS Student Government Association states the following:

1. We declare climate change a generational justice and human rights issue.
2. We call on Congress to swiftly end 30 years of climate neglect by enacting national policies to restore the climate for the good of young people and of future generations.
3. We thank the school boards who have spoken up for climate justice by passing their own climate action resolutions. We encourage the remaining 13,000+ school boards in the country, including the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, should go beyond mandating every NC students to learn about climate change (in Earth & Environmental Science) by passing their own climate resolution.
4. We encourage all student councils, teachers’ unions, PTA’s, and education support organizations to pass climate action resolutions similar to ours, calling on Congress to enact climate policies to protect current and future students.

² Burleson, A. (n.d.). City Council Meeting Materials. Retrieved December 3, 2018, from https://www.ashevillenc.gov/departments/city_clerk/city_council_minutes.htm

³ Burleson, A. (n.d.). City Council Meeting Materials. Retrieved December 3, 2018, from https://www.ashevillenc.gov/departments/city_clerk/city_council_minutes.htm

⁴ Gable, M. (2018, January 22). America's teachers speak up for climate action. Retrieved December 3, 2018, from

<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/americas-teachers-speak-climate-action/>

In addition:

The Asheville High Student Government Association celebrates existing local sustainability initiatives such as:

- *The existing Environmental Committee and its work*
- *The Zero Waste initiative*
- *Asheville's ClimateCon and Climate City Expos*
- *Local cleanup organizations such as the Steady Collective*

We encourage our school district to develop a Climate Action Plan addressing these areas:

- Buildings and Grounds
- Operations and Transportation
- Plant-forward, climate friendly food service
- Encourage classes to increase the amount of climate literacy
- Administration's public advocacy for climate action
- Partnerships with local, regional, state, and national agencies and organizations to advance our response to climate change

We direct our student council secretary to transmit official copies of this resolution to our school administration, the Schools for Climate Action campaign, all student councils in our district and neighboring districts, our district, county, and state school boards, our district teachers union and PTA, the State School Boards Association, all North Carolina members of Congress, the Congressional Climate Solutions Caucus, and the National School Board Association (NSBA).

Votes:

Ayes: _____ Noes: _____ Abstentions: _____

Signed:

President

Vice-President

Representative

On _____

