Diesel Exhaust and School Bus Idling: What You Should Know

School districts can help reduce children's exposure to diesel exhaust around school buses by taking some simple steps to reduce idling time.

Why Should School Districts Upgrade School Buses in Their Fleets?

School buses remain the safest way to transport children, and their diesel engines are both durable and economical. However, the Texas Education Agency reports that more than 33 percent of the school buses in local fleets are more than 10 years old. In the years since these vehicles were purchased, several advancements in vehicle and engine technology have helped reduce emissions from school buses.

Recommended Actions to Reduce Diesel Pollution

There are a number of steps that schools can take to reduce exposure to diesel exhaust.

Adopt Idling Guidelines

School bus drivers should turn off their buses as they arrive at loading or unloading areas to eliminate idling time and reduce harmful emissions.

Work Closely with School Districts and Bus Drivers to Support the Idling Guidelines

- Inform bus drivers of the health benefits from reducing diesel exhaust by not idling.
- Highlight the dollar savings of reduced fuel consumption as a result of less idling. A typical school bus burns approximately one-half gallon of diesel fuel for each hour it idles. If a school district operates 50 buses 180 days a year and each bus reduces its idling time by 30 minutes per day, at an average of $2.00 per gallon of diesel fuel, the school district would save $4,500 per school year in fuel costs. The table below shows the amount spent on idling alone as the price of fuel increases.

Price of diesel fuel	Amount spent on idling for 50 buses annually
$2.50	$5,625
$3.00	$6,750
$3.50	$7,875
$4.00	$9,000

Texas Clean School Bus Program

What is the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality Doing?

Funding Vehicle Retrofits

Funding may be available through the Texas Clean School Bus Program to help school districts when purchasing and installing emissions reduction technologies such as diesel particulate filters, diesel oxidation catalysts, and crankcase filters.

Funding Vehicle Replacements

Funding may be available to school districts located in designated counties through a separate TCEQ program, the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP). TERP grants cover part of the cost of buying a new, lower-emitting school bus. You can find out more about the TERP grants and how your district might qualify at <terpgrants.org>.

TexasCleanSchoolBus.org

For more information about the Texas Clean School Bus Program, or to find out more about how your school district can reduce school bus emissions, call the TCEQ at 512-239-3100, or e-mail <cleanbus@tceq.texas.gov>.

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