

September 24, 2015

Dear Parent or Guardian:

On September 15, 2015 the Utah State Office of Education hosted a press event where a declaration from Governor Gary R. Herbert was presented by his Deputy Chief of Staff, Michael Mower. The declaration recognizes the excellent efforts of our school bus drivers and many of our elementary schools. It also encourages all Utah residents to help improve our air by turning off vehicles whenever reasonable instead of idling.

I would like to share some information about what public education has been doing over the last eight years to support air quality initiatives and to invite your participation as efforts are continued. Eight years ago, in partnership with Utah Clean Cities, the National Energy Foundation, and local school districts and charter schools, the Utah State Office of Education implemented a school bus idling reduction program. Currently, the program has reduced consumption of more than 644,000 gallons of fuel amounting to a savings of over \$1.6 million for the school districts/charter schools and reduced approximately 45,000 lbs. of harmful particulate matter, benefiting air quality throughout the state.

Turn Your Key Be Idle Free, a familiar slogan across the state of Utah, began in 2007 as a pilot training program for bus drivers. It was so successful that in 2009, Governor Huntsman recognized 3,000 Utah School Bus Drivers for their efforts that saved over 90,000 gallons of fuel and reduced several tons of pollutants from the air.

Our school bus drivers across the state are challenging parents to join them in protecting the air our children breathe by reducing idling. In support of these efforts, I am encouraging parents to join the annual Idle Free Utah Challenge this year. Utah Clean Cities, in partnership with UCAIR, has provided auto decals for the parents or guardians of student riders. Idle free facts can be found on the following web site: www.utahcleancities.org/

I invite parents, guardians, families and neighbors of our students to join in the Idle Free Challenge to Turn the Key - Be Idle Free. Please join us in this campaign for a healthier Utah for our children.

Sincerely,



Brad C. Smith
State Superintendent of Public Instruction