

NHBOE Climate Emergency Resolution

RESOLUTION OF THE NEW HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION ENDORING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN AND RESTORE A SAFE CLIMATE.

WHEREAS: in 2019 New Haven Board of Alders declared that we face an existential climate emergency that threatens our city, region, state, nation, human civilization, and the natural world; and

WHEREAS: President Biden said climate change is, “an existential threat to our lives, to our economy. And the threat is here. It’s not going to get any better. The nation and the world are in peril”; and

WHEREAS; our children will face a future that will be very chaotic and dangerous with unprecedented climate shocks without significant immediate reductions in greenhouse gas emissions: and

WHEREAS; as reported by the Aspen Institute in their [K12 Climate Action Plan](#), “the education sector has yet to establish its role in addressing climate change, and large-scale climate solutions too often overlook the role education can play, “ and “envision(s) a future where America’s over 100,000 schools are models for climate action, climate solutions, and sustainability, and the 50 million children and youth in these schools are prepared to succeed in the clean economy and lead a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable society”; and

WHEREAS: a rising sea level and more intense precipitation due to global warming can cause home displacements, disrupt the availability of reliable drinking water, enhance the likelihood of the propagation of water-borne diseases to the 2.2 million people who live on Connecticut’s 217 miles of Long Island Sound shoreline; and

WHEREAS: New Haven is ranked 11th of 100 US metropolitan cities that are most challenging to live with asthma by Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America in large part because of the burning of fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS: life expectancy in New Haven is lower than surrounding towns, due in part to poor air quality, which causes respiratory diseases, heart disease and cancer; and

WHEREAS: America's nearly 100,000 public K-12 schools are one of the largest public energy consumers, with 480,000 school buses that consist of the largest mass transit fleet in the country, and 530,000 tons of food waste from over 7 billion meals each year.

WHEREAS: the COVID-19 pandemic has already imposed significant financial burden on many New Haven residents, causing more people than ever to lose their jobs, rack up debt, withdraw their money from their retirement, halt local businesses; and

WHEREAS: disruptions to school systems due to the pandemic have worsened the mental health of families, and exposing students and communities to trauma and uncertainty.

WHEREAS: 55.6% of the New Haven population consists of people of color, and statistics have shown that low-income communities, and communities of color in the United States and abroad have suffered the gravest consequences of climate change; and

WHEREAS: NASA scientists demonstrated that the goal of the Paris Agreement which aims to keep global warming under 2°C through the end of the century would prevent 4.5 million premature deaths, 1.4 million hospitalizations and emergency room visits, 300 million lost workdays, 1.7 million incidences of dementia, and 440 million tons of crop losses in the United States; and,

WHEREAS: New Haven cannot risk the health and welfare of its 130,331 residents to the consequences of extreme rain and snow events, hurricanes, heat waves, and accelerating sea level rise to begin an emergency climate mobilization; and

WHEREAS: the New Haven Board of Alders officially committed to leading an emergency mobilization effort that would work to end community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by or before December 31, 2030, and immediately initiate an effort to safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS: considerable efforts must be made in the New Haven public education sector to support teaching and learning on sustainability; recognize the role that burning fossil fuels play in the climate crisis; prioritize communities most impacted by climate change; and involve students, families, and community members in decisions about climate action.

WHEREAS: electrification will improve air quality as all-electric buildings will improve indoor air quality and overall health, by eliminating natural gas combustion inside homes that produces harmful indoor air pollution; and

WHEREAS: increased consumption of local food cuts down ecological footprints from reduced fuel consumption and air pollution due to the decrease in travel; and

NOW BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the New Haven Board of Education takes immediate actions to mitigate climate change by reducing the carbon footprint and ensure an effective transition to clean energy and sustainable operations.

1. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education will attempt to mobilize appropriate financial and regulatory assistance from City, state and federal authorities, and will aim to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 100% on or before December 31, 2030, reflecting the [United Nations' "now or never" urgency to act](#).

2. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Finance & Operations Committee will aim to create a plan within six months of passage of this Resolution on reducing transportation carbon emissions and other air pollution including electrifying all school buses and other Board of Education vehicles by 2030. ([See here](#) for possible bus electrification funding initiatives).

3. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Citywide School Building and Stewardship Committee will aim to create a plan within six months of passage of this Resolution on reducing energy use in all facilities, increasing efficiency, and on electrifying energy in buildings to the greatest extent possible.

4. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Teaching and Learning Committee will aim to create a plan within six months of passage of this Resolution on fully incorporating climate and public

health education at all grade levels appropriate for helping students and families prepare for the growing climate threat and help them play a role in reducing negative health impacts.

5. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Food Service Task Force will aim to create a plan within six months working with the New Haven Food Policy Council to expand access to locally-grown, healthy, sustainable food, decrease packaging waste, and increase opportunities for food donation, food rescue, and composting.

6. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education will recognize the urgent nature of the climate emergency and allocate the resources to fully fund these projects. For example, hiring consultants, hiring a full time climate coordinator staff member, having the district's grant writer come up with resources, etc.

7. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Education will review public health analysis of climate impacts on students and families (like the [Yale Climate Change and Health in Connecticut 2020 Report](#)). Then, recognizing the impacts of heat waves, floods, extreme storms, etc, on learning, the Board will aim to report back within six months with a plan how schools can help students and families prepare for and limit coming climate driven negative health impacts.