

**[Op Ed Template: Electric School Bus Campaign, by Mothers Out Front, National Communications Team, Jean Cummings (781-530-0511)]**

**Protect Children’s Health: Switch to Electric School Buses Now!  
[June 2019], [name of group], Mothers Out Front**

Picture a handful of students huddling on the sidewalk waiting for the school bus on a chilly September morning. The big yellow bus roars down the hill and slows, with brakes squealing, to a stop. It picks up the kids and then accelerates, spewing exhaust, and makes its way to the next stop 200 feet away. Fumes from the diesel engine bathe the lungs of the students and the waiting moms and their younger children.

What is wrong with this picture?

Studies strongly suggest a link between diesel exhaust and poorer health outcomes. Diesel exhaust has been implicated in the increase in pediatric asthma and other respiratory illnesses as well as cancer and other illnesses. [The CDC reports](#) that asthma has been increasing since the early 1980s. In 2015 one out of every 12 children had asthma, 16 million in all.

Mothers Out Front, mobilizing across the U.S. for a livable climate for all children, has launched campaigns in a number of communities, including [name of town], to spur the adoption of electric school buses. With tens of millions of children traveling on school buses we aim to have a strong health impact. Communities of color and lower income households are exposed to school bus exhaust disproportionately.

In [name of town], we are [describe campaign]

There are other important advantages beyond health benefits to switching to electric school buses.

A new study in Georgia published in *Economics of Education Review* shows a [link](#) between school bus exhaust and test results. “When comparing the test scores, the researchers discovered that schools with the clean-burning buses logged significantly higher English test scores and slightly higher math scores.” Although the comparison was done with buses retrofitted with emission-reduction systems, test scores would likely increase even more with use of zero-emission electric buses.

Another impact of electrifying the school bus fleet is mitigating the climate crisis. With transportation-related carbon emissions accounting for the highest percentage of fossil fuel pollution in the U.S., switching to electric school buses in every single town and city can make a significant difference in slowing environmental degradation. As we hear every day on the news, weather is more often in the headlines and calls for an urgent emergency response to the climate crisis. Electric school buses are an impactful part of that response.

Although an electric bus is currently more costly to purchase than a diesel bus, innovative financing measures are being considered to offset the initial costs. Some proposals are: deploying the Volkswagen settlement payments for an in-kind environmental improvement; having local utilities shoulder initial costs in return for electricity returned to the grid; and allowing the community, through the electric school bus fleet, to participate in beneficial carbon credit markets.

The exhaust children breathe at the bus stop and through the open windows and air leaks inside the buses are contributors to the toxic load kids are forced to carry. As Mothers Out Front in [name of town] we are leading the charge to [adopt our first electric school bus, or other]. We welcome allies of all ages to help us in this effort to make our kids and communities healthier. [Here is the ask]

We are also [calling on our elected representatives/selectpersons/etc. to...].

(~550 words – typical of newspaper and online op eds.)