



## National Idling-Reduction Campaign!

**Overview:** In this project, students will educate themselves and others on the harms associated with idling vehicles! They will then consider an idling reduction program for their school or school district, and implement it for the duration of National Green Week and beyond! The target of this project will be school buses, as they typically contribute the most to unnecessary idling.

**Grades Applied:** All.

**Time Requirement:** At a minimum it should take place during National Green Week with the possibility of becoming a long-term school policy.

**Background (Basics):** Unnecessary school bus and personal vehicle idling pollutes the air, wastes fuel, and causes excess engine wear. Thanks to some thoughtful scientists at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), we now know that many of our age-old myths about why it helps to leave a vehicle running are simply untrue! By reducing unnecessary idling – particularly in school buses – we can help prevent global climate change, save fuel and money, and protect ourselves from harmful exhaust (diesel exhaust from school buses is listed as a likely cancer-causing agent by the EPA; children are especially vulnerable).

**Learning Goals:** The goal of this project is to develop students' understanding of scale and types of environmental, public health, and economic impacts associated with idling vehicles. This knowledge should empower students to change the culture and habits of drivers in their very own school yard, homes, and beyond.

**Materials Suggested:** Idle-Reduction Campaign Do-It-Yourself Kit (available at <http://epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/antiidling.htm>). This resource includes a broad range of materials that can be tailor made to your event!

### Project Steps:

**1. Learn** all about what it means to idle our vehicles: the cost to our wallets, the environment, public health, and even to our vehicles themselves. With this knowledge, build a Green Team action plan to combat it. Get started by going to <http://epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/antiidling.htm>. Try using the Idling Calculator to determine the exact amount of fuel and money lost by school buses unnecessarily idling in the schoolyard!

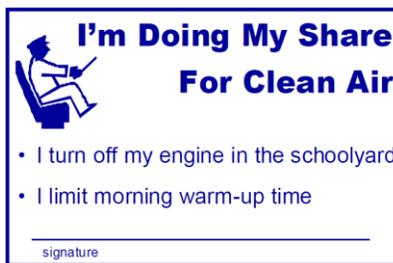
**2. Decide on your strategy:** How are you going to reach out to your school bus drivers, school officials, classmates, parents/guardians – anyone that operates a vehicle – to educate them about idling and what they can do to reduce it?

- **Possible Strategies for the Campaign**

- *Run a school-wide campaign to educate your peers*
- *Educate school bus drivers and other vehicle owners*
- *Educate school officials and administrators*
- *Draft a petition in support of a school idling policy and gather signatures; Present petition to school officials*
- *Draft a "Idling-Reduction Promise" list for drivers to sign*
- *Reward or recognize participating drivers (see Examples)*
- *Run a communitywide campaign*
- *Combine several of these strategies and run a Green Day at your school or come up with your own strategy.*

- **Examples**

- ***In their classrooms***, students can give a simple, yet engaging presentation that describes the myths associated with idling, and the impacts caused by it. They can share results of the “Idling Calculator” with classmates and teachers, and implore them to recognize and modify their habits where possible. They should further encourage individuals to share this conversation with drivers they know (friends, family, bus drivers).
- ***At home***, students can have a similar conversation with their parents/guardians, explaining in clear terms how they can reduce unnecessary idling and why this issue is important to them.
- ***To reach the target audience of school bus drivers***, students can partner up with school officials to educate bus drivers to understand and follow agreed upon school idling guidelines or recommendations. Sample guidelines and policies can be found at EPA’s National Idle-Reduction Campaign website (see Resources). School bus drivers can sign pledge stickers, such as the one below, and display them on their windows or doors.



- ***In the schoolyard and elsewhere***, students can take steps to ensure compliance with idling guidelines/recommendations and to recognize achievement. Try spot-checking loading and unloading areas at your school, as well as delivery areas, parking lots and bus depots. Bus drivers who successfully reduce idling can be recognized with certificates of achievement such as the one seen below.





**3. Set a goal** and determine how you will **measure its success**.

- Example goal: The Taft School will reduce the amount of time spent idling by buses during and after National Green Week by (% , minutes) through (your strategy).
- Example measurement: We will take periodic surveys of idling habits (minutes per day) in the schoolyard using independent visual observation and personal interviews. We will document and compare pre-event habits to post-event habits.

**4. Plan your Green Team Project:** The following are some logistical questions to consider.

- Build a list of tasks and assign Green Team members to each one. The planning document should have various jobs listed: publicity, tabling, data takers, enforcers, etc.
- Determine how you will communicate your plan to a target audience or audiences (i.e., email, cable announcements, school posters, flyers, e-flyers, etc.)
- Do you want to contact your local newspaper or other news media to place a story about your efforts?
- How will you effectively document and measure your success? (e.g., tallies of results of parking lot rounds)
- If you are running a contest, what will be your prize and who will be responsible for making the arrangements?
- Who will communicate with school administrators, bus drivers, or other collaborators?

**5. Implement your plan** and take photos or videos of your program.

**6. Report** on your success! Email results to [awards@nationalgreenweek.com](mailto:awards@nationalgreenweek.com) to enter your project for the Green In-Action Award. Submit your results and email photos, videos, and art created for your Idling Reduction Campaign.



**Assessment Questions:**

Were people surprised to hear that many age-old “facts” about idling (e.g., it’s better to idle than to turn the car off and on again) are actually myths?

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Were drivers open to the idea of changing their habits to reduce the amount of time they spend idling their bus/vehicle?

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What was one surprising thing that you learned from this Green Team project?

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What other steps did you take to get the word out about the myths and harms associated with idling vehicles?

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**Resources:**

Idle-Reduction Campaign Do-It-Yourself Kit  
<http://epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/antiidling.htm>

Idling Myths  
<http://epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/antiidling.htm#myths>

Sample School Bus Idling Policy  
[http://epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/idling\\_policy.htm](http://epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/idling_policy.htm)

Idling Calculator: Calculates Fuel/Monetary Savings from Reduced School Bus Idling  
[http://epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/idle\\_fuel\\_calc.htm](http://epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/idle_fuel_calc.htm)

Clean School Bus Idle Reduction Certificate  
<http://epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/documents/csb-ir-certificate.pdf>

“I’m Doing My Share For Clean Air” Pledge Stickers For Bus Drivers  
[http://www.epa.gov/ne/eco/diesel/assets/pdfs/maine\\_pledgecard.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/ne/eco/diesel/assets/pdfs/maine_pledgecard.pdf)