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Valley schools embrace benefits of air quality data

Healthy Air Living Schools program prioritizes student health

Today in Turlock, Valley education administrators, the Central California Asthma Collaborative (CCAC) and the Valley Air District jointly applauded the Turlock Unified School District during a press conference at Walter Brown Elementary School for implementing a free, valuable school-based program that provides tools for educators to protect their students' from the harmful effects of air pollution.

The Healthy Air Living Schools program was developed by the Air District to notify schools when air quality is not conducive to outdoor activity, and to educate their staff, students and even parents about maintaining and improving the health of the Valley's students.

“Our goal is to encourage 100 percent of the schools in the San Joaquin Valley to become Healthy Air Living Schools,” said Destiny Rodriguez of the Central California Asthma Collaborative, the Air District's partner in administering the program throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

Healthy Air Living Schools are provided free tools and education to bring air quality information to their school sites. Some of the components of the program are:

- Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN), which offers 24-hour access to real-time localized air quality information throughout the Valley via a website, email and text messages
- Real-Time Outdoor Activity Risk (ROAR) guidelines that provide health recommendations for outdoor exercise based on the duration of student's exposure, the intensity of their exercise and the air quality conditions
- Anti-idling signage and materials, which remind parents and drivers of students to cut their engines when dropping off and picking up students, reducing student exposure to harmful emissions

“Healthy Air Living Schools is a health-focused multi-faceted free program that helps schools provide an important service to their students and families,” said Jaime Holt, the District's chief communications officer. “It allows them to be proactive in addressing Valley air pollution and student health.”

When a school enrolls in the program, the Central California Asthma Collaborative provides materials, training and support to the school site. To enroll in Healthy Air Living Schools and request materials, please contact the Central California Asthma Collaborative at (559) 272-4874, or an Air District office in Fresno (559) 230-6000, Modesto (209) 557-6400 or Bakersfield (661) 392-5500.