



SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT PRESS RELEASE

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South Coast AQMD, LAUSD deploy electric school bus, announce air quality education program benefitting communities across the region

DIAMOND BAR –Today the South Coast Air Quality Management District (South Coast AQMD) announced its new “Why Healthy Air Matters” (WHAM) high school air quality education program that will increase awareness of air quality issues in environmental justice communities across the South Coast Air Basin. In addition, the South Coast AQMD, along with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), deployed a new electric school bus funded as part of its Lower Emissions School Bus Program that provides incentives for public schools to switch to near-zero or zero-emission vehicles. This is the first electric school bus in the school district.

South Coast AQMD Governing Board Vice Chair Ben Benoit and LAUSD Superintendent Austin Beutner made the announcements at an event held at the Gardena Bus Depot where the electric bus headed out to pick up students on the first day of school.

“We are excited to continue our partnership with LAUSD on these critical programs,” said South Coast AQMD’s Governing Board Chair Ben Benoit. “Together, we will do our part to clean the air students breathe, while increasing awareness of air quality issues within their communities.”

The WHAM program will teach students about air quality through various activities and hands-on experiments, including measuring air pollution with hand-held sensors. South Coast AQMD staff, including resident engineers and meteorologists, will also co-teach students alongside teachers in the classroom. The WHAM program will be implemented at 100 high schools located throughout South Coast AQMD’s jurisdiction, with 20 schools participating from LAUSD for the 2019-2020 school year.

“Los Angeles Unified is at the center of the communities we serve and we are working to protect the environment in every way we can,” said Superintendent Austin Beutner. “By working with South Coast AQMD, we are able to do more for our communities and help our students learn how to advocate for a cleaner environment.”

South Coast AQMD provided LAUSD with approximately \$536,000 in 2017 for the purchase of two all-electric school buses. The first bus, deployed today, is a zero-emission battery-electric vehicle with a 48 passenger capacity and a range of up to 90 miles on a single charge. Funding for the two buses comes from South Coast AQMD’s Carl Moyer Program, with additional funds from the California Air Resources Board’s Hybrid and Zero Emissions Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Program.

The Lower Emission School Bus Program provides incentives for public schools to replace older, high-emitting school buses with new, alternative fuel and zero-emission buses. Under this program, South Coast AQMD has provided LAUSD with 520 alternative fuel school buses and has replaced more than 1,600 diesel buses within the four-county region.

For more information on the Lower Emission School Bus Program, please visit:

<http://www.aqmd.gov/home/programs/business/lower-emission-school-bus-funding-criteria>

South Coast AQMD is the air pollution control agency for Orange County and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties, including the Coachella Valley. For news, air quality alerts, event updates and more, please visit us at www.aqmd.gov, download our award-winning app, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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