

For immediate release 8-14-19

**Attn: Local news, health and
assignment editors**

Media Contact:

Cassandra Melching (559) 230-5901

Spanish-language

Maricela Velasquez (559) 230-5849

Be mindful of air quality during Back-to-School season

At this time of year, when students return to school, increased vehicle traffic contributes to a rise in ground-level ozone. Parents can help protect public health and the health of their children by reducing vehicle emissions through carpooling and turning off their engines during school pick-ups and drop-offs. In addition, Valley residents are urged to reduce vehicle emissions by driving less, driving zero-emission or low-emission vehicles, keeping their vehicles tuned up and avoiding the use of drive-through services.

Valley air quality has shown tremendous improvement over the past several years. The progress can be attributed to a combination of the District's many control strategies, robust incentive programs, and a commitment by Valley businesses, residents and stakeholders to reduce emissions whenever possible.

"Thanks to the vigilance and cooperation of residents and businesses throughout the Valley, we continue to see improvements in air quality every summer," said Samir Sheikh, the District's Air Pollution Control Officer and Executive Director. "We urge the public to be even more mindful of their impact on air quality during this critical Back-to-School window."

To help ensure continued progress and minimize pollution associated with school site vehicle idling, the District has partnered with hundreds of Valley schools through the Healthy Air Living Schools program, providing signs and other resources that remind parents to "Turn the Key & Be Idle Free" when picking up or dropping off students. Healthy Air Living Schools also includes training for school staff on using the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN), which displays hourly air quality data, and corresponding outdoor activity recommendations to protect student health.

All Valley residents can find current, localized air quality data by visiting myRAAN.com or downloading the free Valley Air District app from the Apple Store or Google Play. These tools allow users to save multiple locations and quickly view the air quality level at their saved locations.

To learn more about the Healthy Air Living Schools program, request a presentation or enrollment into the program, visit www.healthyairliving.com/schools or contact us at healthyairlivingschools@valleyair.org.

For more information, call a District office in Fresno (559-230-6000), Modesto (209-557-6400) or Bakersfield (661-392-5500).