Resolution Of The Board Of Trustees Of The
Alum Rock Union Elementary School District
Resolution # 58-22/23 Climate Change and Green Schoolyards

WHEREAS, schools in California and nationwide have the potential to effect positive, tangible environmental change while preparing students in their careers and civic life to be stewards of their communities, the earth, and its resources; and

WHEREAS, there is broad consensus within the scientific community that human activities contribute to increases in greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS, climate change is a non-partisan issue and local, state, and national policies should be guided by the best available science; and

WHEREAS, climate change presents a series of governance-related challenges for public agencies, including school districts and county offices of education; and

WHEREAS, climate change is a global issue that can and should be addressed locally; and

WHEREAS, climate change and extreme climate-related events such as wildfires, floods, extreme heat, and public safety power shutoffs directly impact the physical and economic health of communities in which our students and their families live, while also causing lost learning days; and

WHEREAS, California's Fourth Climate Assessment estimates that if greenhouse gas emissions are not reduced, the average water supply from California's snowpack is projected to decline to 2/3 of historical levels by 2050, and total sea level rise by 2100 is expected to be 54 inches; and

WHEREAS, the Fourth Climate Assessment also finds that action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions which also release criteria air pollutants, including particulate matter, nitrous oxides, and volatile organic compounds will indirectly improve California’s air quality; and

WHEREAS, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2016 (Senate Bill 32), called for a reduction of statewide greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, yet current projections show California is unlikely to reach the target at the current rate; and

WHEREAS, California's agricultural contributions to the U.S. and world economy are impacted by the consequences of climate change; and

WHEREAS, the negative impacts of climate change, including public health and economic consequences, have a disproportionate impact on chronically underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards provides an opportunity for students to engage in real-world inquiry and application of science skills in understanding and addressing climate change; and

WHEREAS, the clean energy sector presents an economic opportunity for students and the local economy; and

WHEREAS, implementation of sustainable practices on school campuses, capital investments to improve energy efficiency, and other environmentally mindful purchasing decisions can yield significant cost savings for our schools; and

WHEREAS, climate change adaptations of school infrastructure and practices can mitigate the risk of increased natural disasters; and

WHEREAS, California's children and youth have demonstrated leadership and expressed an expectation that their representatives will advocate for their communities' well-being; and

WHEREAS, California students across many grade levels including those in their early elementary years and all the way up through high school strive to be environmentally conscious in their daily lives and to be active and engaged leaders in combating global climate change in their community, both now and in the future;

WHEREAS, In alignment with the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District's Board of Education and Superintendent are committed to creating environments where students feel safe, welcome, and excited to learn, and to a strategy that includes developing safe and sustainable green spaces, outdoor learning environments, and shaded areas at each school;

WHEREAS, Campuses can be greened through a variety of approaches, including, but not limited to planting new grass fields, replacing paved surfaces with permeable surfaces that incorporate native and drought tolerant planting areas, installing trees, creating school gardens, and incorporating features that reduce the heat island effect;

WHEREAS, Research has shown that green spaces on or around a school campus are positively associated with reductions in chronic absenteeism (MacNaughton et al., 2017), increased academic achievement (Wu et al., 2014), restored attention capacity, decreased stress levels (Li & Sullivan, 2016), as well as reduced mental fatigue and aggression (Schulman & Peters, 2008);

WHEREAS, Rising temperatures caused by climate change have necessitated responsive greening policies to urgently address conditions such as extreme heat and ensure that students across the District have access to shaded outdoor areas that provide cooler and greener spaces for students to learn, engage, and play every day and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, Alum Rock Union Elementary School District is committed to identifying opportunities within our curriculum, and providing additional learning and leadership opportunities where possible, that reflect our students' environmental goals for their civic lives and their academic and professional careers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Alum Rock Union Elementary School District recognizes that there is increasing demand for a skilled workforce in the clean energy and sustainability sectors and that the (district or county office of education) can help meet this demand by providing enriched learning opportunities for our students to prepare for careers in these emerging and important fields; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District is contributing to this work in the redesign and the upcoming start of the re-designed Russo McEntee Academy whose educational offerings present to students and families a solid education with an environmental science focus as well as opportunities for families to experience open spaces and nature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Alum Rock Union Elementary School District will seek out creative and collaborative partnerships that connect our students and staff with local community groups, business leaders, associations, and city and county government in efforts to make our community more environmentally friendly and promote sustainable practices; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Alum Rock Union Elementary School District endeavors to connect with key stakeholders within the community including student and youth groups on the importance of local climate action to gather input and identify additional opportunities for student learning and activism; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Alum Rock Union Elementary School District calls on the California Department of Education, the California State Board of Education, and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to provide increased opportunities for local educational agencies to promote student learning on the effects of global climate change and identifying solutions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Alum Rock Union Elementary School District also calls on federal entities, such as the U.S. Departments of Education and Energy, to support the efforts of state and local educational agencies to expand their curriculum and opportunities for student learning on climate and environmental literacy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District's governing board directs the clerk or executive officer to transmit official copies of this resolution to the following: all student councils in our district, the employee labor groups or representatives, all PTO/PTA/Education Foundations, the Superintendent of County Schools, the City Council members, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, relevant local media outlets, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the California State Board of Education, the California School Boards Association, our local California State Legislators, the Congressional Climate Solutions Caucus, and all California members of Congress.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Governing Board of the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District, Santa Clara County, State of California, on April 20, 2023, by the following vote:

Ayes: ____ Noes: ____ Abstain: ____ Absent: ____

_____ Date: April 20, 2023

Clerk of the Governing Board