

**BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
644 PLEASANT STREET
BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS 02478**

September, 2007

Dear Parent,

The start of the school year is always exciting, and this year is no exception. In addition to our pursuit of academic excellence, we are excited to continue our partnership with the Town of Belmont in addressing a vital environmental issue: air quality.

Good air quality is important to everyone, but especially to our students. According to the American Lung Association, children are more vulnerable to air pollution because their airways are smaller, their respiratory defenses are not fully formed, and their higher breathing rates increase their exposure. In Belmont, cars and buses are the major sources of air pollution (including climate change gases).

We are working with Sustainable Belmont's Clean Air Campaign to safeguard our children's health and our air. This campaign is discouraging unnecessary vehicle idling, making our diesel buses as clean as possible, and creating a more pedestrian-friendly Belmont.

As part of this campaign, we are asking drivers not to idle near our schools, ensuring that our buses have the most up-to date pollution control equipment, and supporting walk to school days throughout the year.

You can help too:

- If you and/or your children can walk to school, please do so! Walking is a healthy way to get to and from school.
- If you must drive your child to school, please carpool whenever possible, even if just a few times a month.
- If you drive to pick up or drop off your children, please abide by the anti idling signs around town and turn off your vehicle's engine if you plan to wait longer than 10 seconds.
 - Idling creates unnecessary pollution which our children breathe.
 - Idling for more than 10 seconds wastes more fuel than restarting the engine.
 - It is against the law in MA for vehicles to idle for longer than five minutes.

If you would like more information about Sustainable Belmont or the *Cleaning the Air* campaign, please e-mail sustainablebelmont@gmail.com.

Sincerely

Dr. Peter B. Holland
Superintendent