Press Release

Medfield Public Schools to Draw Attention to Massachusetts Anti-Idling Law

With the beginning of the new school year, Medfield public schools will work with parents, students, teachers, and staff to reduce unnecessary idling of cars outside school buildings.

Collaborating with Sustainable Medfield and supported by the Police Department, schools will draw attention to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 90, Section 16 A, and the Department of Environmental Protection's idling reduction regulation. MGL Chapter 90, Section 16B further restricts unnecessary idling in school zones.

Ten years ago, a coalition of Medfield civic organizations started a campaign to educate Medfield residents about these regulations and to encourage them to stop unnecessary idling of their cars. This campaign was co-sponsored by the Medfield Police Department, the School Committee, as well as the Board of Health, and it was endorsed by the Select Board, who authorized the installation of anti-idling signs in front of public buildings.

Today, while the Commonwealth experiences an increase in childhood asthma and the climate crisis has worsened, there is ample evidence that most citizens are still unaware of the statute and the many reasons for it. However, environmental consciousness has also increased: the network of Sustainable Medfield currently includes over two dozen affiliated organizations and groups. In this context, the original organizers are now renewing their informational campaign. Their goal is not to penalize but to educate the public.

In this, partnership with the schools is crucial. Experience in other towns shows that young people can have significant influence over their parents – persuading them to stop idling, for instance, while waiting in line to pick them up. This anti-idling initiative can also provide learning opportunities for students, generate project ideas, and strengthen community.

It is hoped that this informational campaign will eventually reach a wider audience and contribute to cleaner air not just around school buildings but throughout the town of Medfield.