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## *Idle Threats*

You can't park exhaust fumes

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**Brief #10**  
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**What is the significance of IAQ? 'A' is for air. People breathe air—regularly! That alone makes IAQ a pretty important topic.**

Growing children with developing lungs are especially sensitive to toxic environmental pollutants (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8, 2014). School-based exposure to poor IAQ can interfere with a student's ability to be present, ready, and able to learn (U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency, 2009). Asthma, headaches, lethargy, nausea, drowsiness, and dizziness can be distracting. Beyond producing acute symptoms and irritations, certain hazardous pollutants—referred to as 'air toxics'—are known or suspected to cause cancer over time (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2012).

Outdoor pollutants creep indoors via airflow through open doors, windows, air intake mechanisms, and 'leaky' building envelopes (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2009). The transportation dynamics surrounding the daily ritual of school dismissal set the stage for reduced outdoor *and* indoor air quality.

You've seen it: buses in queue, waiting for the final bell to ring and students to spill out of buildings and climb aboard. If engines are running, fuel is burned and diesel exhaust is emitted—whether the bus is moving or not. Idling buses produce concentrated levels of unhealthy exhaust, including pollutants such as benzene and formaldehyde (American Lung Association, Colorado, n.d.; Environmental Law Institute, 2013).

[Read Full Summary.](#)

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