



Pleasantdale School District 107 DRAFT 2023 Proposed IASB Resolution Submission

Proposed Resolution: The Illinois Association of School Boards (“IASB”) shall support and encourage legislation that prohibits the construction of industrial facilities near schools.

Industrial facilities have negative consequences on schools that are three-fold:

- 1.) The health and safety of all students, faculty, and staff,
- 2.) The learning outcomes of students, and
- 3.) The learning environment of students.

The health consequences and educational barriers associated with industrial zones near schools including, but not limited to pollution, noise, and hazardous diesel exhaust are well-documented and can have serious long-term effects on the health and well-being of children, faculty, and staff. Furthermore, the presence of industrial zones near schools can negatively impact the quality of education by creating distractions and disruptions. Finally, learning outcomes also have shown to suffer as a result of industrial facility proximity to schools. We urge policymakers and stakeholders to take immediate action to ensure that schools are located in safe environments free from the risks posed by industrial facilities.

District Rationale: Numerous studies have proven that school proximity to industrial zones, directly impacts student health risks, academic outcomes, and impedes the learning environment.^{1 2} Specifically, studies have shown that schools located closer to highways and industrial facilities had higher risks of respiratory and neurological diseases than those located farther away.³ The health and safety of students, faculty and staff as well as the promotion of an enriching, distraction -free learning environment is at the core of IASB advocacy. This proposed resolution meets two of the IASB Advocacy Core Values. It advocates for legislation that supports the physical well-being of students and staff. It also supports a safe and secure learning environment for all. In 2011, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) published, “School Siting Guidelines” that confirms, “The overriding purpose of a school building is provide a safe, healthy and supportive environment in which children can learn.”⁴

¹ Kweon, B. S., Mohai, P., Lee, S., & Sametshaw, A. M. (2018). Proximity of public schools to major highways and industrial facilities, and students’ school performance and health hazards. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science*, 45(2), 312-329. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265813516673060>

² *School Siting Guidelines*. United States Environmental Protection Agency. Office of Children’s Health Protection. https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-06/documents/school_siting_guidelines-2.pdf

³ Kweon, B. S., Mohai, P., Lee, S., & Sametshaw, A. M. (2018). Proximity of public schools to major highways and industrial facilities, and students’ school performance and health hazards. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science*, 45(2), 312-329. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265813516673060>

⁴ *School Siting Guidelines*. United States Environmental Protection Agency. Office of Children’s Health Protection. https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-06/documents/school_siting_guidelines-2.pdf

This environment includes both indoors and out. The EPA specifically lists industrial pollutants as a contaminant that should be avoided in proximity to a school in principles 1.4, 2.2, 4.3.1, 5.2, 5.6.2, 5.7.2, 6.4, 8.11, 9.6 and refers to sites in close proximity to industrial facilities as “incompatible land” for a school location site. The potential hazards identified included air pollution, soil contamination, ground water contamination, surface water contamination, accidental releases/spills of hazardous chemicals, odors, heavy vehicular traffic.⁵ Noise distraction due to high-traffic roads or roads with heavy diesel truck traffic were also cited as potential hazards regarding the siting of a school and the EPA recommended distancing schools from such distractions.⁶ Finally, studies have shown that performance rates of schools near industrial facilities also suffer.⁷⁸ The negative impact of industrial facilities is well-documented by both academics and government agencies. The need to protect the health, safety, performance and environment of our students, faculty and staff is great and we ask for the IASB’s support. Additional sources available upon request.

Relevant IASB Advocacy Core Values:

Advocates for legislation that supports the physical and emotional well-being of students and staff.

AND

Supports a safe and secure learning environment for all; including, but not limited to one in which all are free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence.

⁵ Id.

⁶ Id. at 57.

⁷ Kweon, B. S., Mohai, P., Lee, S., & Sametshaw, A. M. (2018). Proximity of public schools to major highways and industrial facilities, and students’ school performance and health hazards. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science*, 45(2), 312-329. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265813516673060>

⁸ Mohai, P., Kweon, B. S., Lee, S., & Ard, K. (2011). Air pollution around schools is linked to poorer student health and academic performance. *Health Affairs*, 30(5), 852-862.