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MEDIA ADVISORY

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**KU School of Medicine–Wichita and USD 259 partner to reduce air emissions from idling cars and busses**

WICHITA, KAN. – Four years ago, the Wichita Initiative to Renew the Environment (WIRE), a community-based initiative led by the KU School of Medicine–Wichita, surveyed Wichitans to learn their top environmental concerns. Mobile source air emissions from vehicles and busses was the top air-related concern.

WIRE has initiated an idle-reduction program and collaborated with USD 259 transportation staff and transportation contractor First Student to establish a pilot project that will create idle-free zones at Truesdell Middle School.

WHAT: Idling reduction education and media event

WHO: **Elizabeth Ablah**, PhD  
Preventive Medicine and Public Health assistant professor  
KU School of Medicine–Wichita

**Katie Henning**  
AVID program coordinator  
Truesdell Middle School

**Tim Phares**, CHMM, CEA, CIE  
Environmental Services Department director  
USD 259

**John Billigmeier**  
Senior Contract Manager  
First Student, Inc.

– more –

Several students from Truesdell's AVID program

WHERE: Truesdell Middle School  
2464 S. Glenn

WHEN: March 14, 2012, at 2:15 p.m.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS: Vehicle emissions significantly contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone, responsible for at least 39 percent of the pollutants in Wichita's air. Ozone can cause respiratory problems for those who have asthma, bronchitis, or other respiratory conditions. By eliminating unnecessary school bus and car idling around student loading and unloading zones, exposure to diesel exhaust and air pollution can be reduced.

As part of the idle-reduction pilot project, an air quality education campaign was developed for students, teachers, bus drivers, and parents. Along with WIRE volunteers, AVID students from Woodman Elementary, Truesdell Middle School, and South High School created an education campaign that included posting "No Idling" signs and distributing "Breathe Free, Idle Free" bracelets.

*The KU School of Medicine–Wichita educates doctors for Kansas while improving the health of Kansans through research and innovation.*

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