

Diesel exhaust fumes get a scrubbing at Whittier

HAVERHILL -- Whittier Vo-Tech's school buses will expel cleaner air after being fitted with special parts to oxidize the exhaust and better ventilate the air students breathe inside the buses.



Massachusetts Clean Diesel Program has donated \$16 million to the project, and the EPA has pitched in \$120,000, so there is no cost to the district's cities and towns, said Whittier Superintendent William P. DeRosa.

"It's a terrific program," said Susan Lyon, an environmental planner for the state's Department of Environmental Protection. "Studies have shown that diesel vehicles are associated with the state's high level of pediatric asthma, and the federal government is really

supporting this program."

Diesel fuel has 40 different toxic substances in it and contributes to ozone formation, she said.

The program provides money to vocational schools such as Whittier that own its own buses, with several that travel long distances. One of Whittier's buses, for example, travels up to 80 miles a day to transport students to and from Ipswich.

"We're thrilled to be chosen for the project," said Superintendent DeRosa. "It fits in with our efforts to be greener everywhere we can."

Seven of Whittier's 28 buses will get both a diesel oxidation catalyst fitted into the exhaust stream under the bus, and a filter to ventilate the crank case. The remainder will receive the crank case ventilator because they are newer and already have the oxidation technology.

Whittier is the third vo-tech school in the state to have its buses retrofitted.