



**Remember the Children:
NAME's Statement on Climate-Change Induced Trauma**

Wildfires in the United States in 2018 claimed dozens of lives, injured scores of people, consumed hundreds of houses and businesses and left thousands of families homeless. In ongoing efforts to regroup and rebuild now and into 2019, the National Association for Multicultural Education urges national, state and local leaders not to overlook the physical and emotional needs of the children and the schools that will help prepare young people for the challenges of tomorrow — including climate change.

The Camp Fire (named after Camp Creek Road) in California this year has been called the most destructive in the state's history. It claimed more than 80 lives, destroyed more than 18,500 structures and consumed more than 153,000 acres. Paradise, Calif., is among the towns with little but brick chimneys remaining where homes once stood. Tent cities have sprung up, providing housing for some of the evacuees while others have taken refuge with friends in nearby towns, where homes remain standing. Parking lots have been converted into community space, offering clothing, water and food to people who've lost everything in the fires. More than a month after the fire and just in time for holidays, the evacuation from Paradise was lifted. Unfortunately, many evacuees did not have home waiting for their return.

Among the displaced are children and teachers. Butte County, Calif., schools closed Nov. 8. Classes resumed in early December but in makeshift structures, in many cases, replacing the schools that the fire destroyed. News accounts have hailed the school re-openings as a return to normalcy, but this normality ignores the loss and trauma that children teachers and the entire community continue to endure. NAME urges school districts to provide counseling and intervention services for students and teachers to enable them to contend with the ongoing trauma in their lives, recognizing that long-underfunded districts are already called on to support more than they are resourced to do.

NAME also recognizes that though the nation's focus in 2018 has been on wildfires in California because of climate change, people nationwide must brace for major disruptions in everyday life along with massive associated costs. A comprehensive government report released in late November notes the devastating future effects that climate change will cause in the United States. Temperatures on the planet are rising, carbon dioxide production continues to climb and fossil fuel consumption by humans is to blame. The cost in property damage, crop and livestock losses, and human injuries and deaths could amount to hundreds of billions of dollars a year, the report says, and no area of the country is spared. More mosquito and tick borne illnesses also are predicted. Wildfire season will go longer and extend into more states, consuming six times more forest area by 2050. Heat-related deaths will climb, and a trillion dollars in property in coastal areas will be threatened by rising seas and surging storms.

NAME's overriding concern is for the children, educators and schools in communities in affected areas. NAME underscores the need for global action to arrest climate change through massive reductions in fossil fuel use and for humanity to switch immediately to renewable sources of energy. Worldwide, nations need to mandate only vehicles and industries that are powered by electricity and use wind, geothermal and solar units as fuel sources instead of coal, gas and oil. Apartments, schools, businesses, churches, community structures and universities need to also convert to renewable energy sources. For the children's safety and everyone's future, the world's carbon footprint must undergo a massive reduction. Otherwise, more Camp Fires will be in our future along with the devastation and destruction disrupting lives for years to come.