



Waste Reduction and Recycling

Level One Best Practices Guide for School Districts

To receive recognition as a Level One King County Green School District, school districts must meet the criteria in this Best Practices Guide. School districts that do not meet the criteria are still eligible for assistance.

Directions

- Fill in the school district name and other information on this page.
- For each action your district completed, place a checkmark in the appropriate box.
- Email the completed form to GreenSchools@cplusc.com or the Green Schools Program representative who has assisted your district.

Criteria are divided into five areas

- Green Schools Program participation
- Policies, oversight, assessment, and monitoring
- Waste reduction (paper use; food scraps/lunchtime waste; durable products/bulk dispensers)
- Hazardous waste management
- Communication with the King County Green Schools Program

Assistance: Ask for help from the King County Green Schools Program. The program provides hands-on assistance, site visits, tools, and step-by-step guidance for participating schools and districts.

Recognition: To be recognized as a Level One Green School District, complete the actions in this guide. See page 7 for steps to recognition.

School district: _____

Date: _____

Name and title of the person completing this guide: _____

Contact information for the person completing this guide: _____

Name and title of district resource conservation (RCM) or facilities manager: _____

Contact information for RCM or facilities manager: _____

A. Green Schools Program participation

Complete the following **2 REQUIRED** actions. Fill in all note fields in this section.

- 1. Announce participation in the King County Green Schools Program to all district and school employees when your district begins to participate in the program and then annually to inform them about available program assistance and resources and your district's conservation successes. Staff meeting announcements and staff emails can be used to inform staff. Briefly describe how and when you did this, and send us your email or other announcement: _____
- 2. At least 75 percent of the schools in the district meet Level One school criteria. See [level one school criteria](#). List your district's King County Level One Green Schools here or attach a list: _____

B. Policies, oversight, assessment, and monitoring

Complete the following **7 REQUIRED** actions. Fill in all note fields in this section.



- 1. Adopt and enforce a Waste Reduction and Recycling (WRR) policy or procedure requiring
 - Each school facility to compost all landscaping waste and to recycle the following materials: paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, scrap metals, fluorescent light bulbs and tubes, and electronic waste.
 - Each school facility to have a plan in place for regularly emptying indoor recycling bins so they do not overflow. (It is best if indoor recycling bins are emptied when garbage bins are emptied.)
 - Each school facility promotes waste reduction and recycling expectations and practices to students and staff.

Send us your written WRR policy or procedure. Add any notes here: _____

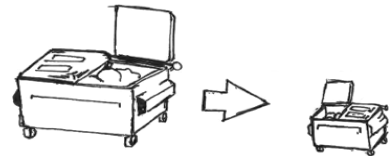
- 2. At the beginning of each school year, communicate the district WRR policy to all district and school staff members. Briefly describe how and when you did this: _____
- 3. Include waste reduction and recycling policies and procedures in new employee orientations and annual training for custodians, kitchen managers, and teachers. (King County Green Schools Program can conduct a WRR training at annual staff training or meetings.) Briefly describe how and when you did this: _____
- 4. Designate one district staff member to oversee and monitor solid waste and recycling and to serve as the district's liaison with the King County Green Schools Program. This role can be filled by the district resource conservation manager, maintenance supervisor, facility manager, or someone in a similar position. Share name and contact information for this staff member: _____
- 5. Two or more times during each school year, monitor each facility's monthly garbage and recycling volumes and calculate the recycling rate for each facility and the volume

of garbage generated per student in each facility. (King County Green Schools Program will assist with this.) Briefly describe how and when you did this, and share a list of each facility's recycling rate and how it was calculated: _____

- 6. At least once per year share with each principal and custodian the garbage and recycling data (i.e., monthly garbage and recycling volume, recycling rate, and volume of garbage generated per student) for each school, so they can see how their school compares to others. Share this notification with us and briefly describe how and when you did this: _____
- 7. Adjust garbage and recycling collection service when garbage and recycling volumes change. To achieve cost savings, downsize garbage dumpsters or reduce the frequency of garbage collection. Briefly note which facilities (if any) needed collection service changes: _____

C. Waste reduction

Complete at least **1** waste reduction improvement in **each** of the following three areas (1, 2, and 3). When you check a strategy, provide details in the note field.



1. Reduce paper use

Complete at least **1** of the following actions.

- 1. Adopt a double-sided photocopying and printing policy -- and provide instructions to photocopy machine users. Use signs and reminders to regularly promote double-sided copying and printing. Briefly describe how and when you did this, and share the written policy and instructions with us: _____
- 2. Use email instead of paper copies for one or more regularly issued staff or parent newsletter, bulletin, or memo. Briefly note which regularly issued communication is shared via email instead of paper copies: _____
- 3. Print only what you need. Reduce print runs based on number of leftover copies, and/or "right size" the paper used (e.g., use half sheets). Also reduce margins on each document – or, better yet, change the margin default – thereby reducing the amount of paper needed for each print job. Briefly describe what you did and when you did this: _____
- 4. Establish, promote, and monitor a reuse station (e.g., a shelf or area) in district offices for used office supplies (e.g., file folders and envelopes that can be reused), and encourage all school offices to do the same. Office staff can monitor or oversee this reuse area. Briefly describe how and when you did this: _____
- 5. Other: _____ (What other significant waste reduction practice did the district initiate to reduce paper use?)

2. Reduce food waste

Complete at least **1** of the following actions. For information about reducing food waste in schools, see <https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dnrp/waste-services/garbage-recycling-compost/solid-waste-programs/green-schools/program-levels/level-one/food-waste>.

- 1. Establish and implement an “offer and select” policy that will not require students to select a milk carton or other food item they do not intend to consume. (It is understood that federal nutrition guidelines must be met, including students selecting at least three items to qualify for reimbursement.) Briefly describe how and when you did this: _____
- 2. Establish and implement a food purchasing system to reduce the amount of leftover food that must be disposed or donated. Briefly describe how and when you did this: _____
- 3. In one or more schools, facilitate school produce gardens to teach students about food systems, nutrition, and food waste. List the school(s) with such gardens, and briefly describe how and when you did this: _____
- 4. Conduct district-wide education to encourage students to reduce food waste. Briefly describe your educational methods and when you did this: _____
- 5. In one or more schools, conduct recess before lunch and assess if that change resulted in less food waste. Briefly describe how and when you did this: _____
- 6. To reduce milk waste, in one or more schools replace single-use milk cartons with bulk milk dispensers and cups. List the school(s) in which you did this, and briefly describe how and when you did this: _____
- 7. Track menu options students typically do not eat so food services may revise future menus within federal nutrition guidelines. Briefly describe how and when you did this: _____
- 8. Allow one or more schools to set up a Share Table or Bin to collect unopened, packaged items and whole fruits with inedible skins from the school nutrition program for other students to take during the meal. List school(s) with Share Tables or Bins, and briefly describe how and when you did this: _____
- 9. Donate food leftover from school Share Tables/Bins and/or leftover at the end of the school year and/or other appropriate times such as prior to holidays or during snow days that cannot be kept until school reopens or that will reach the expiration date before it can be consumed. Briefly describe how and when you did this: _____
- 10. Compost food scraps at 25 percent or more of school facilities, either on-site (via a system such as the BioStack or Earth Tub) or off-site (via a hauler collection program that transports food waste to a composting facility). List the schools collecting compostable materials and briefly describe how and when each facility did this: _____ WA State Organics Management law (phased in from Jan. 2024 – Jan. 2026) will require schools generating certain quantities of organics and solid waste to separate organics for composting. Who will need to comply?

- January 1, 2024 - Schools generating at least 8 cubic yards of organic material waste per week
- January 1, 2025 - Schools generating at least 4 cubic yards of organic material waste per week
- January 1, 2026 - Schools generating at least 4 cubic yards of solid waste per week

11. Other: _____ (What other significant waste reduction practice did the district initiate to reduce food waste?)

3. Reuse durable products, use bulk dispensers

Complete at least **1** of the following actions.

1. Replace disposable trays with durable trays – or eliminate use of lunchroom trays. List which schools did this, and note if the school(s) have durable trays and/or eliminated trays: _____
2. Replace disposable utensils with durable utensils. List which school(s) did this, and briefly describe when and how this change was made: _____
3. Replace bundled plastic-wrapped utensils and straws with an individual selection of unwrapped utensils and straws. List which school(s) did this, and briefly describe how and when this change was made: _____
4. Replace disposable plates, glasses, and/or cups with durable products in student cafeteria(s) and/or in district staff breakrooms. List which district facilities did this, and briefly describe what types of durable products are used in each facility: _____
5. Use bulk dispensers in lunchrooms. Briefly describe the type of bulk dispensers available and list the school(s) with such dispensers: _____
6. Switch to foam soap dispensers in restrooms. List which facilities have such dispensers, and when the dispensers were installed: _____
7. Install air hand dryers instead of paper towels. Briefly describe how and when this change was made, and list which facilities have air hand dryers: _____
8. Other: _____ (What other significant waste reduction practice did the district initiate related to durable products or bulk dispensers?)

D. Schedule telephone call with King County Green Schools Program representative / schedule visit if needed

- 1. Communicate with the King County Green Schools Program representative to determine if a site visit will be scheduled prior to recognition as a Level One Green School District.
- 2. Communicate with the King County Green Schools Program representative about your district's Level One practices.

Steps to recognition



- Step 1.** Complete this guide.
- Step 2.** Send the completed guide to the King County Green Schools Program representative.

Next up, celebrate! Inform your district and community that you are a King County Level One Green School District.

Share your successes

- on your school district website
- in a family newsletter
- at a district staff meeting, PTSA meeting, and/or a school board meeting

Visit [Certificates of Recognition](#) for forms you can fill in and print for district or school staff members, student leaders, and parent volunteers.

Your school district will receive a certificate of recognition and a success story will be posted on the King County Green Schools Program website. Your school district also will be mentioned in a press release issued by King County.

Optional: To help showcase your efforts, send the King County Green Schools Program representative a photo(s), along with either a signed release form(s) for each staff member or student in the photo(s) or an email stating that your school district has parent/guardian permission to use the photo(s) of students that appear in the photo(s).

October 2023

