



District Benchmark Guide

This guide lists the district-level criteria for the different benchmarks of the King County Green Schools Program. Each spring, districts will have the opportunity to submit recognition forms for as many benchmarks as possible. To learn more, visit the [King County Green Schools](#) website, or contact your Green Schools Program representative.

Waste Reduction Criteria

- At least 60% of active participating schools received the Waste Reduction recognition benchmark this school year. *(Yes/No)*
- Share how you promote staff education and engagement with waste reduction in schools. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)*
 - Green Schools Program representative can provide support and training opportunities to custodial and nutrition services staff.
- Share how you adopt and support waste reduction policies, procedures, and systems. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)* Examples might include:
 - Providing support systems and services that promote waste diversion.
 - Providing incentives to schools that promote waste reduction practices.
 - Providing systems for properly disposing of hazardous products such as cleaning products, fluorescent light bulbs, and non-recyclable batteries.
- Provide schools with a copy of the district's waste reduction goals, priorities, policies, and procedures. *(Attach a copy of the goals, priorities, and/or policies.)*
- Share how you adjust garbage and recycling collection service when garbage and recycling volumes change. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)*
- Share how you promote using reuse stations in district offices for gently used/second-hand office supplies. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)*
- Share how you promote and maintain the replacement of single-use products with durable options in schools*, such as trays, utensils, cups, or plates in school lunchrooms or hand dryers in bathrooms. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)* Examples might include:

- Transitioning schools away from single-use products such as disposable lunch trays.
- Stop distributing or selling bottled water, install water bottle refill stations, and provide durable water bottles or cups.

**Districts that have previously transitioned schools away from single-use items can be recognized for maintaining these systems and expanding durables to additional schools or implementing new durable items.*

- Share how you promote and maintain at least two different types of bulk dispensers in schools*, such as soap dispensers, milk dispensers, and condiment dispensers. (*Short Answer/Open Answer*) Examples might include:
 - Transition schools to bulk condiment dispensers at lunch.
 - Install and maintain milk dispensers during meal service.

** Districts that have already implemented bulk systems can be recognized for maintaining them, expanding them to additional schools, or implementing new bulk dispensers.*

- Optional: Share other actions you are trying. (*Short Answer/Open Answer*)

To apply for recognition fill out the district level [Waste Reduction Benchmark form](#).

Recycling Collection Criteria

- At least 60% of active participating schools received the Recycling Collection recognition benchmark this school year. *(Yes/No)*

- Adopt and support district-wide recycling policies, procedures, and systems and provide schools with the documents or information about the district's recycling goals, priorities, and policies. *(Attach a copy of the goals, priorities, and/or policies.)* These systems might include:
 - Providing recycling support systems and services to schools.
 - Providing and supporting the collection of unique recyclable products such as ink cartridges, batteries, plastic film, shredded paper, and electronics.
 - Provide ongoing communication with school staff and teams around proper recycling practices, hauler services, and changes to collection such as bagged versus unbagged recycling, milk carton collection, and plastic cup collection. We recommend monthly or bi-monthly communications.

- Share how you promote staff education and engagement with waste reduction in schools. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)*
 - Green Schools Program representatives can provide support and training opportunities to custodial and nutrition services staff.

- Share how you adjust recycling collection service when recycling volumes change. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)*

- Provide clearly labeled and paired trash and recycling bins in all district office spaces. *(Yes/No)*

- Optional: Share other actions you are trying. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)*

To apply for recognition fill out the district level [Recycling Collection Benchmark form](#).

Food Waste Reduction Criteria

- At least 60% of active participating schools received the Food Waste Reduction recognition benchmark this school year. *(Yes/No)*

- Adopt and support district-wide food waste reduction policies, procedures, and systems and provide schools with the documents or information about the district's food waste goals, priorities, and procedures. *(Attach a copy of the goals, priorities, and/or policies.)*
Systems might include:
 - Providing food waste reduction support systems and services to schools, such as installing bulk milk dispensers to reduce liquid milk waste.
 - Supporting the establishment of food share tables and food donation programs.
 - Providing ongoing communication with school staff and teams around federal laws such as “offer and select” policies. We recommend monthly or bi-monthly communications.

- Explore changes in food waste reduction systems and opportunities for your schools. *(Summary of possible actions being considered and next steps)* This might include:
 - Tracking menu options students typically do not eat so Nutrition Services may revise future menus within federal nutrition guidelines.
 - Instituting recess before lunch.
 - Instituting set minimums for “seated lunchtime” to ensure all students receive at least 20 minutes of seated lunch times.

- Optional: Share other actions you are trying. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)*

To apply for recognition fill out the district level [Food Waste Reduction Benchmark form](#).

Organics Collection Criteria

- At least 60% of active participating schools received the Organics Collection recognition benchmark this school year. *(Yes/No)*

- Adopt and support district-wide organics collection policies, procedures, and systems and provide schools with the documents or information about the district's goals, priorities, and procedures. *(Attach a copy of the goals, priorities, and/or policies.)*
Systems might include:
 - Providing support systems and services that encourage organics collection.
 - Providing incentives to schools that separate organic waste.

- Share how you promote staff education and engagement with school organics collection. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)*
 - Green Schools Program representatives can provide support and training opportunities to custodial and Nutrition Services staff.

- Share how you adjust garbage collection service when garbage volumes change due to the diversion of organic material. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)*

- Optional: Share other actions you are trying. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)*

To apply for recognition fill out the district level [Organics Collection Benchmark form](#).

Climate: Energy & Transportation Criteria

- At least 60% of active participating schools received the Climate recognition benchmark this school year. *(Yes/No)*

- Adopt and support district-wide climate mitigation policies, procedures, and systems and provide schools with the documents or information about the district's heat mitigation and emission goals, priorities, and/or procedures. *(Attach a copy of the goals, priorities, and/or policies.)* Systems might include:
 - Replacing HVAC systems with high-efficiency equipment when systems are being replaced.
 - Ensuring all schools have well-insulated walls, floors, roofs, and windows.
 - Supporting the design of new school buildings and upgrades to school buildings based on natural light, energy efficiency, and meeting LEED standards where possible.
 - Promoting and supporting a no-idling policy for school buses and cars at pick-up and drop-off times.
 - Planning for increased green spaces and tree cover in new buildings.

- Share how you promote staff education and engagement with climate mitigation in schools. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)* These actions might include:
 - Annually measuring the number of students and staff that commute to or from school by using alternative modes of transportation such as yellow school bus service, public transit, carpools, walking, and biking.
 - Sharing with each principal and custodian the energy use for their facility and how it compares to the energy use per capita for the other facilities in the school district.
 - Measuring the impact on energy use and cost savings of newly adopted energy conservation practices.
 - Provide covered bicycle racks and other accommodations to promote bicycling and walking to school/work.

- Optional: Share other actions you are trying. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)*

To apply for recognition fill out the district level [Climate: Energy & Transportation Benchmark form](#).

Water Conservation Criteria

- At least 60% of active participating schools received the Water Conservation recognition benchmark this school year. *(Yes/No)*

- Adopt and support district-wide water conservation policies, procedures, and systems and provide schools with the documents or information about the district's water conservation goals, priorities, and/or procedures. *(Attach a copy of the goals, priorities, and/or policies.)* Systems might include:
 - Creating a vacation and summer shut-down checklist for maintenance staff.
 - Promoting and maintaining the use of timers, automatic shutoff switches, and water-efficient faucets/toilets/showers in bathrooms and encouraging the replacement of old fixtures with high-efficiency fixtures.
 - Creating a comprehensive plan for checking, reporting, and correcting water leaks, standing water, and/or running water.
 - Utilizing drip and low-water outdoor irrigation systems when needed.

- Track water use and costs for district and school facilities. Establish baseline usage and costs for water and regularly monitor water use. Share what you learn with schools and program participants. *(Summary of Findings)*
 - An example might include using a Utility Manager Software Program to monitor water use and costs.

- Share how you promote staff education and engagement with water conservation in schools. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)* These actions might include:
 - Annually sharing with each principal and custodian the water consumption data for their facility and how it compares to the water consumption per capita for the other facilities in the school district.
 - Water conservation policies and procedures should be included in annual custodial/maintenance staff training.

- Optional: Share other actions you are trying. *(Short Answer/Open Answer)*

To apply for recognition fill out the district level [Water Conservation Benchmark form](#).

Schoolyard Stewardship Criteria

- At least 60% of active participating schools received the Schoolyard Stewardship recognition benchmark this school year. (Yes/No)
- Adopt and support district-wide schoolyard stewardship policies, procedures, and systems and provide schools with the documents or information about the district's schoolyard stewardship goals, priorities, and/or procedures. (*Attach a copy of the goals, priorities, and/or policies.*) Systems might include:
 - Determining criteria for which schools are a priority for schoolyard enhancement.
 - Assessing schoolyard habitat features.
 - Approving policies to encourage support staff to accompany teachers when students are outdoors during class.
 - Completing stormwater retention, rain garden, or pervious (permeable) surfaces site assessments at each school.
 - Making schoolyards open for community access after school hours.
 - Training maintenance staff in pesticide/herbicide-free natural pest control.
- Share how you promote staff education and engagement with schoolyard stewardship in schools. (*Short Answer/Open Answer*) These actions might include:
 - Training on schoolyard-enhanced learning or schoolyard curriculum offered for all teachers.
 - Ongoing teacher professional development for outdoor education facilitation and integration of the schoolyard in curriculum.
 - Facilitating school and district-wide challenges for classes to take learning outside.
- Optional: Share other actions you are trying. (*Short Answer/Open Answer*)

To apply for recognition fill out the district level [Schoolyard Stewardship Benchmark form](#).