



Green Team Guide: Strategies for Success

What is a Green Team?

A Green Team is a group of school community members who work together on education and action for sustainability. Green Team members may include students, teachers, custodians, administrators, and parent, family, or community volunteers.

Student Green Teams in schools participating in the King County Green Schools Program are eligible to receive guidance. Contact your Green Schools Program Representative for more information.

Strategies for success

Successful teams usually follow an ongoing three-step process of **recruit**, **sustain**, and **reward**.

Recruit

Recruit adults. Include a minimum of two school staff members, such as teachers, administrators, or custodians. Adult members serve as primary contacts for King County Green Schools Program support.

- It is helpful to include a member of the custodial staff. Custodians collect garbage, monitor heating systems, and are familiar with all parts of the building.
- Parent/guardian/family or community volunteers also can participate.

Recruit students. There is no such thing as too large a Green Team! Large teams may be divided into sub-groups focused on different conservation practices such as waste prevention, recycling, composting, energy conservation, water conservation, school garden, healthy schools, transportation, and more.

Below are strategies to increase student membership or participation.

- **Promote.** Use posters, fliers, and morning, lunch, and assembly announcements.
- **Ask an existing club to include Green Team activities.** Consider ASB, science, environmental, gardening, or community service clubs.

- **Consider designating a specific grade level as the Green Team.** Graduating students can orient or train incoming students a few months before the end of each school year.
- **Use a formal application process.** A student Green Team application form and pledge asks students to commit to serving on the team and communicates clear expectations about student participation.

Although a large Green Team can be helpful, keep in mind that, as Steve Jobs said, “A small team of A+ players can run circles around a giant team of B and C players.”

Sustain

Regular meetings and realistic activities are the best ways to sustain Green Team action and enthusiasm. Tips to maintain student motivation, team visibility, and continuity:

- Meet regularly (once per week or once every other week is recommended)
- Keep project goals achievable. For most schools, it works well to plan one small project, one activity, or one step toward a larger project per month.
- Share each success or project completion with the school community.
- Compile a list or calendar of team activities -- including a short description of the activity, who is involved, and when the activity occurs -- and share it with the school. This is helpful, especially when staff and student leaders change and when more than one team or class is involved.

Reward

Celebrate successes as a team and as a school!

Green Team members work hard and deserve to be acknowledged for their efforts and successes. Positive reinforcement encourages members to stay on the team and draws others to join.

Below are examples of rewards and celebrations.

- Recognize the team and its successes at a school assembly, a school staff meeting, and a school district board meeting.
- Recognize the team and its successes in a school or district newsletter, an online bulletin, a hallway bulletin board, or school website.
- Provide certificates of recognition.
- Provide team members with additional recess or free time.
- Show a movie or plan a special activity of the team’s choosing during lunch or after school.
- Have a party with fun and healthy snacks. To support the Green Team’s mission, use durable plates, bowls, and utensils, and reduce food waste by offering appropriate quantities and planning what you will do with leftover snacks.

Recap: Successful School Green Teams

Your school can have an active student Green Team by:

- Regularly recruiting team members.
- Setting realistic goals.
- Sustaining the team with regular meetings and a variety of activities.
- Sharing with the school community the results of the team's activities and the school's conservation successes.
- Keeping a list or calendar of ongoing education and actions to help guide the team.
- Rewarding team members with praise and recognition.
- Receiving guidance from the King County Green Schools Program.

Ask for help from the King County Green Schools Program. Contact your representative today!