



Alpac Elementary School

School district: Auburn

School location: Pacific

Began participating in the Green Schools Program: September 2017

Level One of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in May 2017

Level Two of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in May 2018

Level Three of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in May 2019

Sustaining Green School 2022-2023: Achieved in May 2023

Student Green Team recognition: Multiple years, including 2022-23

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Alpac Elementary School achieved a recycling rate of 59%.
- The school established a student Green Team made up of 12 volunteers who helped collect recyclable materials around the school.
- A partnership between the Green Schools Program, City of Auburn, and University of Washington led to a cafeteria waste audit in March 2017. The audit provided data about unopened, packaged foods from the school lunch program which could be donated instead of disposed, and led to recommendations about collecting recyclable materials in classrooms where students ate lunch.
- To reduce wasted food, Alpac set up a food share table where students could place unopened packaged foods from the meal program for others to take.
- Teachers and custodians helped train students on what belongs in recycling and waste bins. Teachers worked with student leaders to assist their fellow students to sort lunch materials.
- Weekly morning announcements included tips and fun facts about the 4R's - reduce, reuse, recycle, and rethink.



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

- To reduce paper use, administrators and teachers used the school website and text alerts to communicate with parents.
- Custodians monitored waste collection to reduce contamination in recycling bins.
- To reduce paper waste, reusable badges and hall passes were used.
- Students received star tickets -- “caught ‘ya doing something good” -- when they brought a waste-free lunch.
- To reduce single-use plastic bottles, the school encouraged students to bring reusable water bottles and to use the water filling station.
- See the **Sustaining Green School 2022-23** section below to learn about additional waste reduction improvements at Alpac Elementary.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- “Turn off Lights” and “Turn off Equipment” signs were placed in all classrooms to remind students and staff to turn them off when not in use.
- The Green Team formed an “Energy Conservation Patrol” which helped ensure that all lights and equipment were turned off when not in use.
- Regular monthly announcements included energy conservation tips and facts.
- Teachers included energy conservation themes in classroom activities.
- Teachers turned off lights in unoccupied spaces and used daylight instead of electric lights whenever possible.
- All incandescent lights were replaced with fluorescent or LED bulbs.
- School administrators encouraged students and employees to dress appropriately for the weather rather than adjust thermostats.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- In 2018, fifth-grade classes learned about stormwater pollution prevention from a City of Auburn guest speaker.
- Second-grade students learned about the water cycle, local sources of drinking water, and watersheds as part of the curriculum.



Students removing oil from feathers, simulating an oil spill cleanup. March 2023

- Water conservation facts and reminders about turning off water while soaping hands were placed in classrooms, restrooms, and kitchen.
- The school worked with the nonprofit Futurewise to plant native drought-resistant plants on school grounds to filter pollutants from soil and thus protect the watershed from stormwater pollution.
- In 2019, several classrooms wrote and displayed water conservation pledges. Teachers monitored water use in classrooms and encouraged students to reduce water use when washing equipment.
- In newsletters and emails, the school shared water conservation facts and tips with teachers and parents.
- The custodian turned off hot water and circulation pumps during school breaks.
- Assistant principal Tonni Best used email to share with all employees about Green Schools Program participation and goals, as well as examples of how staff can encourage sustainable practices.

Sustaining Green School recognition

Alpac sustained and built on Level One waste reduction and recycling practices, Level Two energy conservation strategies, and Level Three water conservation actions. How the school accomplished this each school year is described below.



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Sustaining Green School 2022-2023

- Reusable serving-ware became part of Alpac's sustainable practices from the start of 2022-23, after school staff met with district Child Nutrition Services to request this change. Disposable plastic sporks were replaced with reusable utensils, and the cafeteria provided durable, reusable trays.
- By March 2023, individual condiment packets were replaced with large condiment dispensers, thus reducing plastic waste.
- Alpac continued to collect recyclable materials and organics (food scraps and food-soiled paper). Posters provided reminders about how to sort items.
- To learn what recycling education was needed, Green Club members observed materials in classroom bins and then created posters with actual items attached to show what materials belong in recycling bins.
- Classroom recycling improved by at least 20%, and organics collection by at least 33%, evidenced by a third Cedar Grove composting container filled weekly.
- To reduce single-use plastic bottles, Alpac students and staff continued to use the water bottle filling station to fill their reusable bottles.
- Green Club advisors visited each third- to fifth-grade class to talk about environmental advocacy at school and in the community.
- During Earth Week, students in every grade level learned about the importance of pollinators, and students were invited to make a pledge to protect butterflies, hummingbirds, bees, bats, and flowers. Pledges were displayed in a hallway.
- To conserve water, classroom faucets were placed on timers.
- Weekly intercom announcements included conservation tips on reducing waste, recycling, composting, water conservation, and energy conservation.
- Student Green Club members created and posted signs around the school reminding people to "turn off the lights when you leave a room" and "turn off computers and monitors when you leave school."
- Most classrooms had student jobs for turning off lights when leaving rooms and closing doors to keep heat or cold out of rooms.