

Auburn School District

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
2006

Level One Green School District:
Achieved in 2008

General

A critical district achievement was the creation of a resource conservation manager (RCM) position to expand and monitor conservation systems. Districts with RCMs who regularly monitor energy and water use and garbage and recycling volumes - as well as associated costs - have seen greater reductions in garbage, energy use, water use, and costs, and have sustained those reductions over time.

See updates at the end of this section noting successes from 2009 - 2023.

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- From 2006-2008, 16 of the district's 22 schools participated in the Green Schools Program and increased their recycling rates. As a result, the district reduced garbage disposal costs in several schools.
- With Green Schools Program guidance, from 2006-2008, custodians and other staff set up and improved recycling systems and educated students and staff about reducing waste and recycling. The program provided recycling bins for classrooms, lunchrooms, and offices, and stickers for each



Randy Thomas, director of maintenance and operations (right), receiving recognition from Dale Alekel, Green Schools Program manager (center) and Kathleen Edman, City of Auburn (left)



Scott Weide, resource conservation manager of Auburn School District, receiving a King County Earth Hero at School award from King County Executive Ron Sims in 2011



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

bin showing what materials can be placed in each. The program also provided dollies to help custodians collect both garbage and recyclables.

- In 2007, the district started a pilot food scrap collection program at several schools, with help and tools from the Green Schools Program.
- Gildo Rey Elementary increased its recycling rate from 43% in 2006 to 67% in 2008, resulting in cost savings of \$425 per month or \$4,230 per year, thanks to increased recycling which reduced garbage pickups from twice to once per week.
- Auburn Mountainview High increased its recycling rate from 35% in 2006 to 55% in 2008, and began to collect food scraps for pickup by Cedar Grove Composting, a local composting facility. Although the district paid for that collection service, the net result was a monthly cost savings of \$580, achieved by reducing garbage collection service which costs more than composting collection.
- Kitchen staff management reduced food waste in school kitchens.
- The district addressed illegal dumping issues at a number of schools by posting no dumping signs provided by King County Solid Waste Division.
- City of Auburn provided classroom workshops about recycling and waste reduction, and shared garbage and recycling data for each school.



Arthur Jacobsen Elementary student Green Team and staff receiving their Level One Green School banner in 2012

Waste reduction and recycling: Updates through June 2023

- In fall 2014, district resource conservation manager Scott Weide held an **Auburn Green Schools Academy** on a staff in-service learning day. Along with Scott, the Green Schools Program led breakout sessions about waste prevention, recycling, composting, and student Green Teams.



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- In 2017, the district partnered with the University of Washington (UW) Livable Year program, City of Auburn, and the Green Schools Program to conduct a study of cafeteria waste. The Green Schools Program trained UW students to sort and analyze materials placed by K-12 students in cafeteria garbage, recycling, and composting bins. The program also provided tarps, scales, and other materials the UW students used to conduct the study. The final report included an analysis of the types and quantities of edible food which could be placed on food share tables.
- In 2017, the Green Schools Program manager worked with child nutrition director Jan Campbell-Aikens to support school food share tables. The district provided trays and ice sheets, and the program created signs - one for elementary and the other for secondary schools – tailored to the district. In 2019, the Green Schools Program updated the signs to match district changes.
- **Updates as of June 2018:** Compared to 2016-2017, district schools collectively produced 388 tons less garbage, collected 229 fewer tons of compostable materials, and collected 7.5 tons more recyclables. This data shows the effectiveness of waste prevention such as using durable serving-ware, reducing paper use, and reducing wasted food.
- In March 2019, the Green Schools Program conducted a training for district kitchen staff on food waste reduction, food share tables, durable serving-ware, and collection of recyclable and compostable materials.
- **Updates as of June 2023:** 21 of the district's 22 schools had help from the Green Schools Program; 19 schools had been recognized as Level One Green Schools for waste reduction and recycling practices; and 10 of the 19 schools received recognition as Level Two Green Schools, six schools as Level Three Green Schools, and four schools as Sustaining Green Schools.





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Energy and water conservation practices – reported in 2008

The district conserved energy use and costs in the following ways.

- Programmable thermostats were installed in portables, boiler tune-ups were conducted, and the Superintendent notified administrators that personal appliances such as small fridges and individual coffee pots should be minimized due to high energy costs.
- Energy misers were maintained on all vending machines, and software was installed to shut down computers automatically at the end of each day.

The district conserved water through the following strategies.

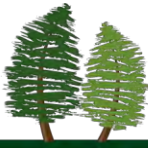
- Faucet aerators and low flow faucets were installed.
- The district replaced spray nozzles with low flow nozzles in school kitchens.
- Rain gauges were installed on all irrigation systems.

Other sustainable practices - reported in 2008

- The district's Child Nutrition Department partnered with local farmers who supplied fresh organic foods, and created a school garden to teach students sustainable practices and provide fresh organic vegetables for two schools.
- Through its Safe Routes to School Committee, the district expanded safe walking and bicycling routes. Pioneer Elementary participated in Ride Your Bike to Cool the Planet. Washington Elementary students and families walked instead of driving to school on International Walk to School Day.
- The district Transportation Department enforced its no-idling policy during after-school loading times.

Award

In 2008, Michael Martin, a fourth-grade teacher at Terminal Park Elementary, received a King County Earth Heroes at School award for forming a student Green Team which promoted waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting.



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Comment

“Auburn School District was very pleased with the support received from King County Green Schools Program. The benefits experienced were instrumental in moving the district toward a more comprehensive district-wide resource conservation program.”

- **Randy Thomas**, director of maintenance and operations