



Bellevue Montessori School

School district: Private

School location: Bellevue

Began participating in Green Schools Program: November 2019

Level One of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in January 2020

Level Two of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in June 2020

Level Three of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in June 2022

Sustaining Green School 2022-23: Achieved in June 2023

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- The school achieved a 40% recycling rate.
- Green Team students formed multiple teams to monitor recycling, composting, and other conservation practices.
- The school started to collect compostable materials in 2019-20 for transport to a regional composting facility.
- Student Green Team members delivered compost bins to classrooms, taught each class about the benefits of recycling and composting, and showed other students how to sort materials into appropriate bins.
- To reduce food waste, students were encouraged to “take or bring only what you will eat.”
- The school started a new meal program to provide healthy lunch options using only compostable serving materials. The school’s new food delivery company provided compostable plates and utensils. No lunch trays were used.
- To reduce paper use, electronic curriculum modules replaced paper workbooks, the school communicated its policy on double-side photocopying and printing, and all newsletters were sent via email.
- The school purchased paper, paper towels, and other products made from recyclable materials.



- Student volunteers made sure staff kitchen compost bins were used correctly. In February 2020, students presented staff members with lessons on what items can be composted.
- In 2019-20, recycling practices were included in classroom routines and ecology lessons. The school continued to use classroom lessons, newsletters, and signs to educate students, custodians, teachers, and administrators about recycling and waste reduction practices.
- Near classroom recycling bins, the school posted “Wait: Use one-sided good paper first” signs to encourage students and staff to use both sides before recycling.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- The school’s new facility was built with sustainable features, including motion timers on all lights and windows which allow natural light while insulating from exterior fluctuation. All doors to the outside are closed after people enter.
- The school reduced lighting and often used natural lighting only. Small LED lamps were used when extra lighting was needed in classrooms. Classroom blinds were open during the day for natural lighting and closed when rooms were unoccupied.
- Students posted signs near light switches to remind the school community to turn lights off manually when not in use. They also placed signs above regularly used equipment reminding people to turn off equipment when not in use.
- A student created a classroom Energy Conservation Pledge and conducted a poll to see how many students would be willing to sign the pledge.
- A student team monitored lights and computers to make sure they were turned off after use. They interviewed teachers to ask if they were following the team’s energy conservation suggestions, and no problems were found.
- As part of a cultural fair project, a student researched how humans lived sustainably for thousands of years, how modern humans are not living



sustainably, and how we can make different choices. The student compared his daily choices and noted how he could reduce his carbon footprint.

- The Montessori elementary “cosmic” curriculum was integrated and designed around ecology to imprint on students the interconnectedness of all things in the universe, including the local environment and classroom community.
- Each classroom temperature was set to 65 ° F, and students and staff received regular reminders to dress appropriately for the season.
- The school saved on average \$15.34 per month on electricity bills in 2019-2020.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- Students studied riparian zones and tested the impact on water samples by observing growth in tanks of pond water samples containing varying levels of fertilizer to mimic run-off. They used the scientific method to create posters describing and analyzing their results.
- The Green Team created posters to encourage reducing water waste, washing only full loads of laundry, and durable, reusable water bottles.
- The Green Team checked for leaks and other water issues around school, researched rain barrels for school gardens, and created signs for restrooms explaining what should or shouldn't be flushed down toilets.
- Before a park clean-up project, the fifth- and sixth-grade reading group read an Ecology Anthology and the fourth-grade reading group read a Rachel Carson biography. In the park clean-up project, students removed debris from sewer grates, removed invasive ivy, sorted litter into recyclable materials, compostable materials, and trash - and then analyzed results.
- The school continued to reduce waste and recycle. Examples included using recyclable materials such as cardboard for art projects, and making it a student job to sort and keep reusable art supplies.
- The Green Team shared its efforts at all-school meetings and in school announcements and newsletters.



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Sustaining Green School 2022-23

- The school's Green Team is made up of 17 students in 4th-6th grades. To recruit members, the team hung posters and presented to several classrooms.
- At the start of the school year, the team focused on recycling practices. Approximately 50% of the school's waste was recycled and composted.
- The school continued to collect food scraps which an employee took home for their chickens.
- In spring 2023, the team conducted a waste audit in three classrooms and presented results to classrooms, and found that, depending on the classroom, paper towels were 40 – 65% of each classroom's waste. In the staff lounge, they experimented with two bins – one for food scraps and one for paper towels – and, as a result, staff lounge garbage was reduced by 20%.
- School lunches were provided in compostable containers.
- To reduce waste, each classroom had a container for paper used on one side only so students could use the other side for notes, and all cleaning was done with reusable rags rather than paper towels.
- The school maintained energy practices such as using sunlight instead electric lights whenever possible. The Green Team replaced missing "turn off the lights signs" to remind people to turn off lights when they are not needed.
- The Green Team visited a wastewater treatment plant to learn how it operates, and then conducted research about their community's water system.