



Christa McAuliffe Elementary School

School district: Lake Washington

School location: Sammamish

Began participating in Green Schools Program: September 2019

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

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

Level Three of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in June 2023

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- The school achieved a 56% recycling rate, thanks to reducing waste, collecting recyclable materials, and collecting food waste and other compostable materials.
- Recycling bins were labeled and paired with garbage bins. Students emptied classroom recycling bins into larger hallway recycling bins daily.
- 80 Associated Student Body (ASB) students served as the Green Team. They learned about the benefits of recycling and composting, and what materials can be recycled and composted.
- The team made monthly waste reduction and recycling announcements using information from the Green Schools Program website, and created 3-dimensional posters with actual materials attached to hang near recycling bins to show what materials can be recycled.
- In January 2020, the school began to collect paper towels from restroom handwashing areas and 19 classrooms in the school's compost containers. After adding compostable lunch trays, the school switched from two 96-gallon compost carts to one two-yard dumpster. The collected materials were transported weekly to a Cedar Grove Composting facility to be composted.
- At a 2019 staff meeting, PTSA sustainability chair Jayme Jonas shared information about the Green Schools Program, how to recycle, and the school's pilot composting program. PTSA Wednesday Facebook posts included messages about reducing waste and recycling at home as well as at school.



- The PTSA reduced its paper use by 50% by using only half-sheets for information sent home to families. Staff and family newsletters were sent electronically.
- The PTSA hosted a Used Book Rodeo, with families donating unwanted books, games, puzzles, DVDs, and video games for the community to buy. Book bucks earned for each donated item could be spent at the Rodeo. At this fundraising and reuse event, over 8,500 items were donated. Items not sold were donated to Joy of Reading, a summer literacy program, and other nonprofits in the community.
- The school collected nearly 3,000 pounds of used clothing and other textiles as a fundraiser for the fifth-grade outdoor camp. Items were sold at Value Village.
- The school collected 18 pounds of used markers to be recycled through the Crayola Colorcycle program.
- The PTSA Art Start program purchased and used only art supplies conforming to ASTM D-4236. No powdered paints, glazes, or clays were purchased or used.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- With leadership from associate principal Christina Le, lead custodian Mitch Sims-Fahey, and PTSA sustainability chair Jayme Jonas, the school learned about energy conservation while continuing waste reduction and recycling practices. Here's how the school maintained and improved waste reduction and recycling.
 - Continued to collect restroom and classroom paper towels for composting at a regional composting facility along with school food waste.
 - Made sure labeled recycling bins were in each classroom, hall, and common area.
 - Switched from compostable lunch trays, due to supply chain problems, to durable lunch baskets which were reused.
 - Added a leftover liquids bucket to the lunchroom sorting station, so only empty milk cartons, bottles, and cans would be placed in recycling bins.
 - Reduced paper use by 90% compared to 2019-20 by switching from printed to digital communication.



Success Story

- Participated in marker recycling with Crayola ColorCycle, crayon recycling with Mighty Crayon, and holiday light recycling with a Boy Scout Troop.
- To encourage energy conservation practices, here's what the school did.
 - With guidance from teachers and ASB advisors Jesse Magraw and Megan Dillon, the ASB Green Team created and hung posters about conserving energy, made monthly announcements, participated in McAuliffe's Earth Month Challenge, and helped with Walk and Roll to School Day.
 - The PTSA posted a weekly waste reduction Wednesday conservation tip or fact about energy conservation or waste reduction on its Facebook page and its weekly e-newsletter, and the PTSA Sustainability Chair presented at a staff meeting about how the school reduced energy use.
 - Energy conservation features in the school included motion sensors on classroom lights, LED Energy Star bulbs, automatic shut-off and energy saving modes on computer equipment, no vending machines, and an energy-efficient HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) system.
 - Before weekends and school breaks, custodians followed the shut-down procedures established by the district for lights and electronic equipment.
 - During Green Week, a Turn Off the Lights Day was followed to help save energy. "Be a power saver. Turn off all the lights when you leave a room. Remember to turn off the TV and computer when you are not using them" messages were included in the school's Earth Month Challenge. This challenge invited students to record what they did to meet the goal.
 - The school posted No Idle Zone signs on the school campus, and the message was promoted through the e-newsletter and Facebook posts.
- The school hosted its second annual "Virtual Walk-tober" in October 2021 to encourage students to walk and roll in their neighborhood. When students recorded the days they walked, biked, or scootered on a calendar and turned it in, they received vouchers for cookies from a local store.
- In September and April, litter cleanup days were hosted on campus after school.



Water Conservation (Level Three)

- While continuing to reduce waste and recycle, McAuliffe learned about water conservation with PTSA sustainability chair Jayme Jonas, lead custodian Mitch Sims-Fahey, and ASB advisors Megan Dillon and Saimoon Banerjee as leaders.
- Recycling and waste reduction included:
 - Expansion of organics collection to include kitchen food.
 - Continued participating in a crayon recycling through Mighty Crayon.
- Water conservation education and practices at McAuliffe included the following.
 - Monthly morning announcements shared by the 100-member ASB team.
 - Green Schools Program signs were posted at school sinks as reminders to turn off faucets while soaping hands and to report water leaks.
 - Cascade Water Alliance provided students with reusable water bottles. Families were invited to follow Cascade Water Alliance's #WeNeedWater campaign to learn about conserving and protecting water.
 - With PTSA funding, an Eagle Scout planted drought-tolerant plants on campus and posted signs about native plants reducing water use. A Girl Scout troop of McAuliffe students added plants to the garden.
 - PTSA Facebook posts throughout the year and two staff meeting presentations by Jayme Jonas shared water conservation information.
- During Earth Week, PTSA asked families to take a No Idle Pledge. Pledge forms and information were sent home with students. Students who returned a signed pledge earned Star Tickets, the school's positive behavior reward.
- In October 2022, the school hosted its annual Walk-tober to encourage students to walk and roll to or from school. The Mayor of Sammamish attended the Walk-tober kick-off to talk about the importance of active and shared modes of transportation. If students recorded days they walked, biked, carpoled, or bussed, they received vouchers for ice cream from a local store.
- The PTSA sponsored an Earth Day Art Contest to challenge students to use art to educate about conservation practices. The PTSA organized two campus litter pickup events and a community litter pickup event.