

## Cougar Ridge Elementary School

**School district:** Issaquah

**School location:** Bellevue

**Began participating in the Green Schools Program:** September 2010

**Level One of the Green Schools Program:** Achieved in May 2011

**Level Two of the Green Schools Program:** Achieved in May 2012

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

**Sustaining Green School 2022-23:** Achieved in June 2023

### Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Cougar Ridge achieved and maintained a 45% recycling rate.
- In 2010-11, the school began to collect lunchroom food scraps and other compostable materials. Student volunteers monitored lunchroom sorting.
- The student Green Team performed a skit about how to sort recyclable and compostable items, then students practiced sorting in the lunchroom.



In 2022 – 2023, to help students sort in the lunchroom, Green Team students created 3-dimensional posters with actual items attached.



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- Third- and fourth-grade students trained fellow students about reducing waste, reusing, recycling, and composting.
- The cafeteria switched from single-use plastic utensils to durable, reusable utensils.
- At the end of the school year, teachers offer supplies and decorations they no longer need to the rest of the staff.
- The school created reusable passes for volunteers, restroom, health room, etc.
- Art classes reused materials to create artwork and the second-grade music classes included conservation themes into their music choices.
- Students created posters about recycling and composting to hang in hallways and the lunchroom.
- Students were encouraged to take only what they can eat and to eat what they take. As a result, less food was wasted.
- Recycling stickers from the Green Schools Program were attached to recycling bins. Students emptied classroom recycling bins into larger containers, which the custodian emptied into the outdoor recycling container.
- Cougar Ridge recycled printer cartridges and clean plastic bags in its staff area.
- To reduce paper use, the newsletter was sent via email and many classrooms collected paper only used on one side so students could use the blank sides.
- In 2018-19, the school began to collect restroom paper towels for transport along with food scraps and other compostable materials to Cedar Grove Composting.

## **Energy Conservation (Level Two)**

- The school continued its waste reduction and recycling practices, and included tips about waste reduction, recycling, and energy conservation in the school newsletter and in morning announcements.
- Student Green Team members placed stickers next to each light switch reminding students and staff to conserve energy by turning off the lights when they were not needed.



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- Team members calculated their carbon footprints and compared them to the average individual's carbon footprint in the U.S. and worldwide. They shared this information with classmates and families.
- The Physical Education teacher and Green Team started Walk-to-School Thursdays to encourage students to walk or ride their bikes to school from April through the end of the school year. Green team members counted the number of cars coming to the school each Thursday and reported the information to students to measure reduction of vehicle drop-offs.
- Many classrooms participated in lessons and activities about conservation in observance of Earth Day 2012.
- Math classes conducted surveys to determine how much energy students consume by using televisions, computers and other electronics.
- Issaquah School District's contract with its vending machine company required that the machine's display lights are permanently shut off.
- Problems with heating and cooling were reported and corrected by district staff.

## **Water Conservation (Level Three)**

- Weekly water conservation tips were placed in Cougar Ridge News.
- Third-grade curriculum included the water cycle and healthy streams for salmon.
  - Students designed and created a model community within a watershed to gain understanding of the systemic nature of watersheds.
  - Students predicted consequences of human activities on a watershed and salmon populations, and investigated effects of water deposition on landforms in a watershed.
  - Students listed actions they can take to preserve and support salmon populations at various stages in their life cycles.
- A parent volunteer presented to classes about climate change and water conservation.
- The school installed automatic shut-off faucets and displayed signs by all faucets to remind students and staff to turn off the water while soaping hands.



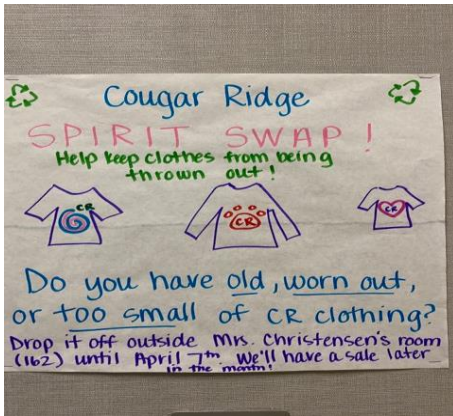
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## Sustaining Green School 2022-23

- The school restarted and maintained its waste reduction and recycling practices, and the cafeteria brought back the practice of durable, reusable utensils which had been initiated before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The student Green Team of 45 students in grades 3-5 monitored daily lunch sorting. The team created 3-dimensional posters with actual items attached and made videos to educate students about correct sorting.
- Cougar Ridge Spirit Wear Swap, hosted by the Green Team, encouraged students to drop off school Spirit Wear clothing they had outgrown so other students' families could buy the used items. The team's campaign featured adverse effects of fast fashion and overconsumption. Stained or damaged items were repurposed into a school quilt and textile remnants were recycled.



- The school set up bins in classrooms and restrooms to collect used paper towels, which were added to the school's food scraps for transport to a regional composting facility. The Green Team created videos about the paper towel collection to air on student news which all students watch in their classrooms.
- King County's assembly on waste reduction and recycling was performed at the school.
- The PTSA newsletter included conservation tips, and all PTSA events used only compostable serving-ware and did not offer single-use plastic water bottles. Attendees were encouraged to bring their own durable water bottles.