



## Discovery Elementary School

**School district:** Issaquah

**School location:** Sammamish

**Began participating in the Green Schools Program:** In 2005-06, then again in April 2009

**Level One of the Green Schools Program:**  
Achieved in December 2009

**Level Two of the Green Schools Program:**  
Achieved in February 2015

**Level Three of the Green Schools Program:** Achieved in May 2016

**Sustaining Green School 2016-17:**  
Achieved in May 2017

**Sustaining Green School 2017-18:**  
Achieved in April 2018

**Sustaining Green School 2018-19:**  
Achieved in May 2019

### Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Discovery achieved and maintained a 59% recycling rate. The school reduced the size of its outdoor garbage container from 8 yards picked up twice a week to 6 yards picked up once a week. This decreased the cost of garbage disposal by 58%.
- In spring 2016, the school piloted durable utensils in the cafeteria to replace plastic disposable utensils. In 2017, Discovery eliminated plastic forks and instead used durable, washable metal utensils for all students who purchased hot lunches. Students who brought lunches from home were asked to bring their own utensils, and received a note to take home when they forgot to bring utensils.
- The school promoted Waste-Free Wednesday lunches to encourage reducing wasted food and packing lunches from home in reusable containers.



Green School information booth at the family multicultural night event



Book swap during Literacy Night



- Most classrooms had paper reuse trays for paper used only on one side.
- To reduce food waste, in 2015-16 the Green Team created a video and posters encouraging students to only take the amount of food and milk they would eat or drink and to eat the foods and drinks they placed on their trays.
- Students monitored and placed stickers listing what can and can't be recycled on indoor and outdoor recycling containers throughout the school. All recycling, composting, and garbage containers were color-coded and placed next to each other in each room and areas of the school.
- The Green Schools Program trained the student Green Team to monitor cafeteria sorting stations to help their fellow students sort recyclable and compostable materials. Green Team students wore aprons from King County to identify themselves as monitors.
- The Be Green Club created PowerPoints with facts and tips about conservation practices, and the presentations were shared with students during lunch.
- In 2015-16, with permission from Cedar Grove Composting, the school began collecting restroom paper towels to be added to food scraps and other compostable materials for transport to Cedar Grove Composting. Small buckets to collect food scraps from snacks were placed in all classrooms.
- All students were invited to take part in the Discovery Great Green Challenge which included monthly activities to help students and families start conservation practices in their homes.
- Discovery was recognized in the Guinness Book of World Records for the most plastic bottles - 657 pounds - collected for recycling in an eight-hour period.
- Along with all schools in Issaquah School District, Discovery's cafeteria eliminated drinking straws. With the help of kitchen staff, the cafeteria switched from using disposable polystyrene trays to reusable plastic trays.
- The school sent reminder emails to staff about waste reduction and how to sort recyclable and compostable materials.

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

- Student Green Team members presented energy conservation tips at staff meetings and in morning announcements.



- The school included energy conservation reminders during the Green Day kickoff at the start of the school year, and throughout the year reminded students and staff to dress appropriately for the weather to avoid adjusting thermostats.
- Green Team students calculated their carbon footprints at the beginning of the school year and planned to do that again at the end of the year to compare results. A carbon footprint exercise was added to the Green Team website.
- Energy conservation labels were posted on light switches to remind staff and students to turn them off when they were not needed.
- In each class, Power Rangers – a classroom job – used an energy conservation checklist at the end of each day to make sure lights and electronics were turned off.
- Students participated in the Cool School Challenge by conducting classroom energy audits and providing classes with information and tips on how to reduce energy use.
- Discovery staff participated in the Level Two King County Green Schools Program orientation held for all Issaquah School District staff.
- District software automatically shut down computers in the evenings, and the school's vending machine lights were permanently turned off.

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

- The student Green Team presented Level Three Green School goals at a staff meeting in November 2015.
- Monthly morning announcements included information about recycling, waste reduction, and water conservation.
- Green Team advisors shared grade level appropriate videos for classrooms about water conservation, and encouraged all teachers to brainstorm with students about ways to conserve water at school and home.
- Second- and fourth-grade students visited Mercer Slough and conducted experiments in class to learn about water conservation and the human impact on natural resources such as water. A first-grade teacher invited a guest presenter from the Living Building Foundation to teach students about conservation and sustainable building. Second-grade students learned about terrariums and aquariums.



- Green Team students:
  - Tested school faucets throughout the school building for water flow rates and shared their data with the custodian.
  - Created water conservation signs to post above school sinks.
- Head custodian Wil Chromey:
  - Hung water conservation signs above all sinks.
  - Adjusted water flow to decrease school toilet water use.
  - Used microfiber flat mops in the lunchroom to clean lunch tables. The flat mops used less water and required less washing and drying than previous wet wash cloths, saving both water and energy.

## **Sustaining Green School recognition**

To earn recognition as a Sustaining Green School, Discovery Elementary sustained and built on its Level One waste reduction and recycling practices and Level Two energy conservation practices and water conservation strategies. How the school did this is described below.

### **Sustaining Green School 2016-17**

The school organized a book swap during its annual literacy night. Waste reduction and recycling sorting stations were set up at family events such as the back to school BBQ.

### **Sustaining Green School 2017-18**

The Be Green Club set up Crayola crayon and marker recycling boxes and signs for each classroom. The before- and after-school clubs began using reusable plates for snacks.

### **Sustaining Green School 2018-19**

- School counselor Denise Darnell shared information about waste reduction, reuse, and recycling practices with all classrooms.
- An inventory was conducted in each classroom of waste-free, reusable party supplies and marker recycling buckets.



King County



King County Green Schools Program

# *Success Story*

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- Discovery Elementary participated in the Waste-Free Wednesday district-wide lunch competition.
- Teachers taught students about harmful impacts of plastic straws, plastic bags, and plastic bottles on the environment.

## **Awards**

- Head custodian Wil Chromey received a 2016 Earth Hero at School award.
- Teachers Tasha Kirby and Sue McNamara received King County Earth Heroes at School awards in 2008 for starting a food scrap collection program at the school, guiding students to replace throwaway materials with washable serving-ware for classroom parties, and collecting empty, clean plastic bags for recycling.