King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Eastside Catholic School

School district: Private

School location: Sammamish

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
September 2016

Level One of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in January 2017

Level Two of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2018

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

Students conducted a waste audit.

Eastside Catholic School launched a No-Idling Campaign.

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- The school reached and maintained a recycling rate of 62%.
- The school hosted a waste-free lunch day at a sophomore class retreat where students formed teams to compete in a waste reduction challenge. The team that produced the least amount of waste was awarded a Free Dress Day.
- Information on how to pack a waste-free lunch was sent to families, teachers, and students in the school's electronic newsletter.
- The student body president shared monthly announcements about waste reduction and recycling with the school community.
- The student Green Team:
    - Collaborated with faculty to share a waste reduction and recycling video with all middle school classes and high school mentor classes. The video included information about waste reduction and recycling practices.
    - Created educational posters to increase awareness about the benefits of reducing waste, recycling, and composting.

- To reduce paper use, the school initiated a print only what you need policy, which encourages students and faculty to use technology for school assignments instead of printing on paper.
- In March 2018, Green Team students conducted a waste assessment to calculate the school's recycling rate. Based on the data, specific tips on reducing waste and recycling were shared on the electronic reader board.
- Containers for paper used only on one side were placed in all copy rooms, and the paper was used on the reverse side as scratch paper.
- Baskets were set up for surplus or unwanted supplies. Before buying new supplies, staff checked to see if the supplies were available in the baskets.
- In 2017-18, during Catholic Schools Week, as part of a commitment to care for creation, a Ban the Bottle campaign was held. Students who brought refillable bottles received stickers for their bottles were entered into a drawing for a Hydro Flask water bottle.
- The school donated leftover food from staff events to local firefighters.
- In fall 2019, students worked with the cafeteria provider (No Junk, Inc.) to replace single-use plastic utensils and containers with compostable utensils and containers.
- As a result, the school reduced the number of garbage bins and increased the number of recycling and composting bins throughout campus.
- Waste station bins were color-coded and signs were posted on each cafeteria garbage, recycling, and compost bin. A bulletin board near each waste station displayed information about recycling practices.
- The high school mentor program started a monthly Go Green challenge, and Go Green tips and facts were shared in morning announcements.
- Water bottle refilling stations were installed to reduce single-use plastic bottles.
- Staff was challenged to eliminate single-use water bottles and coffee cups from campus. The school worked with the Parent and Family Student Association (PFSA) and Parent Teacher Family (PTF) to reduce waste at meetings and events.
- Automatic paper towel dispensers were installed in restrooms to minimize excessive use of paper towels.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- To reduce energy use, the school installed light motion sensors in classrooms and restrooms. Classroom electronics were set to enter sleep mode when not in use.
- The school became an EPA Energy Star certified school in April 2012.
- The AP Environmental Science class completed and presented projects about renewable energy sources and how to reduce overall energy consumption.
- In 2017-18, the school introduced carpool parking on campus by issuing more carpool parking passes than regular parking passes to reduce the number of cars driving onto campus. In 2019-2020, the school continued to encourage carpooling.
- In February 2018, the school performed an annual Thermal IR scan to detect energy waste. Energy use and costs were reviewed every month to monitor for spikes in energy use that would indicate energy waste.
- The school centrally controlled classroom temperatures and encouraged the school community to dress for the weather instead of asking for the heat to be increased.
- In January 2020, the school implemented a “no idle zone” in the carpool waiting area. Students reminded idling cars to turn off their engines to conserve energy and to reduce carbon emissions and air pollution.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- In fall 2019, the school used morning announcements, staff meetings, and family newsletters to announce its goal of achieving Level Three Green School recognition. The announcements promoted conservation practices, including the no-idling zone, reusable water bottles and containers, and correct sorting of recyclable and compostable materials.
- At the all-faculty and staff in-service day in August 2019, the school shared water conservation and pollution prevention tips .
- The school pledged to eliminate single-use bottled water at on-campus events and discontinued purchase of individual plastic water bottles. Families were asked to bring refillable water bottles to events and water jugs were provided at staff events.

- Signs were posted in restrooms to educate the school about what should and should not be flushed down the toilet as part of King County Don't Flush Trouble campaign. The cafeteria displayed "Do not pour fats, oils or grease down the drain" signs to avoid clogging pipes and sewer systems.
- Water conservation signs were posted in kitchens and science laboratories.
- The school used a master valve at the water meter to shut off the controller if it senses when water is not needed to maintain soil moisture.
- The school purchased water-efficient fixtures and equipment when replacements were needed.
- To eliminate one cause of water pollution, the school stopped purchasing balloon decorations for events such as admission events, assemblies, and dances.
- In 2019, at the Project Based Learning Curriculum Design Lab Series about groundwater supply in Sammamish Plateau, a faculty member learned about educational materials, lessons, and action projects related to water supply and water conservation, and shared materials with Environmental Science, Life Science, and Chemistry teachers as well as Green Team leaders. Topics included groundwater well infrastructure, policies, and data for people living on Sammamish Plateau. Other topics included geology of groundwater supply, engineering and chemistry related to pumping, treating, and transporting water and wastewater, climate resiliency planning, civics policymaking lessons, and water management economics.