



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Echo Lake Elementary School

School district: Shoreline

School location: Shoreline

Began participating in Green Schools Program:
January 2012

Level One of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2012

Level Two of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in June 2014

Level Three of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2015

Sustaining Green School: Achieved in

- 2015-16
- 2018-19
- 2022-23

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Echo Lake achieved a 41% recycling rate and then, in 2018-2019, increased its recycling rate to 58%.
- In 2011-12, the school improved lunchroom recycling and began to collect compostable materials for transport to a composting facility.
- By promoting waste reduction and adding compostable materials collection to the school lunchroom, the school reduced the number of garbage dumpster pick-ups from once each week to less than twice each month.



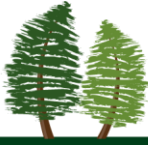
Second- and third-grade Eco Team members showcase Echo Lake's water conservation posters and pledges



Inside a lunchroom food scrap bin at Echo Lake. The materials are destined for the regional composting facility.



Bulletin board shows items that can be recycled



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- Recycling bins were located in the lunchroom and in every classroom. Recycling stickers from the Green Schools Program showing what can be recycled were placed on all recycling bins.
- Eco Team students trained kindergarten through second-grade students and monitored lunchroom disposal stations to ensure correct recycling and waste disposal. They also created posters for placement throughout the school to remind students what materials can be recycled.
- A lunchroom food share table was set up for unwanted and unopened foods.
- Students took ownership of the recycling process by emptying classroom recycling bins into larger hallway bins for the custodian.
- Two school assemblies and regular PA announcements were used to promote the school's waste reduction and recycling efforts.
- Third- through sixth-grade Eco Team members created art projects using empty juice pouches collected at school.
- Eco Team students made a waste reduction and recycling video Wizard of Garbage that was shown at an all-school assembly.
- The Eco Team promoted waste-free lunches which focused on teaching students to take only the food they will eat and to eat the food they take.
- To reduce waste, the lunchroom used durable trays and eliminated straws.
- Paper use was reduced when Echo Lake provided laptops and digital assignments to students, and when Google Documents were used.
- Document cameras and whiteboards helped reduce the number of handouts.
- All unwanted paper supplies were placed in a central location for others to reuse and the bi-monthly school newsletter was sent by email.



Inside a lunchroom recycling bin at Echo Lake. The materials will be handled at a local recycling facility.



Green Team members analyzed lunch time waste.



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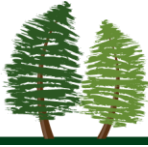
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- The student Eco Team created a *Jeopardy*-style game played during lunch to teach students and staff about waste reduction best practices.
- On Earth Day 2014, the Eco Team:
 - partnered with a QFC grocery store, which gave the school 600 paper grocery bags on which students wrote environmental conservation pledges to be given out at the store;
 - created posters with four simple actions students can take to help the earth; and
 - posted local eco-activities for families.
- Second-grade classes started a worm bin to collect compostable materials from their classrooms.
- Students watched a documentary that followed one person's trash and recycling from curbside to the landfill or recycling plant.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- The Eco Team posted energy conservation signs from the Green Schools Program next to light switches as reminders to turn off lights when leaving rooms.
- Echo Lake permanently turned off display lights in vending machines to reduce energy consumption.
- The classroom and office thermostats were managed by the school district and set between 68-70 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Staff and students were encouraged through newsletters and staff bulletins to dress appropriately for the weather rather than adjust thermostat settings.
- Energy conservation tips and recommendations were shared by the Eco Team and school principal during announcements and staff bulletins.
- YMCA after-school clubs were consolidated in the gym to reduce heating in unoccupied areas.
- Staff kept window drapes and blinds open when possible to use natural light, and closed drapes and blinds at the end of the school day to conserve energy.
- Fourth-grade students completed a science electricity kit and shared energy conservation reminders with the school community.



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- In 2013, students participated in the Seattle City Light Shrinking Bigfoot energy conservation calendar contest.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

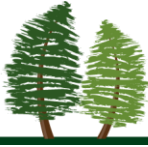
- Students chose facts from a King County Green Schools Program water conservation list and created hallway posters with a picture for each fact.
- Students and staff made water droplet signs with pledges about specific ways they planned to conserve water at home and at school.
- The school partnered with a local QFC to display in store windows water conservation facts and pledges written on small signs that looked like water droplets. Shoppers had opportunities to fill out water conservation pledges to be displayed in the store windows.
- Fifth-grade classrooms toured the Brightwater Treatment Plant and created a poster to be displayed at school about what they had learned.
- The school only ran dishwashing and clothes-washing machines when full.
- Echo Lake placed “turn off the faucet” signs above sinks to remind students and staff to conserve water.
- Green Team students measured the water flow of school faucets in April 2015.
- The school committed to not watering outdoor spaces during long breaks.
- Sixth-grade students sold Brown Bear Car Wash tickets as a fundraiser rather than hold their own charity car wash, which could pollute surface water.

Sustaining Green School recognition

Echo Lake Elementary sustained and built on its Level One waste reduction and recycling practices, Level Two energy conservation practices, and Level Three water conservation strategies. How the school built on its Level One through Three achievements each year is described below.

Sustaining Green School 2015-16

- The school color-coded its lunchroom recycling bins to help students sort recyclable and compostable materials.



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- Shari Wennik and the student Eco Team trained the rest of the school on what can and cannot be composted or recycled.
- Eco Team members monitored lunchroom recycling stations. As a result, the school saw a significant improvement in lunchroom recycling.
- Through Crayola's ColorCycle program, Echo Lake began recycling used markers from each classroom.
- During Earth Week, students participated in a program based on the book *We Are Extremely Very Good Recyclers*. The book provides recycling tips as well as a tree poster. The tree poster was hung up in the lunchroom where students posted and kept track of their recycling projects.

Sustaining Green School 2018-19

- Teacher Mr. Atencio worked with second- through sixth-grade students to create a core Eco Leadership team. The team promoted a “pride in place and pride in self” school culture and worked to revitalize sustainable behaviors.
- The sixth-grade Eco Leadership team members served as supervisors and trained younger students, leading three waste reduction training sessions focused on why reducing waste and recycling are important and practicing correct sorting of unwanted materials into garbage and recycling bins.
- During lunch, the Eco Leadership team served as table captains to teach others how to clean up after themselves and sort correctly.

Sustaining Green School 2022-23

- Echo Lake re-started collection of recyclable and compostable materials in its cafeteria. Student Eco Team members were a consistent presence in the cafeteria, helping fellow students sort their waste into garbage, recycling and composting bins.
- The 75-member Eco Team, ranging from second- to fifth-grade students, carried out weekly rotations of helping Kindergarten and first-grade students sort their waste.
- The team created posters to help students know how to sort and a video for Earth Day about the importance of recycling.
- Daily reminders also were shared in the cafeteria about turning off lights in unoccupied classrooms and saving water by only turning on faucets to wash hands.