



Explorer West Middle School

School district: Private

School location: Unincorporated King County - White Center

Began participating in the Green Schools Program: 2006

Note: Explorer West participated in the Green Schools Program before program level recognition was included in the program.

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- The school increased its recycling rate from 28% to 59%.
- Students conducted a waste audit in Sept. 2007 to establish a baseline and then measured progress throughout the year, with a final audit in May 2008.
- A “green fact” and “green action” were posted in the school’s weekly bulletin.
- The school contracted with Cedar Grove Composting for weekly pick-up of compostable materials. Students labeled containers and educated the community about how to separate the compostable items.
- Students made posters for each recycling station and performed skits demonstrating what can be placed in recycling and composting bins. The skits included “pack what you eat, and eat what you pack” messages.
- To compost food scraps and yard waste on campus, students assembled worm bins for a classroom and outdoors.
- The school bought compostable serving-ware and utensils accepted by Cedar Grove Composting.
- Students reduced waste by placing paper reuse trays in each classroom and educating the community about the importance of using both sides of the paper.
- Most students brought their lunches in reusable lunchboxes.



Energy conservation actions

- Students performed an energy audit in Sept. 2007 to establish a baseline of energy use.
- Students made posters for doors and lights reminding people to close doors and turn off lights in unoccupied rooms to conserve energy.
- Thermostats were reprogrammed to be more efficient.
- Students worked with Seattle City Light (SCL) to understand energy consumption and promote conservation at home and at school, and received free compact fluorescent light bulbs from SCL to install at school and at home.
- In 2008-09, Explorer West conducted an energy and carbon footprint audit.

Water conservation actions

- Students made posters for restroom sinks encouraging water conservation.
- Students received free shower timers from Seattle Climate Action Network.
- To conserve water, faucet aerators were installed in restrooms and classrooms.
- Drought resistant plants were planted in the school's native garden, which was designed and installed by students. Garden benches were made from northwest native stones.

Transportation

- Students held an Alternative Transportation Day to encourage carpooling, walking and bicycling.
- Regular "no idling" reminders were sent to parents and students.
- As part of the Earth Science class, eighth-grader students reduced their annual carbon footprint by an average of 10% through the following efforts: Carpooling and walking, washing laundry in cold water, hanging laundry to dry, and reducing shower time. All students were given shower timers.



Environmental education

- The school held an annual Sustainability Festival. The theme for 2007-2008 was Sustainable Design and Structures.
- The first two weeks of 2007-2008 were devoted to outdoor education and sustainability curriculum, including faculty in-service, student workshops, and student-led lessons for families.
- The eighth-grade Earth Science and Global Studies classes included sustainability lessons. Art, Music, Latin, English, and Math included the Sustainable Design and Structures theme into curricula for 2007-2008 year.
- A “green fact” and “green action”, posted in the school’s weekly bulletin, included information about waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, energy and water conservation, transportation choices, and other conservation practices.
- Students were given credit for attending Seattle’s Green Festival, Green My Ride, and Sustainable West Seattle events. Students hosted a booth at the Sustainable West Seattle event in May 2008.
- Eighth-grade students researched and wrote articles for the annual Sustainability ‘Zine. The Global Studies teacher presented at local and national conferences on issues of sustainability and curriculum.

Awards

- Explorer West was recognized as a King County Earth Hero in 2007.
- Explorer West’s Sustainability Initiative was recognized by the National Association of Independent Schools as one of three Leading Edge Schools for Environmental Sustainability in 2007.

Comment

“We knew what we wanted to do, and our King County Green Schools liaison helped us with resources and logistics. She was enthusiastic and helped us integrate our recycling and composting program into the ethos of the school.”

- Kristin Moore, Science Department Chair, Explorer West Middle School