



French American School of Puget Sound

School district: Private

School location: Mercer Island

Began participating in Green Schools Program: September 2011

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

Level Two of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in May 2013

Level Three of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in May 2014

Sustaining Green School: Achieved in

- 2014-15
- 2019-20
- 2021-22
- 2022-23

Student Green Team recognition: Received in June 2023

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Teachers adapted curricula to incorporate waste reduction and recycling reminders appropriate to each age level.
- The school increased its recycling rate from 44% to 52%, thanks to initiating collection of recyclable and compostable materials from classrooms.
- In 2014, an all-school assembly kicked off a paper towel reduction campaign. Students and staff were encouraged to use only one paper towel sheet when drying their hands. The student Green Team created posters about reducing paper towel use in classrooms.
- A note was sent home with each student to encourage families to pack lunches in durable containers and to reduce the amount of wasted food at lunch.
- Middle school students taught elementary students how to use the three bins – recycling, compost, and garbage – in each classroom.
- In 2014-15, the student Green Team weighed lunch waste from several lunches in multiple classrooms each month. The team displayed data on posters hung



around the school. Signs were posted in every classroom to remind staff and students how to properly sort their waste.

- Students organized a contest which involved weighing each classroom's garbage weekly for four weeks and graphing the results. The winning class reduced its garbage weight by 80 percent, and was awarded a ginkgo tree which they planted during a ceremony in the school garden.
- In 2012-13 the school began offering a hot lunch program with compostable plates and utensils.
- The staff kitchen is equipped with reusable plates, glasses, cups, and silverware to reduce waste from plastic and paper products.
- The school reduced paper by sending out its weekly newsletter electronically.
- In August 2012, to reduce paper use, the copier system was updated to include an option to send documents to the user's email inbox.
- Household alkaline batteries were collected at the school's front desk and a staff member disposes of them in an ecologically responsible way.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- Stickers were placed near light switches to remind students, staff, and visitors to turn off lights and electronics when they aren't needed.
- Staff were encouraged to keep doors and windows shut and to turn off lights when leaving rooms on campus.
- The school installed occupancy sensors to help conserve energy. The thermostat system was programmed to turn off on evenings and weekends.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- Low flow flush valves were installed in restrooms.
- Facilities staff monitored monthly utility invoices to identify, report, and solve water leaks.
- The school saved water by running only full loads in its Energy Star dishwashers.
- During extended school breaks, hot water and circulation pumps were turned off.



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- All students learned about water sources and uses in different parts of the world, including the historical importance of water to the development of civilizations.
- Adult supervisors trained preschool and kindergarten students to conserve water when washing their hands.
- In 2015, teachers held classroom water conservation discussions with students.
- In winter 2013, an all-school assembly was performed by fourth-grade students to educate staff and students about water conservation, and how to reduce food waste and paper towel use.
- In 2011, the school started a garden based on the science curriculum. With the help of a professional landscaper, the school selected native plants and organized them in six garden boxes, each representing different ecosystems.
- In the fall, students learned about the cycle of life by planting pumpkins, harvesting them, saving the pumpkin seeds, and making pumpkin muffins. In the spring, they planted the pumpkin seeds they had harvested.
- After installing two rainwater collectors in the garden, the school used the collected rainwater to irrigate. Maintenance staff applied mulch to conserve water. Sprinklers were set to water only lawn and garden areas and not sidewalks, driveways, or gutters, and were turned on when evaporation is lowest.
- Water-saving drip line irrigation systems were used for most of the campus.
- No pesticides were used in the school garden.

Sustaining Green School recognition

The school sustained 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 2014-15

Students in the theater performance group designed a play about conserving water. The play was performed in May 2015 at an all-school assembly. Middle school students took a field trip to the Bullitt Center to learn about sustainable building design.



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Sustaining Green School 2019-20

- First- and third-grade students joined Earth Corps members to remove blackberry bushes and plant a tree at Island Crest Park. Students also were given a portion of the park to clean up.
- The school encouraged students to ride bikes to school and to use the bike rack the school installed in 2018. The Climate Club ran an anti-idling campaign and shared messages about no idling of vehicles throughout the school year.
- The school introduced a phone app to assist parents with carpooling via the school's website to allow parents to learn of other families living close by.
- The school continued to involve the entire school community in recycling batteries. Students, staff, and parents dropped off used batteries in containers.
- The school promoted zero-waste lunch boxes. The school cafeteria used compostable utensils and the staff lounge used reusable utensils and plates.
- The Elementary and Middle School had built a composter and added a worm bin in 2015-16. For the March 2020 Science Fair, the technology teacher built a new composter and repaired the old one.
- All classes weighed recyclable and compostable materials as well as garbage during the week of the school's annual science fair.
- Fourth-grade students distributed information to several classes to raise awareness about the importance of food waste reduction.
- Teachers attended the U.S. Green Schools conference in Portland, OR in 2020.

NOTE: In 2020-21, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures, the Green Schools Program did not offer recognition.

Sustaining Green School 2021-22

- A few students helped construct planter boxes for an edible garden, Students from every grade used the garden to plant, weed, and learn about insects.
- Fourth-grade students created posters on sorting waste correctly and the importance of recycling and composting, then visited grade 1 - 5 classrooms to



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present the posters. Kindergarteners visited and presented in the Young Preschool and kindergarten classes.

- The school included energy conservation tips in the Friday Flash, the school's weekly newsletter, and hung Zero Waste: 5 simple steps posters in each classroom.
- The school collaborated with Forest Restoration, Island Crest Park, Mercer Island, and EarthCorps to provide opportunities for teachers and students. Kindergarten teachers received forest stewardship training, then worked with students to remove invasive species. Through a World Wildlife Fund program, preschool students learned about and sponsored an endangered species.
- As part of a year-long project at Islandwood, an environmental education nonprofit, fourth-grade students spent three days at Islandwood's Overnight Program.
- The middle school held three interdisciplinary days focused on the environment. Students helped package food at Food Lifeline, an organization providing food for community members facing food insecurity, removed blackberry bushes at a park in West Seattle, and learned about endangered animals at the zoo.
- In a science fair about sustainability, students created projects about sustainable actions, including composting, reusing rainwater, restoring forest, waste sorting, how to not waste school supplies, and green transportation.
- The school's Green Schools banner was hung in the school entrance. The school's website includes a link to this success story and recognition level icons.

Sustaining Green School 2022-23

- Students in the Green Committee met weekly and completed several projects, including:
 - Created posters and wrote articles for the school's weekly newsletter about reducing lunch waste by bringing reusable utensils and bags.
 - For Earth Day, families were asked to commit to packing zero waste lunchboxes.



Success Story

- Ensured all middle school classrooms had a garbage bin, a recycling bin, and an organics bin, and made signs for each classroom about how to sort.
- The Green Club met after school and completed several projects, including:
 - Building a raised bed and a bird feeder for the school garden.
 - Creating insect "hotels" from recycled materials and hanging them in the school garden.
 - Building an electric bike.
- Three student Eco-delegates were elected in the middle school to support the Green Committee, help with projects, and communicate with their peers about conservation practices. They sit weekly in the Middle School Student Council.
- In 2022-23, these new practices were initiated.
 - No car week: Students and their families were encouraged to bike and walk instead of driving. Grade 3 students won an ice cream party by biking and walking most.
 - Pedibus: Over 100 students, their families, and faculty signed up to come to school on foot. Two walking groups were formed: one left from South Bellevue Park and Ride, one from Mercer Island Park and Ride.
- Cedar Grove Composting visited a Pre-kindergarten class, a first-grade class, and a third-grade class to talk about composting.
- The 2022-23 Middle School Interdisciplinary Days were focused on Farm to Table with a field trip to Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands, a Pike Place Market treasure hunt to meet local producers and buy local food for a cooking project, a food donation drive, virtual tours through the Bill and Melinda Gates Discovery Center, and a cooking challenge using local products only.
- Middle school and pre-school students cooked together, using vegetarian recipes and some ingredients from the school garden.
- Grade 7 science class students participated in Project Tara Oceans to study biodiversity in the ocean.



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- The school continued to collaborate with IslandWood, Forest Restoration, Island Crest Park, Mercer Island, YMCA EarthCorps, and World Wildlife Fund to provide educational and volunteering opportunities for students and staff.
- Energy conservation tips were placed in the weekly school-wide newsletter.
- To reduce waste, students were encouraged to keep and use notebooks that were not yet full, and teachers were asked to inventory closet supplies and consult a shared spreadsheet of surplus items prior to ordering.
- Conservation actions and successes were shared in the school's newsletter and website, at a State of the School meeting in January, and at an all-staff meeting.