

Green Gables Elementary School

School district: Federal Way

School location: Federal Way

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
March 2009

Level One of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in April 2010

Level Two of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2011

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

Sustaining Green School recognition:
Achieved in

- 2016-17
- 2017-18
- 2021-22

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Green Gables improved its recycling practices each year, and, by April 2018, had reached a recycling rate of 54%.
- Student volunteers monitored lunchroom sorting stations and helped fellow students sort their garbage, recyclables, and compostable materials.
- Recycling bins were placed in the lunchroom for empty milk cartons, juice boxes, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans, and stickers from the Green Schools Program showing what can be recycled were attached to the bins.
- With help from the Green Schools Program, the school collected food scraps in the lunchroom and in classrooms for transport to a regional composting facility.
- Recycling and food scrap bins were set up next to garbage bins at school events.



Green Club advisor and teacher Karen Konrad planting strawberry plants with students



School staff and student in Green Gables garden



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

- Educational efforts included classroom and staff meeting presentations about the 4 R's - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink. All new staff were informed about waste reduction and recycling practices and policies at Green Gables.
- The student Green Club created classroom certificates to recognize classes which sorted recyclables well. The team created posters and videos to promote Waste-Free Wednesdays, where students were encouraged to reduce wasted food and to pack lunches from home in reusable containers.
- Newsletters were sent electronically to reduce paper use.
- Students created and posted signs in restrooms encouraging students to use only one paper towel to dry their hands.
- Every year, students created a multi-media Earth Day assembly which included drama, dance, music, and information about environmental topics and how students can become Earth stewards.
- Most years, at the start of the school year, the school had a King County assembly presentation to teach students why recycling matters and what materials can be recycled. Many classes participated in King County's classroom workshops.

A leader in the district

- Green Gables was the first school in Federal Way Public Schools to collect food scraps and other organics for composting at a regional composting facility. The school's success was a model for the district.
- Green Gables was the first school in the district to establish a pesticide-free garden. The garden included raised beds, a wheelchair accessible bed, water drip lines, and an open-air compost bin to compost garden scraps. The garden was an integral part of the school's curriculum and community outreach efforts.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- The Green Club created posters to hang throughout the school about how to reduce energy use, and shared daily conservation tips in morning announcements.
- Each classroom conducted an energy audit. The Green Club compiled the results and shared them with students and staff.



King County Green Schools Program

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Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

- The Green Club wrote and performed a play titled *The Energy Vampire Strikes Back* about how recycling saves energy and ways to reduce energy. Students also created a game to engage students in learning how to reduce energy use.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- The school continued its waste reduction and recycling practices while learning about water conservation. Green Club members educated their classmates about a variety of day-to-day conservation practices.
- Students tested water flow of school faucets and reported findings to custodial staff.
- The school held a school-wide water conservation poster contest.
- Fifth-grade students went to Island Wood, an outdoor education center on Bainbridge Island, and learned about watersheds, water conservation, and how to reduce water pollution. Karen Konrad's classes participated in *Storming the Sound with Salmon* curriculum which taught students how to protect their local watershed.
- The school's vegetable garden used drip irrigation to conserve water.
- City of Federal Way helped the school install a rain garden with flowers, shrubs, and grasses which soak up water from impervious surfaces to help prevent pollution from entering local waterways, recharge the aquifer, and attract pollinators such as birds, butterflies, and bees.



Sustaining Green School recognition

Green Gables sustained and built on its Level One through Level Three practices. How the school did this each year is described below.

Sustaining Green School 2016-17

The Green Club shared green tips about reducing waste, recycling, energy conservation, and water conservation every morning during announcements and in the school newsletter. New checklists were placed on classroom doors to remind students to reduce waste, recycle, conserve water, and conserve energy.



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Sustaining Green School 2017-18

Students took turns making sure electricity on computer carts was turned off at the end of each day. The Green Club planted a new native plant garden with a water-efficient sprinkler system.

Sustaining Green School 2021-22

- The student Green Club was formed after an interruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Student members presented an introductory play to the entire school to re-engage the community in conservation practices.
- With the leadership of Green Club advisor and teacher Karen Konrad, the club restarted collection of organics, including food scraps and other compostable materials, in its cafeteria and staff breakroom.
- The School to Home Pollinator project which started in some classes during the pandemic was shared with the entire school community. Students received pollinator plant seeds, planting materials, and instructions. A play highlighting the importance of pollinators was written and performed for the school.
- The Green Club informed and reminded the entire school community about reducing, reusing, and recycling.
- Waste prevention practices, such as using both sides of paper and using refillable water bottles, were encouraged.
- The Green Club helped clean up litter on school grounds.
- Students and their families volunteered to help maintain the school's pesticide-free garden. In 2021-22, the school received over \$4,000 in grants to purchase tools and supplies for its garden. The school's K-5 curriculum integrated garden practices with academic programming.
- Green Gables continued to participate in King County's Storming the Sound with Salmon Program, and raised 130 Coho Salmon from eggs to fry for release into a local stream in April. The school's first-grade team integrated this project into all academic areas.





King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

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Awards

- Green Gables received a U.S. Green Ribbon School award in 2017.
- Students Sun Hong and Alexis Lolley received 2016 King County Earth Hero at School awards.
- Teacher and Green Club advisor Karen Konrad received a King County Earth Hero at School award in April 2010.