



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Island Park Elementary School

School district: Mercer Island

School location: Mercer Island

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
March 2008

Level One of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2009

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

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

Sustaining Green School recognition: Achieved for

- 2017-18
- 2018-19
- 2019-20
- 2022-23

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

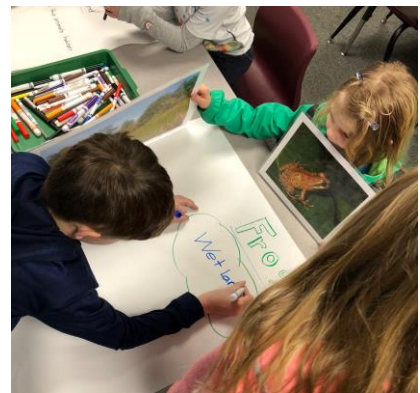
- The school maintained a recycling rate of 52%, and reduced lunchroom garbage from six to 1.5 bags per day by recycling empty bottles, cans, and cartons.
- The Green Team of fourth- and fifth-grade students received training about waste reduction and recycling practices from the Green Schools Program, and then helped with recycling efforts throughout the school.
- Staff placed recycling stickers from the Green Schools Program showing what can be recycled on all classroom and lunchroom recycling bins.
- Island Park began collecting food scraps and other compostable materials for pick up each week by Cedar Grove Composting.



Island Park's principal, teachers and a student accept King County award in April 2011



Students learn about habitats and natural resources



The Green Team starting their habitat protection action posters.



- Students and staff promoted waste-free lunches and used classroom worm bins to compost leftover food scraps from snacks.
- Lunchtime announcements encouraging students to sort their waste were made regularly.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- In 2010-11, the school created an Energy Patrol of students who placed stickers on light switches throughout the school to remind students, teachers, and other school community members to turn off lights in unoccupied spaces.
- Students in grades three to five participated in King County Green Team workshops that included energy conservation themes. The students shared this information with their K-2 buddy classrooms.
- The Energy Patrol wrote energy conservation tips that were posted on the school website and shared during morning announcements.
- Green Team students created and delivered energy conservation checklists to every classroom to help guide energy-saving practices.
- All incandescent light bulbs were replaced with Energy Star light bulbs.



Green Team students get their aprons on and make sure waste is correctly sorted at a family school event

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- The third-grade Green Team created water conservation public service announcements (PSAs) which were shown in the lunchroom. Turning the water off while soaping hands was demonstrated.
- Low-flow flush valves were installed by the district when repairs were needed.
- The school stopped purchasing bottled water for school functions and instead offered bulk water coolers with compostable cups.
- Watering schedules were adjusted on a weekly basis during the watering season.



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- In 2009, volunteers constructed the Island Learning Garden with areas for each grade level to plant and maintain. Garden curriculum units were developed in 2009–10 and have been used each year since then.
- Island Park installed rain barrels to collect water to be used in the school garden.

Sustaining Green School Recognition

Island Park 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 did this each year is described below.

Sustaining Green School 2017-18

- Students tracked quantities of plastic bags and utensils disposed in the lunchroom over a three-month period. The results were used to create an action plan reducing the amount of plastic waste at school.
- The Green Team created posters describing waste reduction actions individuals can take to protect animals and their habitats. The posters were displayed in hallways throughout the school.

Sustaining Green School 2018-19

- The school participated in the Crayola ColorCycle program by collecting used markers to be recycled. The school set up containers in several locations and made announcements about the program.
- Students counted the number of Ziplock bags disposed at lunch, shared the data with the school community, and recommended alternative options. The number of disposable plastic bags decreased over time.

Sustaining Green School 2019-20

- Green Team students participated in a sorting workshop led by a King County Green Schools Program representative. The representative shared a fact or fiction PowerPoint presentation on waste reduction and recycling.



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- Green Team students discussed waste reduction actions families can take during the holidays and shared those tips with their classmates.
- A guest speaker educated students about solar panels and sustainable energy sources. Students created posters about energy sources, including wind, solar, and hydropower.
- Students educated each other about energy and water conservation best practices and reminded their peers about those practices.
- For Earth Week, teachers shared information about the 50th Earth Day anniversary, and encouraged practical science activities, readings, and vocabulary related to Earth Day.
- Principal Hoffman sent a message to the entire school community about green activities for students to do at home to celebrate Earth Day.

Sustaining Green School 2022-23

- The student Green Team of 20 third- to fifth-graders led by teacher Mary Mullen, teacher Denise Anderson, and parent volunteer Andrea Carter met monthly to plan and carry out education and promotion about zero waste lunches, water conservation, and energy conservation practices.
- Throughout the year, regular announcements were made about how to reduce waste, recycle, and conserve water and energy.
- Student Green Team members monitored during lunch to help their peers sort recyclable items, compostable materials, and garbage into the correct bins.
- The team created posters about recycling, other conservation practices, and the school's Waste Free Lunch Challenge during Earth Week.
- At the Waste Free Lunch Challenge, garbage from each lunch period was weighed, with a goal of reducing garbage by 50%. After the Waste Free Lunch Challenge, the Green Team presented each classroom with a thank-you message for participating.
- Three Green Team students created and shared with each classroom a PowerPoint presentation on the importance of everyday choices individuals can make to protect the Earth. They also presented at a district-wide Green Team meeting.
- Of all district schools, Island Park collected the most plastic bags brought in by families from home for Ridwell, a company that collected the bags for recycling.

Award

- Island Park received a King County Earth Hero at School award in April 2011.