



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Issaquah Middle School

School district: Issaquah

School location: Issaquah

Began participating in the Green School Program:
2005-06

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

Level Two of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2010

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

Sustaining Green School recognition:

Achieved for

- 2014-15
- 2015-16
- 2016-17
- 2017-18
- 2018-19

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- By 2018, the school had achieved a 73% recycling rate through school-wide collection of recyclable and compostable materials, and regular education.
- In 2006, the school piloted food scrap collection that served as a model for other schools in the district.
- Due to improved recycling and the addition of food scrap collection, the school's garbage container size decreased from 24 to 8 cubic yards per week.



Olga Haider and Michelle Pickard, teachers, receive award from King County in April 2011.



Students empty classroom recyclable materials into larger containers.



A King County Green Schools Program representative helped the student Green Team conduct a waste audit.



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- The school's average annual garbage collection cost from 2000 - 2006 before recycling began was \$13,824. As recycling improved, the annual garbage cost averaged \$8,749 – a cost savings of 37%.
- The school's weekly recycling volume increased from about 7 cubic yards to 22 cubic yards, including 7 cubic yards of food scraps and food-soiled paper collected for composting at a regional composting facility.
- More than 30 students served as cafeteria sorting station monitors to help educate fellow students on how to sort after lunch.
- Green Team advisor Kurt Wieland assisted the student cafeteria monitors.
- Green Team recycling tips were included in school announcements weekly.
- A representative of the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County, along with researchers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, visited the Green Team to educate students about where trash ends up.
- Students from the Associated Student Body (ASB) collected the school's paper and plastic recyclable materials twice each week.
- Kitchen staff replaced disposable trays with durable trays which were washed and reused after each lunch.
- Students made sure there was a recycling bin in each classroom and placed stickers from the Green Schools Program showing what can be recycled on all recycling bins.
- ASB students and staff members participated in a recycling education skit performed at the first assembly of the school year.
- The school's ASB and National Junior Honor Society planned and led a locker clean-out in which students recycled and donated unwanted school supplies at the end of the school year.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- Green Team students posted signs from the Green Schools Program near light switches and electronics reminding staff and students to turn them off when they were not needed.
- Green Team participants calculated their personal carbon footprints.



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- Students made “green tip of the week” announcements over the PA system to promote waste reduction, recycling, and energy conservation practices such as keeping windows and doors closed when the heat is on and closing window blinds at the end of the day.
- Natural gas consumption decreased by 27%, from a high of 41,370 therms per year to an eight-year annual average of 30,515 therms.
- Electricity consumption decreased by 22%, from an annual high of 957,240 kWh to an eight-year annual average of 745,975 kWh.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- Seventh-grade science students participated in a workshop sponsored by Cascade Water Alliance, an organization of municipalities providing clean, safe water for residents and businesses. During the workshops, students
 - Learned where the school’s drinking water comes from, where it ends up after it goes down the drain, and where the school is located in the watershed.
 - Measured the flow of faucets in the science and humanities classrooms equipped with two gallon-per minute aerators.
 - Measured the flow of these faucets after being refitted with high-efficiency half gallon per minute aerators.
 - Pledged to conserve water at home and at school.
- Green Team students and Issaquah School District plumbers installed high-efficiency aerators, donated by Cascade Water Alliance, throughout the school.
- With support from a King County Solid Waste Division grant and Cedar Grove Composting, Green Team advisors and students constructed, filled, and planted an organic garden to demonstrate ways to conserve water. The project demonstrated how:
 - Waste can be turned into fertilizer with the aid of on-site worm bins.
 - Organic gardening uses compost to grow nutritive vegetables.
 - Organic matter from the garden can be composted.
- The Green Team designed and posted water conservation posters next to all the sinks on campus and in common areas.
- Throughout the school year, Green Team members broadcast water conservation tips through skits and weekly school-wide announcements.



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- Cascade Water Alliance donated to the school a water-conserving irrigation system consisting of a cistern connected to retrieve run-off from the school building's roof and a solar-powered pump to deliver filtered water to drip tubing in the raised garden bed. Through this demonstration project, students learned about harnessing alternative energy and sustainable methods of irrigation.
- The Green Team took walking field trips to Issaquah Creek to conduct turbidity tests of water near run-off entry points along the creek, and used the campus gardens as learning tools to understand the importance of soil conservation.
- Students and staff brought reusable water bottles to school on Water Conservation Day, as part of Earth Week Activities organized by the ASB.
- Sixth-grade science classes studied Lake Sammamish and looked at how invasive species compare with native plants. Seventh-grade science students learned about ocean currents and gyres, and studied plastic garbage waste in the ocean. They studied catastrophic events and investigated global warming and climate change.
- Eighth-grade science students participated in King County's "Earth Impact" and "Think Twice" classroom workshops.

Sustaining Green School Recognition

Issaquah Middle School sustained 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 2014-15

- In 2014-15, Green Team students made three school video announcements with messages and reminders about waste reduction, recycling and conservation.
- Three Green Team students attended a Sustainability Ambassadors summit and shared the information they learned with the rest of the school Green Team.
- For Earth Day 2015, the Green Team organized and presented an all-school assembly where they gave Green Awards to six teachers who embraced green practices in their classrooms and curriculum. The assembly also included an interactive recycling trivia and relay race.



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- A public service announcement project was added to the school's TV production/visual media class, an elective open to sixth to eighth grades. Students selected topics about conservation and used visual media tools to create public service announcements which were shared in the school's morning newscast program.

Sustaining Green School 2015-16

- In January 2016, a representative from King County worked with the Green Team to complete a waste audit and share the results with the school.
- The Green Team completed a Plant Amnesty project. They saved trees by removing ones located on current Tiger Mountain High School property before the trees were cut down to make way for the school's future athletic fields. Trees were donated for replanting elsewhere.

Sustaining Green School 2016-17

- Sixth-and eighth-grade classes participated in King County's waste reduction and recycling classroom workshops.
- Some classrooms began to collect paper towels to add to the school's food scrap container for transport to a regional composting facility.

Sustaining Green School 2017-18

- The Green Team participated in local invasive species removal projects such as pulling invasive Scotch broom along the railroad trail behind the school. Students then planted fir trees in the newly cleared land.
- In 2017, student representatives participated in the Sustainability Summit.

Sustaining Green School 2018-19

- One class worked with Issaquah High and Briarwood Elementary on a project to encourage students to use reusable water bottles. Students produced educational information and shared them via Seesaw website.
- The school participated in the district-wide cafeteria waste-free lunch challenge.
- Classes received King County Consumption Junction classroom workshops.
- Green Team and ASB students co-hosted an Earth Day assembly.



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- The school installed a new school garden. To reduce water use, the top layer of soil was replaced with Cedar Grove compost and soaker hoses were installed.
- In March 2019, the school constructed a nature trail and planted native plants in a small Douglas fir woodland located on the north side of the campus.

A leader in the district

- Issaquah Middle served as a model for other schools in the district by piloting food scrap collection.
- The school was the first school in its district to complete Level Two of the Green Schools Program.

Awards

- Teachers Olga Haider and Michele Pickard received King County Earth Heroes at School awards in April 2011 for their leadership in coordinating completion of Levels One, Two, and Three of the Green Schools Program.
- Issaquah Middle School received a King County Earth Heroes at School award in April 2009 for its successful recycling program, which was due to dozens of committed staff and students that improved and expanded waste reduction, recycling, and composting practices.