



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Lake Wilderness Elementary School

School district: Tahoma

School location: Maple Valley

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
March 2008

Level One of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in December 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 2014-15: Achieved in May 2015

Sustaining Green School 2015-16: Achieved in May 2016

Sustaining Green School 2016-17: Achieved in May 2017

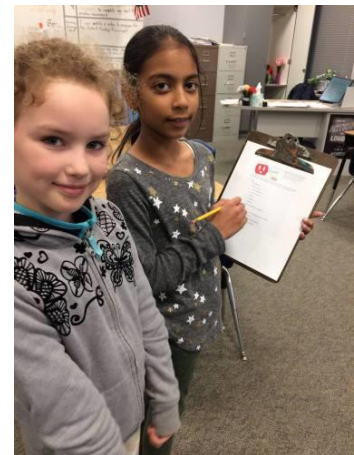
Sustaining Green School 2017-18: Achieved in May 2018

Sustaining Green School 2018-19: Achieved in May 2019

Sustaining Green School 2022-23: Achieved in May 2023



Green Team students led a No-Idle campaign encouraging parents and staff to turn off vehicle engines to reduce emissions and air pollution.



Green Team students conducted a Power Patrol to assess energy use

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Lake Wilderness achieved a recycling rate of 62%.
- The lunchroom switched to reusable durable utensils.
- The monthly volume of food scraps and food soiled paper collected and sent to a regional composting facility rather than the landfill increased from 4.2 cubic yards in 2009 to 12.6 cubic yards in 2012.
- The school held a classroom competition to see which classroom had the best one-sided paper reuse box holder decorated with recyclable materials. The winner was announced over the school PA system.
- Lake Wilderness received the King County Schools Program waste reduction and recycling assembly and follow-up workshops.



- PTSA volunteers and custodians monitored lunchroom disposal stations and helped students sort recyclable and compostable materials. Kindergarten classes were included in the program to help start good habits early.
- The Green Team created and shared a paper recycling video with all classes.
- The parent newsletter was sent electronically, saving approximately 20,000 pieces of paper annually.
- Teachers eliminated weekly letters to parents, saving 35,000 pieces of paper each school year. Each teacher was limited to 15,000 copies per year to reduce paper waste. Most teachers did not use their entire allotment of paper copies.
- Starting in 2012, foil juice pouches were collected and sent to Terra Cycle, a company that uses those materials to make new products. PTSA volunteers helped students sort juice pouches, which earns the school points for purchases. The school recycled 1,000 pouches in its first week of collection.
- Recycling containers were added to the lunchroom for milk cartons, juice boxes, plastic bottles and aluminum cans.
- The Green Team ensured that containers for collection of recyclable and compostable materials labeled with stickers listing what can and can't be recycled were placed in all classrooms, staff rooms, and shared spaces.
- Students created a presentation and video about lunchroom recycling and teachers shared them with all students at the beginning of the year.
- Announcements were sent every week to remind students and employees what can and cannot be collected for recycling and composting.
- The school holds weekly waste-free Wednesdays where students are encouraged to bring reusable food containers, utensils, and water bottles and limit disposable packaging. Students received green "Paw Prints" when they brought a waste-free lunch which could be turned in to earn a prize.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- Students placed "Turn Off Lights" stickers on all light switches.
- Staff and students participated in "unplugged Fridays" to conserve energy.
- To promote energy conservation, students made regular announcements over the PA system about turning off lights in unoccupied rooms.
- Students made and hung posters explaining how turning off lights helps salmon.



- Several staff members regularly checked closets and other rooms to make sure lights were turned off when not needed.
- The Green Team displayed energy conservation stickers in all classrooms, offices, and shared spaces.
- Students conducted Power Patrols to monitor energy waste and, based on their observations, sent energy conservation reminders to teachers about ways to save energy.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- Frequent morning announcements were made to students and staff about water conservation, including reminders to turn off water when soaping hands at school and home.
- Third-grade students went on a field trip to Landsburg Dam as part of their Land and Water Unit.
- Fifth-grade science students performed perk tests to determine the best location for a rain garden. The new garden featuring native, drought-tolerant plants was installed in 2012-13.
- Signs reminding students and staff to turn off the faucet when not in use and to report leaks were placed above school sinks.
- Two restrooms were remodeled in 2011-12 with low-flow toilets and faucets.
- Students and staff were encouraged to report water problems, such as leaking faucets or drinking fountains, to the head custodian.
- The new school facility was installed with motion activated sinks to help conserve water. The school's water use was monitored throughout the school year by building manager Gina Castagna.
- The Green Team conducted a campaign on how plastic bags pollute the ocean. The campaign encouraged the community to use durable bags.

Sustaining Green School Recognition

Lake Wilderness was recognized as a Sustaining Green School by maintaining and building 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 2014-15

- The school participated in the People, Power, Planet Program (PPP) offered by McKinstry, the district's resource conservation management company. Students and staff made energy conservation announcements, conducted classroom energy audits, and reduced energy by turning off lights and electronic equipment when not in use.
- The school displayed energy conservation successes on a PPP board.

Sustaining Green School 2015-16

- The school continued to participate in the PPP program to reduce energy use, earning 31 percent power points by conducting energy patrols and promoting turning off lights in unoccupied rooms and electronics when not in use.
- Students collected 692 energy conservation pledges from the community.
- The school received a USAgain Bin to recycle unwanted clothing. The new program was promoted in the school newsletter for parents.

Sustaining Green School 2016-17

- The school continued to participate in the PPP program, earning power points by reminding teachers to power down electronics and close blinds at the end of the day.
- The school created Spanish and Japanese videos showing how preschool classes learned to recycle. The Green Team learned the PPP pledge in Spanish and English.
- Lake Wilderness set up a reuse bin for teachers to place unwanted construction paper and office items which can be reused by other staff members.
- In March 2017, Green Team students participated in the district's first Sustainability Summit, where they learned to properly sort items in recycling and compost bins and brainstormed ways to help reduce the school's environmental footprint.

Sustaining Green School 2017-18

- To prevent air pollution and reduce emissions, the Green Team conducted a no-idling campaign. Notices were sent to parents and student volunteers created and held up signs during pick-up time to inform drivers of the no-idling rules.
- Green Team students partnered with Maple Valley Lions Club to conduct outreach to other schools and local businesses to discourage use of straws in Maple Valley community.



Sustaining Green School 2018-19

- Green Team students hosted an all-school assembly provided by King County to educate the school about reducing waste and recycling.
- In the cafeteria, Green Team students monitored the waste station and reminded students what can be recycled in each bin. Posters about items accepted in each bin were displayed.
- To reduce food waste, the school set up a cafeteria share table for students to leave and take unopened, packaged foods from the school lunch program.
- The staff lounge added a container for compostable items, and classrooms started to collect paper towels to be composted at a regional composting facility.
- Green Team members helped kindergarten students sort materials for recycling.
- Used markers were collected for recycling through the Crayola ColorCycle program.
- Green Team students wrote weekly news articles to be read over the Tuesday morning announcements. The announcements reminded the school community about the PPP pledge and best practices in recycling, water and energy reduction, clean air and no-idling.
- In April 2019, families received a Green Team newsletter with tips for reducing waste, recycling, and conserving energy and water .
- Sean Kelly, supervisor of operations, sent regular emails to remind staff to conserve energy by turning off lights and equipment, and unplugging electronics.
- Two Power Patrols were conducted, and teachers received a classroom energy conservation checklist.
- The Green Team created a bulletin board to share data on the school's energy and water reductions. Students created graphs showing reductions in utility use and costs compared to other schools. Water conservation signs were posted near faucets in classrooms, restrooms, and kitchens.
- Fourth-grade students visited the Shadow Lake Nature Preserve on a field trip to learn about water ecosystems, and how to conserve water and reduce pollution.
- Green Team students made rain garden models to learn how rain gardens can help filter stormwater pollution.



- **Sustaining Green School 2022-23**

- The 17 third- and fourth-grade Green Team students created and directed a video about recycling to share school-wide. The video included a true/false game to engage students.
- Green Team students created and put up posters about recycling and energy conservation.
- The team created morning announcements about waste reduction, recycling, energy conservation, and water conservation and the announcements were shared over the intercom weekly for nine weeks.
- Each lunchroom recycling bin was labeled with a sticker showing what items can be recycled.
- Green Team students conducted an energy conservation assessment in each classroom after school, and left thank you notes for teachers who remembered to turn off lights and electronics.
- The team regularly reminded the staff and students to close blinds before leaving for the weekend, turn off lights in unoccupied spaces, and keep doors and windows closed when heating and air conditioning is on.
- In the weekly newsletter sent to families, Green Team photos and activities were included.