



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Lakota Middle School

School district: Federal Way

School location: Renton

Began participating in the Green Schools Program: September 2012

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

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

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

Sustaining Green School 2016-17:
Achieved in May 2017



Rasa Conklin, teacher, holds up the school's cafeteria recycling sign at a district Green Coalition meeting.



Celebrating recognition from King County Green Schools and U.S. Green Ribbon Schools in 2016: *front row* – Teachers Laurie Sukola and Rasa Conklin; *back row left* – Dale Alekel, King County Green Schools Program with Washington and U.S. Green Ribbon representatives

(more)



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Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Lakota increased its recycling rate from 38 percent to 64 percent thanks to increased education and collection of recyclable materials in its lunchroom.
- The Green Team sorted and quantified lunchroom trash to see what grade level was the best at recycling and reducing waste. Lakota's eighth-grade class earned a free dress day for having the least amount of waste.
- The Green Team shared best green practices twice per week during morning announcements.
- The eighth-grade leadership students created 3-dimensional lunchroom posters with recyclable materials glued to them to help students correctly sort materials.
- During the first month of collecting lunchroom recyclable materials, about 19 bags of recyclable materials were diverted from the landfill.
- Students stacked polystyrene (also known as Styrofoam) trays to save space in the garbage dumpster, thus reducing the number of dumpster pick-ups and cutting garbage collection costs.
- To learn about sustainable practices, Lakota classes received King County's Biospheres, Earth Impact, and Let's Talk Trash classroom workshops, and visited the environmental education center at Islandwood on Bainbridge Island.
- Sixth-grade students were trained to monitor lunchroom disposal stations and help students with sorting. These students wore King County Green Team aprons to identify themselves as recycling station monitors.
- Green Team students created GOOS (Good on One Side) paper reuse boxes for every classroom. The paper was used as scratch paper.
- In 2016, the Green Team promoted waste reduction and recycling practices at the pep assembly and organized a contest among sixth- to-eighth-grade students on how many trays could be stacked in a minute and a half.



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- Students collected polystyrene trays, rinsed off food remains, and used the trays to create a castle display to increase awareness of how many trays the school uses. Students also created Styrofoam puppets that they used during a presentation at a school board meeting about alternatives to school trays.
- The school reduced food waste by offering a share table in the lunchroom for unopened, packaged food items.
- Teacher Rasa Conklin shared recycling successes at district Green Coalition meetings. Announcements about the school's waste reduction and recycling efforts were made during each staff meeting.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

Before school breaks, emails were sent out reminding staff to unplug computer carts and other small appliances.

Water Conservation and Pollution Prevention (Level Three)

- The Integrated Environmental Sustainability Academy participated in week-long mini-courses addressing human impacts on the environment and water conservation. Each week was taught by a different teacher, with subjects including how to design a school rain garden, writing salmon and human impact stories, and researching sources of drinking water and how wastewater is treated by Lakehaven and Tacoma Public Utilities.
- Green Team students visited Brightwater Wastewater Treatment and Education Center to learn about wastewater treatment and how to prevent water pollution.
- Posters in the bathrooms reminded students that the toilet is not a trash can.
- Students created a short video, signs, and a classroom demonstration about how to conserve water while washing hands.



- To conserve water, low-flow faucet aerators were placed on all science classroom sinks.
- Most school grounds were not irrigated. The gardens were irrigated in the early morning when evaporation rates are low.

Sustaining Green School 2016-17

Lakota made school-wide announcements about conservation, displayed posters, and sent emails to remind staff members about conservation practices.

Other conservation outreach and strategies

- In 2013, 60 Lakota Middle School students attended We Day Seattle, an educational event intended to inspire young people to lead local and global change. Each student who attended We Day Seattle committed to completing a minimum of one local and one global action.
- During Spirit Week, for \$1 students could wear jeans instead of their standard uniforms. The funds raised helped to fund the construction of a clean drinking water well in Sierra Leone. In one day, the school raised \$300 for this cause.

Awards

- Lakota Middle School Integrated Environmental Sustainability Academy earned a 2016 King County Earth Heroes at School award for its community garden.
- In 2016, the school received a Green Ribbon School award from the U.S. Department of Education.