

Maple Hills Elementary School

School district: Issaquah

School location: Renton

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
October 2013

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

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

Level Three of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2019

Sustaining Green School 2021-22:
Achieved in June 2022

Sustaining Green School 2022-23:
Achieved in June 2023



Green Team members



Upcycled art made by Green Team members, using old CDs/DVDs, plastic bottles, and bottle caps.

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- The school first achieved a recycling rate of 47% and then increased its recycling rate to 54% in 2018-19 after starting to collect food scraps, napkins, and other organics for transport to a regional composting facility.
- The 18 third-grade Green Team students emptied recycling bins daily from the library, offices, and classrooms.
- Green Team students monitored lunchroom recycling and garbage bins to help fellow students sort materials correctly.
- Green Team leaders placed G.O.O.S (Good on One Side) boxes in each classroom and workroom to collect paper used only on one side for later use.
- The school reduced paper use by sending electronic newsletters to staff and families, and promoted Waste Free Wednesdays to encourage students to bring lunches from home in reusable containers.



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

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- Used ink cartridges were collected and taken to a recycling location.
- Recycling bins were labeled and paired with garbage bins.
- Green Team members led a recycling awareness event on Earth Day 2016, and planned and led campus beautification events in spring 2014, fall 2015, and spring 2016. Students planted flowers and vegetables and also picked up trash on campus and around the school.
- After observing recyclables ending up in garbage bins, the Green Team made posters to increase awareness about what materials can be recycled. The team also educated students about plastics in the ocean and encouraged bringing durable water bottles to school instead of using single-use plastic bottles.



Using plastic bags, student Green Team members created an art piece called Wave of Responsibility.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- Energy conservation facts and trivia were shared during student lunches and at Green Team events.
- The Green Team created posters about conserving energy, placed stickers from the Green Schools Program in the computer lab and near classroom computers reminding staff and students to turn off electronics when not in use, and followed a checklist that included shutting electronic items down over school breaks.
- The Issaquah School District's contract with Coca-Cola required vending machine display lights to be permanently turned off.
- An email reminder was sent to teachers before each holiday break about preparing classrooms to conserve energy over the breaks. Staff also received reminders from the principal and dean of students to close blinds at the end of the each day to conserve heat and to open blinds during the day to make use of natural lighting.
- Students were encouraged in morning announcements and in the student handbook to dress appropriately for the weather.
- The school set the thermostats to 68 -70 degrees.



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Water Conservation (Level Three)

- The school installed automatic shut-off faucets.
- Issaquah Salmon Hatchery staff visited classrooms to present about watersheds. Students brainstormed ways they can conserve and protect water.
- On Earth Day, announcements were made to encourage conservation practices.
- Current and past waste, water, and energy use data was posted on the Issaquah School District's website.

Sustaining Green School recognition

Maple Hills 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 2021-22

- Green Team members created and hung posters showing examples of materials that should and should not be placed in recycling and compost bins.
- Fifth-grade students visited Kindergarten classes to talk about recycling.
- During Earth Week, the Green Team upcycled old t-shirts into reusable shopping bags.
- The Green Team prepared a letter to send to staff before school breaks to remind teachers to turn of lights, unplug appliances, and power off devices.
- Fourth-grade students created posters with tips on how to reducing waste.



Green Team members used old t-shirts to make reusable shopping bags.





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Sustaining Green School 2022-23

- The school restarted pre-Covid conservation practices such as collection of compostable materials.
- A cafeteria food share table was set up so students could place unopened, packaged items and whole fruits with inedible skins from the school lunch program for other students to take.
- With leadership from third-grade teacher and Green Team advisor Ben Kinkade, the 33-member Green Team of second- to fifth-grade students created educational posters about recycling, composting, energy conservation, and water pollution. This year, the team invited all grades to participate in one team.
- Green Team students helped educate their classmates on what can be placed in recycling and composting bins in each wing of the school
- Team members wrote letters to the principal, dean of students, and kitchen staff to request switching from single-use plastic utensils and polystyrene bowls to durable, reusable utensils and serving-ware.
- Green Team posters helped educate the school community about turning off lights when leaving rooms, powering down devices before school breaks, and the effects of water pollution on orcas, salmon, and other marine life.
- Green Team students used non-recyclable materials to create art or useful items, such as planters out of single-use coffee cups.