



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

McMicken Heights Elementary School

School district: Highline

School location: SeaTac

Began participating in Green Schools Program:
March 2012

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

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

Level Three of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2020

Sustaining Green School 2021-22:
Achieved in June 2022

Sustaining Green School 2022-23:
Achieved in June 2023

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- McMicken Heights achieved a 47% recycling rate.
- At the start of the school year, students learned about school expectations including correct sorting of recyclable materials in cafeteria and classrooms.
- Students promoted recycling through posters, announcements, and an all-school assembly.
- McMicken Heights received a King County waste reduction and recycling assembly during fall 2012. Fourth-grade students learned about landfills and making earth-smart choices during classroom workshops.
- To reduce paper use, a copy limit was established, and staff made double-sided copies. In 2019, teacher Jennifer Walsh set up a GOOS (Good on One Side) paper box in the staff workroom.



Ecowarriors prepared to give classroom presentations about recycling and energy conservation



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- The garden club, which grows pesticide-free organic plants, composted the garden waste on-site.
- Teachers and students collected used markers to be recycled through the Crayola ColorCycle program.
- During 2018-19, the student council made announcements at an all-school assembly and over the PA to reinforce waste reduction and recycling practices.
- Staff members received reminders and tips about waste reduction and recycling via email and daily bulletins.
- Throughout 2018-19, Ecowarriors helped fellow students with sorting in classrooms and monitored cafeteria waste stations.
- Kindergarten students cleaned up litter on school grounds and wrote a letter to families about recycling and how to reduce contamination in recycling bins.
- In 2018-19, third-grade students wrote and presented speeches on how and why to reduce ocean plastic pollution by limiting the use of single-use plastics.
- Teachers encouraged students to bring reusable water bottles and maintained a shared storage space for reusing classroom decorations, posters, and supplies.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- In spring 2019, teacher Jennifer Walsh sent an announcement about the school's energy conservation goals with reminders on how to conserve energy.
- The student Ecowarriors group conducted presentations in classrooms to encourage energy conservation practices.
- To promote energy conservation during Earth week 2019, students and staff were encouraged to sign the school's conservation pledge located in the main hallway.
- Third-grade students participated in Brain Pop Junior, a website that create online animated curriculum aligned to state education standards, and watched videos about energy use, energy conservation, and climate change.
- Signs were displayed next to automatic light switches to encourage students and staff to manually turn off the lights when not in use.
- Teachers assigned a student Light Watcher role in each classroom to help promote energy conservation practices.



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- The school building was designed to take advantage of daylight to reduce the need for electricity. Permanent signs were displayed to explain how access to natural light part of energy conservation at McMicken Heights is.
- Vending machine display lights were permanently turned off in the staff lounge.
- Custodians shut down lights and electronic equipment before weekends and school breaks.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- McMicken Heights maintained its waste reduction, recycling, and energy conservation education and practices.
 - In September 2019, in an all-school assembly, teacher Jennifer Walsh shared past waste reduction, recycling, and energy conservation accomplishments, and King County provided an assembly about waste reduction and recycling practices.
 - Student volunteers monitored lunchroom waste stations every day to help other students learn how to sort garbage and recyclables. Reminders about the school's recycling practices were announced at each lunch.
 - Recycling information also was shared in the staff bulletin, an email to staff, and in the school newsletter. The Green Schools Program provided a recycling training during a staff meeting.
 - The Green Team made posters and shared the video The Story of Bottled Water with all classrooms. Students received Cougar Bucks from the Green Team when they brought their reusable water bottles to school.
- In all-school assemblies in 2019-20, student Green Team members shared information about water conservation practices.
- Students volunteered for a weekly School Clean-up Club to pick up litter on school grounds. Third-grade students wrote opinion papers on litter and collected data on how much litter is found around the school before and after Clean-up Club. One student shared their opinion paper at an all-school assembly and highlighted how picking up litter can help prevent water pollution.



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- In April 2020, a water conservation pledge was shared with students and teachers via Google Classroom. Students and their teachers were encouraged to sign the water conservation pledge and practice water conservation at home.
- Librarian Vivienne Alcantara included water conservation messages in library programs during Earth Week. Students learned about water and energy conservation, protecting honeybees, waste reduction, natural resources and habitats, pollution, and climate change. Earth Week reading assignments were shared with all students via Google Classroom and the school's digital library.
- In reading assignments students were invited to come up with ways to help to protect the planet and reduce climate change impacts. Student responses included picking up litter, turning off the faucet to conserve water, turning off lights to conserve energy, and recycling more.
- In February 2020, water conservation signs from the Green Schools Program were posted near sinks and water fountains throughout the school.
- McMicken Heights used a Rain Bird irrigation controller to set irrigation schedules and duration. Only school sports fields were irrigated. Highline School District landscaped with drought-tolerant plants and did not irrigate the plants once established.

Sustaining Green School 2021-22

- Staff were reminded to turn off and unplug devices before long school breaks.
- Signs from the Green Schools Program were posted to remind staff and students to turn off faucets when not in use and to report leaks to maintenance staff.
- The Green Team collected used markers and encouraged everyone to use both sides of paper.
- Students participated in planting flowers in the school's garden, and second-grade students learned about plants and insects.
- Students volunteered for the clean-up crew and picked up litter on campus.
- Reusable water bottles were given to students and teachers encouraged students to use the bottles.



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Sustaining Green School 2022-23

- McMicken's student Green Team, called Eco Kids, educated the school community through announcements, posters, and newsletters about reducing waste, recycling, and conserving energy and water.
- To encourage conservation of paper, Eco Kids created GOOS (Good on One Side) boxes for paper that was blank on one side, and distributed the boxes to classrooms and offices.
- Students created a rainbow from repurposed trash, and added a banner reading, "There are a rainbow of possibilities when you repurpose trash".
- After noticing the grass on school grounds was disappearing due to overuse, students made clay plaque reminders to stay on the sidewalk.