



Pacific Cascade Middle School

School district: Issaquah

School location: Issaquah

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
October 2010

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

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

Level Three of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2018

Sustaining Green School 2018-19:
Achieved in May 2019

Sustaining Green School 2022-23:
Achieved in June 2023

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- The school increased its recycling rate from 65% in spring 2011 to 70% by spring 2016, and to 86% by spring 2019.
- Garbage volume and frequency of garbage pick-ups decreased, thanks to school-wide collection of recyclable and compostable materials.
- Six staff members helped lead waste reduction and recycling education at staff meetings, through morning videos and lunch time announcements, the school newsletter and website, and in parent communications.
- The school started a student environmental club to engage students in planning and promoting waste reduction and recycling activities.



In 2018-19, to support cafeteria sorting, the Green Team created 3-dimensional posters and a structure for hanging the posters.



Green Team students completed a school campus litter clean-up



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

- All recycling and composting bins were labeled with stickers from the Green Schools Program showing what materials can be placed in each bin.
- With help from more than 60 students and parents, the school began to collect food scraps and other compostable materials in its lunchroom and staff lounge. Over 25 yards of compostable materials were transported to the Cedar Grove Composting facility.
- The school further reduced lunchroom waste while providing food for hungry students by setting up a food share table for unopened packaged foods from the school lunch program that would otherwise have been wasted.
- Pacific Cascade reduced paper use by providing Good on One Side (GOOS) boxes in classrooms for paper used on one side, so students could use the blank sides for notes.
- In 2015-16, to promote Waste-Free Wednesday lunches, the Green Team:
 - Made posters and morning announcements, and presented at a PTSA meeting and a staff meeting.
 - Created a "we're all in for waste-free lunches" banner that students signed during lunch periods. The banner was hung in the cafeteria as a reminder of student commitment.
 - Wrote 15-minute lesson plans about "why care about reducing waste and recycling" for teachers to use during advisory classes.



The Green Team spread compost from Cedar Grove Composting on the school herb garden.



Students working in the school's herb garden



Green Team students on a field trip to Sammamish Water Plateau to learn about their water



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- The student Green Team gave weekly morning announcements about waste reduction, recycling, and energy conservation.
- Energy conservation signs were posted by light switches to remind students and staff to turn off lights when they were not needed.
- Head custodian Joanne Donovan and school staff pledged to conserve energy.
- Classroom and common area window blinds were opened during the day to use daylight and closed at night to keep in heat.
- Issaquah School District's contract with Coca-Cola called for vending machine display lights to be permanently turned off to conserve energy.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- The school posted signs promoting water conservation above classroom and restroom sinks.
- The Green Team measured school faucet flows and reported their findings, and the school adjusted some automatic faucet timing to reduce water use.
- The school installed moisture overrides and timers on sprinklers to avoid overuse of water.



Green Team students tested school faucet flows and reported results

Sustaining Green School Recognition

Pacific Cascade 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 is described below.

Sustaining Green School 2018-2019

- Green Team students led a campaign to encourage students to bring durable, refillable bottles to use the school's new water bottle filling station.



Green Team students tested water samples from a local stream.



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

- Throughout the school year, video announcements were used to share tips about waste reduction, recycling, and other conservation practices.
- For cafeteria sorting stations, Green Team students built structures to place above recycling, composting, and garbage bins so posters with actual items attached could be hung to show students how to sort.
- Green Team members created an herb garden, and used compost to nourish the plants.
- Thermostats were set between 68 to 70 degrees, and staff received water and energy conservation reminders from the district.

Sustaining Green School 2022-2023

- The school continued its waste reduction and recycling practices, and its education about energy and water conservation. A water bottle refilling station made it easy for students to bring and use refillable water bottles instead of single-use plastic bottles.
- All classroom and hallway lights were on timers and automatically shut off when there is not any movement for extended time. To conserve water, restroom sinks only came on briefly.
- Earth Science students learned about water conservation and conducted water audits in their homes. Biology classes worked with Mountains to Sound Greenway to learn about healthy salmon habitat, and tested the health of Issaquah Creek as it flows into Lake Sammamish.
- Life Science and Biology classes revived the school garden by weeding, making paths, and planting herbs, vegetables, and native plants.

Award

The student Green Team, teacher Courtney Peterson, and custodian Joanna Donovan received a 2016 King County Earth Heroes at School award for waste reduction and recycling efforts which resulted in a 70% recycling rate achieved in 2015-16.