



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Panther Lake Elementary School

School district: Kent

School location: Kent

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:

September 2013

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

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Panther Lake Elementary increased its recycling rate from 33% to 44% percent.
- To achieve that increase, the school began collecting recyclable materials in the cafeteria and in all classrooms and offices.
- The school's waste reduction and recycling efforts decreased its garbage pick-ups from twice per week to once per week and increased its recycling dumpster size from four yards to eight yards. **As a result, the school saved approximately \$500 per month in collection costs.**
- Through a school-wide reusable bag campaign led by the student Green Team, 129 families signed a Reusable Bag Pledge and received a custom made reusable bag for grocery shopping. **The reusable bag campaign saved nearly 2,400 plastic and paper grocery bags from being wasted.**
- Library media specialist/ELL Sarah Stoddard helped the Green Team develop the reusable bag campaign, create a logo, and promote and run the campaign.
- In monthly announcements, the school shared waste reduction and recycling information and tips, and recycling successes were shared through PTA and PA announcements.
- In April 2014, Earth Month was adopted as the school's Virtue of the Month. Teachers created activities and songs about sustainable practices. Students performed the songs at an all-school assembly.
- The school adopted a double-sided copying and printing policy, and encouraged students and staff to write on both sides of paper. Whenever possible, staff communicated with parents via email to conserve paper and costs.
- The school set up an office supply reuse station, and reduced waste by reusing visitor badges and holiday decorations.
- Student Green Team members were trained to sort recyclable materials by a King County Green Schools Program representative.



Audrey Varriano holding logo designed for Panther Lake's reusable bag campaign



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- Green Team students monitored lunchroom recycling and garbage collection bins to help ensure correct sorting.
- Head custodian Clark Kieft worked with the student Green Team to recycle milk cartons, cereal bowls, and juice cups during breakfast and lunch.
- In 2010-11, to reduce waste at each school, the district eliminated straws and replaced plastic wrapped sets of utensils, napkins, and straws with individual sporks and napkins that students obtained from dispensers.