



Park Orchard Elementary School

School district: Kent

School location: Kent

Began participating in the Green Schools Program: November 2016

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

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

Level Three of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in May 2022

Sustaining Green School 2022-23: Achieved in May 2023

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Park Orchard Elementary School formed a Green Team in 2016-17 of eight students led by head custodian Matt Roark.
- Recycling bins with recycling signs were placed next to all garbage bins.
- The school achieved a 51 percent recycling rate by 2017 and increased its recycling rate to 67 percent in 2018-19.
- Mr. Roark conducted a kitchen food waste audit to learn which materials were routinely thrown out instead of recycled or composted.
- To help reduce food waste, students set up a share table during breakfast for unwanted, unopened packaged foods and drinks from the school lunch program. Other students who wanted more helped themselves to items on the share table.
- The Green Team shared its successes and efforts through morning announcements and monthly e-newsletters.
- In 2018-19, the school
 - set up buckets for students and staff members to collect used Crayola markers to send to Crayola to be recycled.

- started recycling in the lunchroom and the Green Team received training on how to properly sort items.
 - encouraged students to practice waste reduction at home and reminded teachers to continue to educate their students about waste reduction.
 - shared waste reduction facts and tips with parents.
- The Green Team shared reminders about how to properly sort items in the lunchroom.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- The school posted signs on light switches to encourage students and staff members to turn off lights in unoccupied spaces.
- The custodian turned on heating 90 minutes prior to the start of the school day instead of two hours ahead as had been done in the past.
- To conserve electricity, multiple classrooms used natural light throughout the year when available.
- Each classroom had a student monitor to make sure the lights were turned off when they left a room.
- The school used regular announcements to inform and remind students and staff members about ways to conserve energy.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- The school's student Conservation Crew learned why water conservation is important and encouraged school-wide water conservation practices by sharing water conservation tips in weekly announcements.
- Students learned about the Cedar River watershed, spawning season for salmon, and how electricity is connected to water.
- The school included water conservation information in its curriculum.
- The custodial team conducted weekly water patrols to look for leaks or other problems, and the student Conservation Crew helped.

- The school did not need irrigation due to drought-resistant plants requiring minimal amounts of water.
- The custodial staff set back water intake valves to reduce water use.

Sustaining Green Schools 2022-23

The school's Green Team completed several projects, including monitoring cafeteria recycling bins, making sure to empty leftover liquids before placing recyclable containers in recycling bins. The student Green Team worked on school garden composting, learned how to conserve water, helped keep the campus grounds clean, and encouraged the school community to save energy by turning off lights and electronics not in use.