



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Renton Park Elementary School

School district: Renton

School location: Unincorporated King County

Began participating in the Green Schools Program: April 2011

Level One of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in Dec. 2011

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- In April 2011, Renton Elementary started with a 37% recycling rate. By Dec. 2011, the school had increased its rate to 50%.
- Thanks to improved recycling and waste reduction practices, recycling volume increased and garbage collection frequency decreased.
- To achieve this success, the school's student Green Team placed recycling stickers from the Green Schools Program on all indoor recycling bins to show what can be recycled, created and hung posters about reducing waste and recycling, and wrote articles about recycling and reducing waste for the school's monthly newsletter.
- To reduce food waste, cafeteria supervisors remind students to "only take what they can eat."
- Uneaten or unopened food items from the school lunch program were collected on a table in the cafeteria for sharing. Students may take what they want from the share cart.
- The school began to collect recyclable materials in its cafeteria, where students empty leftover milk and other



Student "Roadrunner Recyclers" help empty recycling containers



Student Green Team members promote their team meeting



Renton Park's conservation pledge tree



"It's Easy Being Green" display case



liquids into collection buckets, then place empty milk cartons into a recycling bin instead of a garbage bin.

- Green Team students were trained by the Green Schools Program how to sort materials correctly, then Green Team members and parent volunteers helped in the lunchroom to teach all students.
- Renton Park stopped using Styrofoam trays in the cafeteria. Lunchroom manager Kosir successfully petitioned the Renton School District to replace the disposable polystyrene lunch trays with durable, reusable trays.
- Kitchen staff recycle steel cans, plastic bottles, and cardboard.
- The school recycled printer cartridges and cell phones. Capri Sun drink pouches were collected in separate containers in every classroom and sent to TerraCycle which uses them to make new products.
- As part of Renton Parks' Meaningful Jobs Program, students were hired as recycling managers to make rounds every Tuesday and Thursday during afternoon recess to empty classroom recycling bins.
- To reduce paper use, staff workrooms used paper reuse boxes for paper used only on one side, and construction paper scraps were used by students for scratch paper, notes, and art projects. Signs were placed on photocopy machines to promote double-sided photocopying.
- School librarian Lindfors led a week-long curriculum on recycling and the human footprint, aided by books purchased by the PTA. At the end of the week the librarian asked students to sign a conservation pledge. The pledge forms, in the shape of a hand print, were placed on a pledge "tree" in the common area.
- Principal JoEllen Tapper made weekly PA announcements to share recycling facts.
- Recycling bins were set out at school events such as movie nights.
- The school began 2011-12 with a school-wide assembly and classroom workshops provided by King County.