



King County Green Schools Program

# Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

## Secondary Academy for Success

**School district:** Northshore

**School location:** Bothell

**Began participating in the Green Schools Program:**  
In 2006, then again in April 2012

**Level One of the Green Schools Program:**  
Achieved in January 2013

**Level Two of the Green Schools Program:**  
Achieved in May 2014

**Level Three of the Green Schools Program:**  
Achieved in February 2015

**Sustaining Green School recognition:**  
Achieved for....

- 2015-16
- 2016-17
- 2017-18
- 2018-19

### Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Secondary Academy for Success maintained a recycling rate of 93%, thanks to school-wide collection of recyclable and compostable materials.
- The school placed recycling bins next to garbage bins in every classroom, and students emptied classroom recycling bins daily.
- To reduce waste, lunchroom dishes and utensils were durable or compostable, and bulk condiment dispensers were used.
- Announcements about waste reduction and recycling practices were made in assemblies, homeroom classes, staff meetings, and bulletins.



Students and teacher Judy Ellis promote aluminum can recycling.



Teachers Judy Ellis and Dawn McArthur train students how to sort recyclable and compostable materials.



Students and staff collect compostables after lunch at 21 Acres, a local organic farm.



- Ninth-grade students completed a waste audit each Wednesday to determine what was disposed at school and what materials could be recycled.
- Ninth-grade Social Studies and twelfth-grade Senior Issues classes included waste reduction and recycling topics in their lessons.
- In September 2011, each student was given a reusable water bottle and encouraged to use the new water bottle filling stations. By end of October 2011, the school reduced its plastic water bottle use by more than 1,000. In 2014, the school received a Donors Choose grant to buy more reusable water bottles.
- To reduce paper use, paper used on one side only was placed in classroom and computer lab reuse boxes so students could use the blank sides. Newspaper deliveries to the school were eliminated.
- In May 2012, the school started to collect food scraps and other compostable materials. The Green Schools Program trained Green Team students how to sort recyclable and compostable lunchroom items.
- The Green Schools Program presented to the entire school about waste reduction and recycling, and helped students create 3-dimensional posters with actual recyclables attached to show how to sort lunchroom materials.
- To reduce food waste, a food share table was set up for unwanted, unopened packaged breakfast foods so students could help themselves.
- Kitchen staff collected recyclable and compostable materials in the school kitchen.
- The school collected shoes for recycling through Nike's shoe recycling program.
- Custodians combined garbage in one bag when possible to reduce plastic bag use.

## **Energy Conservation (Level Two)**

- The school reduced its electricity usage by 19% in 2013-14.
- A beginning of the school year assembly shared with students and staff how to conserve energy as well as how to reduce waste and recycle.
- Green Team members created Power Down for the Planet signs placed near classroom doors as reminders to turn off lights and electronics when not in use.
- The school installed a solar panel to generate renewable energy and reduce energy from the electrical grid. Occupancy sensors were installed on lights in frequently used rooms. The school's Energy Star vending machine was set on a timer to turn off at night. Windows and doors were kept closed when heating systems were on.



## Water Conservation (Level Three)

- While continuing to reduce waste and recycle, students learned about water conservation. Each month, the school bulletin included water conservation tips.
- A water efficient dishwasher was installed in the culinary arts classroom.
- All faucets were equipped with aerators and motion sensors to conserve water.
- To encourage refilling reusable bottles at water fountains rather than buying single-use plastic water bottles, the Green Team conducted a survey and taste test at an all-school assembly about tap water versus bottled water.
- Ninth-grade students toured King County's South Wastewater Treatment Plant in Renton, and volunteered at 21 Acres farm to learn about drought-tolerant plants, water conservation in agriculture, and how to grow microgreens.
- Students toured the Duwamish River, the Ballard Locks, and Issaquah Salmon Hatchery to learn how pollution affects waterways and fish.

## Sustaining Green School recognition

The school maintained and built on its Level One through Level Three practices. How the school did this each year is described below.

### Sustaining Green School 2015-16

- Teacher Dawn McArthur's students visited Crystal Springs Elementary School multiple times to teach students how to sort recyclable materials.
- In January 2016, the school diverted 7,000 single-use plastic water bottles from the landfill. Success was measured using the school's hydration station, which automatically tracks each time someone refills a durable, reusable water bottle.
- In 2014-15 and 2015-16, the school placed second in the Great American Can Roundup, a national aluminum can recycling contest.
- Students developed a seed to salad program with 21 Acres farm. Students received seeds that matured in the school's greenhouse, vegetables were transplanted to 21 Acres where students harvested at the annual field day. Students helped remove invasive blackberries and assisted with pesticide-free gardening.



## **Sustaining Green School 2016-17**

- A group of students visited Crystal Springs Elementary to teach a recycling and garbage sorting lesson. Afterwards they helped third-grade students make posters showing which items belonged in recycling and garbage bins.
- A student artist created signs about the school's sustainability features. The signs were displayed next to the school's sorting stations, water bottle refilling stations, edible garden, solar panel, garden composting area, and greenhouse.

## **Sustaining Green School 2017-18**

- The Green Team started a campaign to encourage a plastic bottle-free school. Students created and shared presentations in classrooms about the impact of plastics on the environment.
- Green Team students visited Canyon Creek Elementary to teach students about reducing waste and recycling.

## **Sustaining Green School 2018-19**

- At an all-school assembly in September 2018, students participated in a scavenger hunt to learn about the school's sustainability practices.
- In the greenhouse, students planted microgreens to learn about nutrition and carbon footprints, and visited 21 Acres farm to learn about sustainable farming.
- Green Team students made homemade hand lotion to decrease the use of plastic packaging, and created a display of a giant octopus with ocean backdrop to raise awareness about the loss of coral reef around the planet.

## **Awards**

- In May 2015, teacher Judy Ellis received a King County Earth Heroes at School award for leading the school's waste reduction and recycling practices since 2005.
- In 2012, the school was one of four Washington schools and one of 78 schools nationwide to receive the first U.S. Green Ribbon School award.