



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Sunrise Elementary School

School district: Northshore

School location: Redmond

Began participating in the Green Schools Program: September 2009

Level One of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in May 2009

Level Two of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in May 2010

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Sunrise Elementary increased its recycling rate from 36% to 57%, recycling an average of three yards of recyclable materials each week, for an annual total of more than 125 yards.
- The Green Team created and distributed colorful posters about recycling that included samples of common recyclable materials.
- Recycling bins from the Green Schools Program were placed in each classroom for paper and empty plastic bottles and aluminum cans.
- School staff placed recycling stickers from the Green Schools Program on all recycling bins to show what can be recycled.
- To reduce paper use and encourage using both sides of paper, the Green Team made scrap paper boxes for every classroom.
- The school's student Green Team planned a Green Week to celebrate Earth Day. Activities included a waste-free lunch day organized by teacher Joanne Burkett.
- Sunrise piloted milk carton recycling in two classrooms and then expanded milk carton recycling to all classrooms.
- The school encouraged use of reusable water bottles at after-school and family events at school.
- Each classroom received a paper reuse box with posters made by Green Team members to encourage students to write on both sides of paper.
- At monthly staff lunches hosted by the PTA, polystyrene was replaced by durable, washable plates and utensils.



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- The school collected cell phones for recycling, and also collected Capri Sun juice boxes to mail to TerraCycle, a company which uses them to make new products.
- The Green Team conducted weekly litter patrols on school grounds. The entire school participated in playground litter clean-ups three times during 2009-10.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- The school's Green Team created an energy patrol to check classroom energy conservation practices twice each month. The team created an energy audit form and provided reminders and recognized classroom conservation practices. Team members also checked water faucets for drips and reported their findings.
- The office manager made staff meeting announcements and sent staff reminder e-mails to close blinds at the end of each day and turn off equipment when not in use.
- The school held a Blackout Day in which classrooms turned off one or both of their overhead lights as well as unnecessary electronics.
- Signs provided by the Green Schools Program were posted on light switches to encourage staff and students to turn off lights in unoccupied spaces.
- The parent newsletter included an article about the school's energy use and energy conservation practices.
- Throughout the district, computer monitors and electronic equipment were automatically turned off when not in use.

Additional Environmental Education

- Environmental topics are integrated into curriculum school-wide.
- Sunrise hosted a school-wide assembly on waste reduction and recycling, provided by King County. Two grades followed up with classroom workshops provided by King County.
- The school hosted Woodland Park Zoo presenters to teach about habitat and environmental preservation. Some classes participated in a native plant identification walk.



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- The Green Team organized after-school weeding of school grounds to avoid use of herbicides or pesticides.
- A week-long Earth Day focus included a waste-free lunch day in which students were asked to pack lunches from home in reusable containers, a school-wide litter clean-up, and a reusable art table for art night.
- The Green Team split into five committees, with each committee taking responsibility for one aspect of environmental stewardship and conservation, including recycling, energy conservation, and water conservation. One committee planned a school garden that could be used as a teaching tool for all classes.
- Guest presenters visited to teach water cycle workshops.
- Through a parent newsletter, the school educated parents about turning their cars off when waiting for students.
- One classroom maintains a worm bin as a teaching tool.

Comment

"Without King County's assistance and guidance through the Green Schools Program, it would have been much more difficult to get our school to 'Go Green.' By providing recycling receptacles, signage, resources and environmental counseling services, the program has been an invaluable part of Sunrise Elementary School's achieving Levels One and Two."

- Joanne Burkett, teacher

Awards

Teacher Joanne Burkett received a King County Earth Hero at School award in April 2010.