



## **Sunset Elementary School**

**School district:** Issaquah

**School location:** Bellevue

**Began participating in the Green Schools Program:** September 2010

**Level One of the Green Schools Program:** Achieved in May 2011

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

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

**Sustaining Green School recognition:**

Achieved for ....

- **2014-15**
- **2015-16**
- **2016-17**
- **2017-18**
- **2018-19**
- **2022-23**

### **Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)**

- Sunset Elementary achieved a recycling rate of 47%, thanks to classroom, office, and lunchroom recycling.
- The school started to collect food scraps and other compostable materials in its lunchroom, classrooms, and staff lounge.
- Over 60 student Waste Watchers monitored cafeteria recycling, composting, and garbage sorting stations to help fellow students sort correctly.
- To reduce wasted food, the school set up a food share table for unopened packaged food from the school lunch program, and staff recognized students who generated the least amount of waste during lunch.
- Sunset promoted Waste-Free Wednesdays to encourage students to reduce wasted food and to bring lunches from home in reusable containers.



- The school reduced the size of its outdoor garbage dumpster and increased the size of its outdoor compostable materials collection container.
- In 2010, the school's PTA received a grant to buy reusable stainless steel water bottles for each student in the school.
- The student Green Team and a second-grade class created posters showing which materials should be recycled, composted, and thrown away. The posters were hung in classrooms and above collection bins throughout the school.
- To conserve paper, the weekly school newsletter was sent to families electronically, saving 3,250 sheets of paper per week. A reuse box for paper used only on one side was set up. Staff and families were asked to make double-sided instead of single-sided copies at school.
- Throughout the district, cafeterias eliminated drinking straws and switched to durable trays. When it was not possible to use durable trays, the lunchroom used compostable paper trays instead of disposable polystyrene trays.
- Green Team members were trained by the Green Schools Program about waste reduction and recycling, and then shared the lessons with their classmates.
- The school hosted the King County waste reduction and recycling assembly for first- through fifth-grade students.
- Students collected Capri-Sun juice pouches in the lunchroom and sent them to TerraCycle, a company that used the juice pouches to make a variety of products.
- The school shared information about its conservation policies and practices in staff and PTA meetings, in newsletters, and at school-wide assemblies.

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

- All Sunset classes signed an Energy Conservation Pledge. Stickers posted on light switches reminded staff and students to turn off lights in unoccupied rooms.
- Green Team members shared conservation tips at faculty meetings and via email. In 2017, emails were sent to teachers with tips to reduce energy consumption, including having student jobs to turn off lights when they leave the room.
- Sunset began a weekly Green Honoree recognition for staff engaged in environmentally-friendly behaviors such as reducing waste and conserving energy.



## Water Conservation (Level Three)

- Green Team and Student Council members promoted water conservation actions through recorded “Green Tips” that were played during morning announcements.
- Sunset participated in the Fix a Leak Week where Green Team and Student Council members checked sinks and drinking fountains for leaks, and all students took home toilet leak check kits provided by Cascade Water Alliance.
- Green Team and Student Council members posted signs by all sinks to remind students and teachers to soap hands with the faucet off, and then rinse.
- Multiple grade levels participated in watershed education assemblies provided by Cascade Water Alliance.
- The school’s low-pressure faucets conserved water.

## Sustaining Green School recognition

Sunset Elementary sustained and built on its Level One through Level Three conservation practices. How the school did this each year is described below.

### Sustaining Green School 2014-15

- In 2015, Sunset participated in a district Zero Waste Cafeteria Challenge. In each class, student council members presented about reducing wasted food and bringing lunches from home in reusable containers. Waste-free lunch tips were included in the school newsletter, in an email to staff, and in posters made by students.
- In May 2015, the Green Team began collecting compostable materials in five fourth-grade classrooms.

### Sustaining Green School 2015-16

- Staff and students promoted waste-free lunches by sharing ways to reduce wasted food and encouraging students to bring lunches from home in reusable containers.
- Fourth-grade classrooms collected used classroom paper towels to add to food scraps which were composted at a regional composting facility. Each of those classrooms reduced garbage to less than one quarter of one garbage bin per day.
- The head custodian made sure the school’s old risers were recycled.



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

- The student Green Team was trained by the Green Schools Program about what materials can be recycled and composted, and the team continued to monitor lunchroom sorting stations year round.
- A waste-free lunch campaign included reminders in fall and spring about how to reduce wasted food and how reusable containers reduce waste.
- Teacher and Green Team advisor Michelle Larson attended district-wide Green Team meetings to share successes and discuss challenges.
- At a 2017 staff meeting, Ms. Larson presented about reducing school lamination, since laminated paper cannot be recycled.
- Using grant funding, the school created an on-site garden involving students, parents, teachers, and the school's landscape supervisor.
- Teacher Usha Ganesh's class completed art work on terra cotta pots and then germinated herb seeds in them and planted them in the garden.

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

- Staff promoted waste free lunches at school family night to encourage families to pack lunches from home in reusable containers.
- The student Green Team assisted with the school garden as docents, and harvested produce which was donated to Issaquah Food Bank.

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

- The kitchen manager monitored the food share table and donated leftover items to Issaquah Food and Clothing Bank.
- Students serving as cafeteria waste monitors received training from the Green Schools Program on what materials can be recycled and composted, and how to teach their fellow students to sort correctly. Custodian Michael Getty assisted students to sort in the lunchroom and provided rewards for correct sorting practices.
- The school started to collect restroom paper towels to be transported along with food scraps to Cedar Grove Composting facility.
- Cascade Water Alliance led water conservation lessons for third-grade students.
- Staff led garden activities for classes and reminded students to conserve water when irrigating the garden.



## **Sustaining Green School 2022-23**

- Teacher Abigail Blastos helped the school maintain its waste reduction, recycling, and other conservation practices.
- Recycling and organics collection continued in the lunchroom with staff help.
- The school held an all-school assembly about waste reduction and recycling practices.
- Family volunteers maintained the school garden.
- Students light monitors in each classroom made sure lights were turned off when the classroom was empty.