



Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Westwood Elementary School

School district: Enumclaw

School location: Enumclaw

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
October 2011

Level One of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2012

Level Two of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2013

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

Sustaining Green School: Achieved in

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

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Westwood Elementary reached a 48 percent recycling rate, and reduced its garbage collection service from an 8- to a 6-yard dumpster, thus decreasing the cost of garbage collection.
- In 2012, the school improved lunchroom recycling by collecting compostable materials to be picked up weekly and taken to a composting facility.
- In 2013, Westwood began collecting compostable materials in its staff lounge. Staff placed signs above the compostable materials bin to assist with correct sorting.
- Recycling bins were placed in classrooms for paper and empty bottles and cans.



Green Team students created a cafeteria display to remind everyone to reduce food waste



Green Team students signed a pledge to reduce food waste



The Green Team presented on food waste in classrooms and collected student pledges to reduce food waste.



- Green Team students created “GOOS” (Good on One Side) paper reuse boxes that were delivered to all classrooms to reduce paper use. Paper handouts were limited, thanks to use of student notebooks and technology by the teachers.
- A lunchroom food share table monitored by the Green Team diverted from garbage and composting bins about 30 food items per lunch.
- Each Friday, leftover food items from the lunchroom share table were donated to food banks in Enumclaw or Buckley.
- Durable trays and utensils were used during mealtime, and the school replaced polystyrene boats and bowls with compostable paper boats in the lunchroom.
- Head custodian Jaime Arroyo used teachable moments in the lunchroom to remind students about proper recycling and composting behaviors.
- A rotating group of Green Team members monitored lunchroom recycling stations, and wore bright green aprons to identify them as monitors. Each group was made up of six fifth-grade students that monitored for one week. Two students monitored the salad bar and suggested portion control for K-3 students. The other four students monitored cafeteria stations that included a bin for durable utensils, a liquid disposal bin, a recycling bin, a compostable materials bin, and a garbage bin.
- Every fifth-grade student was a member of the Green Team. Last year’s fifth graders trained the incoming team.
- Green Team students were each assigned to a kindergarten student. Each Green Team buddy sat next to their assigned younger student, ate with them, and escorted them through the disposal line.
- Green Team students visited each classroom weekly for spot inspections on correct use of garbage and recycling bins. Each class started with 10 points each week and lost one point for each item incorrectly sorted. When a class earned 100 points, it received an extra recess. Spot check results were shared in announcements to encourage and challenge staff and students to improve correct sorting.
- Westwood participated in the King County elementary school assembly and classroom workshops to educate the school community about reducing waste.
- Third-grade teacher Jill Cook created a slideshow to train other classes on how to set up and care for a worm bin.



Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- The Green Team placed signs next to each light switch and computer station to remind everyone to help save energy.
- Westwood conserved energy by turning off computers and projectors each night and turning off all electronics, lights, and heat on non-school days.
- Automatic light sensors were installed in each classroom. School employees were reminded to manually turn off lights in rooms with hanging decorations to prevent decorations from activating the light sensors when rooms are not in use.
- Between first and second lunch periods, Green Team members wore cow hats and became “Energy Cows” who promoted energy conservation messages by:
 - Walking around school grounds to ensure doors were not propped open.
 - Reporting their findings during morning announcements to remind staff members and students to keep doors shut to conserve energy.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- Green Team students:
 - Included water conservation tips in Green School announcements during weekly classroom visits throughout the school year.
 - Tested water flow of classroom faucets twice during the school year and reported their findings to the custodian and school population.
 - Placed water conservation signs next to each school faucet to remind staff members and students to turn them off when not in use.
- With a grant from Enumclaw School Foundation, fifth-grade students constructed and maintained eight raised garden beds that were used in curriculum in every grade level. Fifth-grade science curriculum included resource and water conservation.
- Motion sensors were installed on all bathroom faucets in the school.
- The school conserved water by installing a water-efficient irrigation and sprinkler system.



Sustaining Green School recognition

To receive recognition as a Sustaining Green School, Westwood Elementary sustained and built on its Level One through Three practices. Details below show how the school achieved this each school year.

Sustaining Green School 2014-15

The student Green Team conducted campus-wide litter pick-ups on Fridays throughout the school year. Students tracked quantities of litter and reported findings in weekly announcements to the whole school to encourage litter reduction. Thanks to these efforts, litter on campus has decreased.

Sustaining Green School 2015-16

Fifth-grade Green Team students tracked what was and was not eaten by students purchasing school lunches. The Green Team advisor reported results to the school kitchen staff and school district food services supervisor with the intent of limiting wasted food and money, as well as ensuring students get adequate nutrition.

Sustaining Green School 2016-17

- Students were informed about food waste reduction tips during an all-school assembly, morning announcements, lunch periods, and in individual classrooms.
- A large “help stop food waste” sign was hung in the cafeteria where students could sign a large printed pledge that listed actions they can take to reduce food waste.
- Green Team students continued to observe and track food waste in the school cafeteria during each lunch period and each month reported to the district’s Food Services Manager.

Sustaining Green School 2017-18

Retiring Green Team staff advisor Laura Hoover-Sanders created a Green Team calendar which can be used as a guide for her successor.



Sustaining Green School 2018-19

- In October 2018, Westwood students participated in King County waste reduction and recycling workshops and learned the importance of properly sorting waste.
- The Green Team monitored lunchroom waste stations and food share table. To reduce contamination, the Green Team conducted regular classroom waste audits and shared the results with teachers and students in those classrooms.
- The school handed out Green Planet awards monthly to recognize green practices in classrooms.
- Green Team students monitored the school building and classrooms regularly to make sure doors and windows were closed to retain heat and that all lights and electronic equipment were off when not in use.
- Student volunteers participated in monthly clean-ups of the school campus to prevent stormwater pollution.
- Green Team students measured the flow rate of faucets throughout the school.
- In April 2019, at a school-wide assembly, the Green Team educated students about greenhouse gas emissions and shared strategies for reducing carbon emissions. Students pledged to act on one strategy, including recycling more, choosing reusable items instead of disposable items, carpooling to school, and turning off faucets, lights, and electronic equipment when not in use.
- Fifth-grade students calculated their carbon footprints and formed ideas on how to reduce their local and global impacts by taking actions at school and at home.

Sustaining Green School 2022-23

- The school restarted past waste reduction and recycling practices which had been paused during the pandemic.
- The fifth-grade class of 30 students formed a Green Team and created an informational slide show to share Green Team projects and duties.
- The team picked up garbage around campus on Fridays and helped younger students to correctly sort garbage and recyclable materials at lunch.



- Green Team students helped younger students make sure to set aside reusable metal utensils so they are not placed in garbage or recycling bins by mistake, and to correctly sort materials at lunchtime.
- The principal regularly made assembly announcements about Green School practices, and the Green Team leaders shared videos and reminders about conservation practices during Earth Week.

Awards

- In 2015, Westwood Elementary received the Washington Green School Leader Award, Pillar Two, for improving the health and wellness of students and staff.
- In 2018, Laura Hoover-Sanders won an Earth Hero at School Award.