



Willow Crest Elementary School

School district: Auburn

School location: Auburn

Began participating in Green Schools Program: October 2022

Level One of the Green Schools Program: June 2023

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Willow Crest opened its doors in September 2022, and signed up in October 2022 for Green Schools Program help to improve its recycling and organics collection program.
- In six months, Willow Crest went from a recycling rate of 37% to 44%.
- Staff leaders Ivory (Gabriel) Smith, an ELL specialist, and Mercedes Burnam, custodian, placed a recycling bin next to each garbage bin throughout the school, and posted a sticker from the Green Schools Program on each bin to show what materials can be placed in each.
- Ms. Smith started and led a student Green Team of fourth- and fifth-grade students who practiced presentations about recycling, and then presented in each classroom.
- Green Team members took turns monitoring recycling and waste collection stations in each hallway pod after lunch to inform students how to sort materials.
- Since the main contaminants in Willow Crest's green compost bins were plastic bags and plastic bottles, the Green Team reminded students to place only organics, including food scraps and napkins, in green compost bins, and to place empty plastic bottles in blue recycling bins.
- At staff meetings and in emails, teachers were asked to share information with their students about why recycling matters and what materials can be placed in recycling and organics bins.



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

- At lunch time, a food share basket was placed in each pod for unopened, packaged items and whole fruits from the school meal program, so students can place those items in the basket for other students to take.
- The school switched from compostable cardboard trays to reusable plastic trays. Reusable serving-ware was available in the staff breakroom, and some students used durable water bottles.
- To reduce paper use, many teachers used online resources, made double-sided copies, and set up classroom boxes for "good on one side" paper.
- The school custodians used non-toxic cleaning products.