

Discovery Elementary School

School District: Issaquah

School Location: Sammamish

Began participating in the Green Schools Program: In 2005-06, then again in April 2009

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

Level Two of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in February 2015

Level Three of the Green Schools Program: Achieved in May 2016

Sustaining Green School 2016-17:
Achieved in May 2017

Sustaining Green School 2017-18:
Achieved in April 2018

Sustaining Green School 2018-19:
Achieved in May 2019

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Discovery Elementary School ~~maintained a recycling rate of 57 percent~~ increased its recycling rate to 59 percent.
- The school hosted the King County Earth Challenge elementary school assembly program to educate students about waste reduction and recycling.
- In spring 2016, the school piloted durable utensils in the cafeteria to replace plastic disposable utensils. In 2017, Discovery eliminated plastic forks and instead used durable, washable metal utensils for all students who purchased hot lunches. Students from home were asked to bring their own utensils. When students forgot utensils, they received a note to take home as a reminder.
- The school promoted waste-free Wednesday lunches.
- Most classrooms used paper reuse trays for paper used only on one side.



Green School information booth at the family multicultural night event



Book swap during Literacy Night



Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

- With help from City of Issaquah, the school began collecting compostable materials in its lunchroom.
- To minimize food waste, in 2015-16 the Green Team created a video and posters encouraging students to only take the amount of food and milk they would eat or drink and to eat the foods and drinks they placed on their trays.
- Students monitored and placed stickers listing what can and can't be recycled on indoor and outdoor recycling containers throughout the school. All recycling, composting, and garbage containers were color-coded and placed next to each other in each room and areas of the school.
- The King County Green Schools Program trained student Green Team members to monitor lunchroom recycling stations. The students wore aprons from King County to help identify them as monitors in the lunchroom. Those students monitored the lunchroom stations and also regularly shared reminders about waste reduction and recycling with the school community.
- Discovery Elementary reduced the size of its outdoor garbage container from 8 yards picked up twice a week to 6 yards picked up once a week. This decreased the cost of garbage disposal by 58 percent.
- In 2015-16, with permission from Cedar Grove Composting, the school began diverting bathroom paper towels away from the landfill to the Cedar Grove Composting facility. The school also collected wax-coated cups in its compostable materials collection containers.
- Capri-Sun pouches were collected and sent to TerraCycle, which used the pouches to make new products.
- Compost buckets for snack food scraps were placed in all classrooms.
- All students had the opportunity to take part in the Discovery Great Green Challenge which included monthly activities to help students and families implement "green" actions in their homes.
- Discovery Elementary was recognized in the Guinness Book of World Records for the most plastic bottles – 657 pounds -- collected in an eight-hour period.
- Along with all schools in the Issaquah School District, Discovery's lunchroom eliminated the use of straws.
- With the help of kitchen staff, the school's lunchroom changed from using polystyrene trays to reusable plastic trays.



- The school sent reminder emails to staff on waste reduction and proper sorting of garbage and recyclable materials.
- The Be Green Club created PowerPoints with earth facts and green tips which were shared at lunches.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- Energy conservation labels were posted on light switches to remind staff and students to turn them off when not in use.
- The school created an energy conservation checklist for student "Power Rangers" to check off as a classroom job at the end of each day.
- Students participated in the Cool School Challenge by conducting energy audits of each classroom and providing each class with suggestions on how to reduce its carbon footprint.
- Green Team members presented energy conservation tips at staff meetings as well as energy conservation announcements throughout the year.
- The school included energy conservation reminders during the Green Day kickoff at the start of the school year.
- Green Team students calculated their carbon footprints at the beginning of the school year and planned to do that again at the end of the year to compare results. A carbon footprint exercise was added to the Green Team website.
- Employees attended the Level Two King County Green Schools Program orientation planned for Issaquah School District staff.
- Issaquah School District software automatically shut down computers in the evenings.
- The school's vending machine lights were permanently turned off.
- The school reminded all students and employees to dress appropriately for the weather to avoid adjusting thermostats.

Water Conservation and Pollution Prevention (Level Three)

- The Green Team presented Level Three Green School goals at a staff meeting in November 2015.
- Monthly morning announcements included Green Team conservation information, including tips on conserving water.



- Second- and fourth-grade students visited Mercer Slough and conducted experiments in class to learn about water conservation and the human impact on natural resources such as water.
- Green Team advisors shared grade level appropriate videos for classrooms to about water conservation and encouraged teachers to brainstorm with students about ways to conserve water at school and home.
- A first-grade teacher invited a guest presenter from the Living Building Foundation to teach students about conservation and sustainable building.
- Second-grade students learned about terrariums and aquariums.
- Green Team students:
 - Tested school faucets throughout the school building for water flow rates and shared their data with the custodian.
 - Created a water conservation sign to post above school sinks.
- Head custodian Wil Chromey:
 - Hung signs above all staff sinks to encourage turning off water when not in use.
 - Adjusted water flow to decrease school toilet water use.
 - Used microfiber flat mops in the lunchroom to clean lunch tables. The flat mops used less water and required less washing and drying than previous wet wash cloths, saving both water and energy.
- Water conservation signs, including the City contest winning student poster, were hung in the school.

Sustaining Green School recognition

To earn recognition as a Sustaining Green School, Discovery Elementary sustained and built on its Level One waste reduction and recycling practices and Level Two energy conservation practices and water conservation strategies. How the school built on its previous accomplishments each year is described below.

Sustaining Green School 2016-17

The school organized a book swap during the annual literacy night. Waste reduction and recycling stations were included at family events such as the back to school BBQ.

Sustaining Green School 2017-18



- The Be Green Club set up Crayola crayon and marker recycling boxes and signs for each classroom.
- The before and after school clubs began using durable reusable plates for snacks.

Sustaining Green School 2018-19

- Discovery Elementary participated in the waste-free Wednesday lunch competition in Issaquah District.
- School counselor Denise Darnell shared waste reduction, reuse, and recycling practices with all classrooms in 2018-19.
- To continually promote conservation practices, teachers taught students about the harmful impacts of plastic straws, plastic bags, and plastic bottles on the environment.
- An inventory was conducted in each classroom of waste-free, reusable party supplies and marker recycling buckets.

Awards

- Head custodian Wil Chromey received a 2016 Earth Hero at School award.
- Teachers Tasha Kirby and Sue McNamara received a King County Earth Heroes at School award in 2008 for guiding students to replace throwaway materials with washable tableware for classroom parties, starting a food scrap recycling program, and collecting plastic bags for recycling.