



## **French American School of Puget Sound**

**School district:** Private

**School location:** Mercer Island

**Began participating in Green Schools Program:** September 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 2014-15:** Achieved in May 2015

**Sustaining Green School 2019-20:** Achieved in June 2020

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

- Teachers adapted curricula to incorporate waste reduction and recycling reminders appropriate to each age level.
- The school increased its recycling rate from 44 percent to 52 percent, thanks to initiating collection of recyclable and compostable materials from classrooms.
- In winter 2014, an all-school assembly kicked off a paper towel reduction campaign. Students and staff were encouraged to use only one paper towel sheet when drying their hands. The student Green Team created posters about reducing paper towel use in classrooms.
- A note was sent home with each student to encourage families to pack lunches in durable containers and to reduce the amount of wasted food at lunch.
- Middle school students taught elementary students how to use the three different bins – recycling, compost, and garbage – in each classroom.
- In 2014-15, the student Green Team weighed lunch waste from several lunches in multiple classrooms each month. The team displayed the data on posters hung around the school.
- Signs were posted in every classroom to remind staff and students how to properly sort their waste.



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- Students organized a contest which involved weighing each classroom's garbage weekly for four weeks and graphing the results. The winning class reduced its garbage weight by 80 percent, and was awarded a ginkgo tree which they planted during a ceremony in the school garden.
- In 2012-13 the school began offering a hot lunch program with compostable plates and utensils.
- The staff kitchen is equipped with reusable plates, glasses, cups, and silverware to reduce waste from plastic and paper products.
- The school reduced paper by sending out its weekly newsletter electronically.
- In August 2012, in order to reduce paper use, the copier system was updated to include an option to send documents to the user's email inbox.
- Household alkaline batteries were collected at the school's front desk and a staff member disposes of them in an ecologically responsible way.

## **Energy conservation (Level Two)**

- Stickers were placed near light switches to remind students, staff and visitors to turn off the lights and electronics when they aren't needed.
- The school installed occupancy sensors to help conserve energy.
- Staff members were encouraged to keep doors and windows shut and to turn off lights when leaving rooms on campus.
- The thermostat system was programmed to turn off in the evenings and on weekends when the building is not in use.

## **Water conservation and pollution prevention (Level Three)**

- Low flow flush valves were installed in the bathrooms.
- Facilities staff monitored monthly utility invoices to identify, report, and solve water leaks.
- The school saved water by only running full loads of dishes with their "Energy Star" dishwashers.
- During extended school breaks, hot water and circulation pumps were turned off.



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- Students in each grade level learned about water sources and uses in different parts of the world, including the historical importance of water to the development of civilizations.
- Adult supervisors trained students in the preschool and kindergarten to conserve water when washing their hands.
- In 2015, teachers held classroom water conservation discussions with their students.
- In winter 2013, an all-school assembly was performed by fourth-grade students to educate staff and students about water conservation, and how to reduce food waste and paper towel use.
- In 2011, the school started a garden based on the science curriculum. With the help of a professional landscaper, the school selected native plants and organized them in six garden boxes, each representing different ecosystems.
- Students learned about the full cycle of life. For example, the children planted pumpkins and harvested them and made pumpkin muffins in the fall. In spring, they planted the pumpkin seeds they had harvested.
- The school installed two rainwater collectors for the garden, and used the collected rainwater to irrigate.
- Consistent with natural landscaping practices, no pesticides were used in the school garden.
- Maintenance staff applied mulch on school grounds to conserve water.
- Water-saving drip line irrigation systems were used for most of the school campus.
- Sprinklers were set to water only the lawn or garden and not sidewalks, driveways or gutters, and were turned on during times of day when evaporation is lowest.
- Facilities staff turned off water from areas of school property that are not currently used.



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## **Sustaining Green School recognition**

French American School of Puget Sound sustained its Level One waste reduction and recycling practices, Level Two energy conservation practices, and Level Three water conservation strategies. How the school built on its Level One through Three achievements each year is described below.

## **Sustaining Green School 2014-15**

- Students in the theater performance group designed a play about conserving water. The play was performed in May 2015 at an all-school assembly.
- Middle school students took a field trip to the Bullitt Center to learn about sustainable building design.

## **Sustaining Green School 2019-20**

- First- and third-grade students joined Earth Corps members to remove blackberry bushes and plant a tree at Island Crest Park. Students also were given a portion of the park to clean up.
- The school installed a bike rack in 2018 and encouraged students to ride bikes to school.
- The Climate Club ran an anti-idling campaign and maintained messages about no idling of vehicles throughout the school year.
- The school introduced a phone app to assist parents with carpooling via the school's website to allow parents to learn of other families living close by.
- The school continued to involve the entire school community in recycling batteries. Students, staff members, and parents dropped off used batteries in containers.
- The school promoted zero-waste lunch boxes in Winter 2020.
- The school cafeteria used compostable utensils and the staff lounge used reusable utensils and plates.



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- The Elementary and Middle School had built a composter and added a worm bin in 2015-16. For the March 2020 Science Fair, the technology teacher built a new composter and repaired the old one.
- All classes weighed recyclable and compostable materials as well as garbage during the week of the school's annual science fair in March 2020.
- Fourth-grade students distributed information to several classes to raise awareness about the importance of food waste reduction.
- Teachers attended the U.S. Green Schools conference in Portland, Oregon in March 2020.