



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Sunny Hills Elementary School

School District: Issaquah

School Location: Sammamish

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 May 2014

Level Three of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2015

Sustaining Green School 2015-16:
Achieved in May 2016

Sustaining Green School 2017-18:
Achieved in May 2018

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Sunny Hills maintained a 49 percent recycling rate.
- The school reduced its garbage pick-up from twice per week to once per week.
- With help from City of Issaquah, Sunny Hills launched a program to collect compostable materials in the lunchroom and staff lounge. The compostable materials were transported to Cedar Grove Composting.
- The school formed a staff and student Green Team to conduct waste reduction and recycling education and outreach. The team made and distributed recycling posters and conducted presentations in classrooms and at staff meetings about lunchroom recycling and composting.
- The student council gave presentations to teach their peers about recycling.



Teachers Jane Ulrich, Cami Przybylski, Kathy Dunn, and Cody Johansen accept King County Earth Heroes at School award in 2014.



Student cafeteria recycling monitors train on what is recyclable, compostable, and garbage at school.



Student cafeteria recycling monitors train on how to properly sort waste at school.



- The Green Team developed a website with skits and PA announcements posted online once every two weeks.
- To prepare for the new lunchroom composting, all teachers conducted an interactive review of composting with their classes and one teacher gave lunchroom presentations.
- Green Team and third-grade students formed a Waste Watchers team to monitor and assist others with sorting recyclable and compostable materials during lunchtime.
- The school participated in the King County's Earth Challenge assembly and student Waste Watchers were trained by a King County Green Schools Program representative in the lunchroom.
- The school promoted waste-free Wednesdays in the lunchroom and participated in the district-wide waste-free Wednesday challenge.
- The student council created scrap boxes for each classroom to collect paper used only one side. Staff members reduced paper use by eliminating paper newsletters and making double-sided copies.
- Along with all schools in the Issaquah School District, the school lunchroom eliminated straws and used durable trays that were washed and reused. When it was not possible to use durable trays, the lunchroom used compostable paper trays instead of polystyrene trays.
- The school shared information about its conservation improvements in several of its monthly newsletters.
- Color coded recycling containers were paired with trash cans in every room.
- Green Team students gave announcements and reminders on what belongs in each waste bin.
- Students and staff created mini video clips with waste reduction and recycling reminders for the school population.



Student Waste Watchers learn to how and why to properly sort waste from a King County Green Schools Program representative.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- Energy conservation stickers were placed on light switches to remind students and staff to turn off lights when leaving rooms.



- Student jobs were created to ensure that lights and electronics were turned off and blinds were closed to reduce energy consumption.
- Sunny Hills conserved energy by turning off or putting to sleep all electronics that were not in use.
- After-hours activities were centralized in the gym, library and multipurpose room to reduce heating and cooling in unoccupied areas.
- The school installed occupancy sensors in frequently used rooms.
- Staff and students were encouraged to dress appropriately for the weather rather than adjusting the thermostat settings.
- Energy conservation facts, tips, and reminders were shared weekly through e-newsletters, the school's website, and announcements.
- Energy use was monitored twice a year by teacher Cody Johansen.
- Fourth-grade Green Team students created and performed skits to encourage families to turn off their vehicle engines while waiting to pick up students after schools. An anti-idling PowerPoint presentation was shared in each classroom.
- Fifth-grade students competed in an anti-idling poster contest.

Water Conservation and Pollution Prevention (Level Three)

- The Green Team shared water conservation tips and facts during school announcements twice per week, and posted water conservation signs next to classroom sinks.
- School faucets had low-flow aerators installed to conserve water.
- Sunny Hills maintained a native plant garden with drought-resistant plants. The garden was certified as an official wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.
- Fourth-grade classes
 - Received classroom workshops focused on healthy soil and water.
 - Participated in "Healthy Watershed, Healthy World" classroom workshops focused on storm water pollution prevention.
 - Completed pollution prevention challenges at home where students tracked pollution prevention actions during a two week period.
- A speaker from Splash, a Seattle-based international non-profit organization, shared information with students and staff members about water quality and water use in Nepal and Ethiopia.



- Water conservation and pollution prevention was part of a PowerPoint presentation on school rules and expectations for students that was shared by all teachers with their classes at the start of the school year.
- Before doing laundry, kitchen staff members waited until all lunches were finished and all dish rags were ready for washing. Staff members were assigned to run the staff room dishwasher only when full.

Sustaining Green School recognition

- To earn recognition as a King County Green School, Sunny Hills sustained and built on its Level One through Level Three conservation practices.
- How the school achieved this each year is described below.

Sustaining Green School 2015-16

- Monthly intercom conservation announcements increased from once each month to once per week.
- Student Waste Watchers helped fellow students sort lunch waste at all three lunch periods instead of only at one or two periods as previously done.
- The fourth-grade team participated in a water conservation classroom workshop provided by Nature Vision and in a storm water pollution prevention classroom workshop provided by the City of Sammamish.
- The school's garden became a certified native plant garden.
- Green Team students made announcements about waste-free Wednesdays in the lunchroom and on the school intercom. The head custodian measured lunchroom waste and updated the Green Team advisors and students on the information.

Sustaining Green School 2017-18

- In fall 2017, with district support, the school kitchen began a weekly School Food Share Program in collaboration with Issaquah Food and Clothing Bank. Unopened, packaged items from the school cafeteria were picked up by the Issaquah Food Bank each week instead of being disposed.
- The Green Team began Crayola ColorCycle marker recycling by providing collection boxes and instructions to all classrooms.



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Awards

- The staff Green School team of Cody Johansen, Kathy Dunn, Cami Przybylski and Jane Ulrich received a 2014 King County Earth Heroes at School award for their leadership establishing daily green practices at Sunny Hills Elementary School.

For more information about the school's conservation achievements and participation in the Green Schools Program, contact:

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