



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Echo Lake Elementary School

School District: Shoreline

School Location: Shoreline

Began participating in Green Schools Program:
January 2012

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

Level Two of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in June 2014

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

Sustaining Green School 2015-16:
Achieved in May 2016

Sustaining Green School 2018-19:
Achieved in May 2019

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Echo Lake achieved a 41 percent recycling rate and increased its recycling rate to 58 percent in 2018-19
- In 2011-12, the school improved lunchroom recycling and began to collect compostable materials for transport to a composting facility.
- By promoting waste reduction and adding compostable materials collection to the school lunchroom, the school reduced the number of garbage dumpster pick-ups from once each week to less than twice each month.
- Recycling containers were located in the lunchroom and in every classroom. Recycling stickers listing what can and can't be recycled were placed on all recycling containers.



Second- and third-grade Eco Team members showcase Echo Lake's water conservation posters and pledges



Inside a lunchroom food scrap bin at Echo Lake



Bulletin board shows items that can be recycled



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- Eco Team students trained kindergarten through second-grade students and monitored lunchroom disposal stations to ensure proper recycling and waste disposal. They also created posters that were placed throughout the school to remind students about which materials can be recycled.
- A lunchroom share table was set up for unwanted and unopened foods.
- Students took ownership of the recycling process by emptying classroom recycling bins into larger hallway bins for the custodian.
- Two school assemblies and regular PA announcements were used to promote the school's waste reduction and recycling efforts. The third through sixth-grade Eco Team made art projects using juice pouches collected at school.
- Eco Team students created a waste reduction and recycling video, "Wizard of Garbage," that was shown at an all-school assembly.
- The Eco Team promoted waste-free lunches which focused on teaching students to take only the food they will eat and to eat the food they take.
- To reduce waste, the school lunchroom used durable trays and eliminated the use of straws.
- Echo Lake provided laptops and digital assignments to students to reduce paper use.
- Beginning in April 2012, the bi-monthly school newsletter became digital to be sent in an email format.
- On Earth Day 2014, the Eco Team:
 - partnered with a QFC grocery store, which loaned the school 600 paper grocery bags on which students wrote environmental conservation pledges, which were later given out at the store;



Inside a lunchroom recycling bin at Echo Lake



The Green Team analyzed lunch time waste



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- created posters with four simple ideas that students can do to help the earth; and
- posted local eco-activities for families.
- Second grade classes started a worm bin to collect compostable materials from their classroom.
- To save paper, the school used Google Documents whenever possible.
- New document cameras and whiteboards helped reduce the number of handouts.
- All unwanted paper supplies were placed in a central location for others to reuse.
- Students watched a documentary that followed one person's trash and recycling from curbside to the landfill or recycling plant.
- The student Eco Team created a *Jeopardy*-style game that was played during lunch to teach students and staff about waste reduction best practices.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- The Eco Team posted energy conservation signs by all light switches to remind staff and students to turn off the lights when leaving rooms.
- Echo Lake permanently turned off the display light in the school's vending machines to reduce energy consumption.
- The classroom and office thermostats were managed by the school district and set between 68-70 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Staff and students were encouraged through newsletters and staff bulletins to dress appropriately for the weather rather than adjusting the thermostat settings.
- Energy conservation tips and recommendations were shared by the Eco Team and school principal during announcements and staff bulletins.
- YMCA after-school clubs were consolidated into the school's gym to reduce heating in unoccupied areas.
- Staff members kept window drapes and blinds open as often as possible to use natural light.



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- Staff members were reminded to close drapes and blinds at the end of the school day to conserve energy.
- Fourth-grade students completed a science electricity kit and were responsible for sharing energy conservation reminders with the school community.
- In 2013, students participated in the Seattle City Light Shrinking Bigfoot energy conservation calendar contest.

Water Conservation and Pollution Prevention (Level Three)

- Students chose facts from a King County water conservation handout and created hallway posters with pictures to go along with each fact.
- Students and staff members made water droplet signs with pledges about specific ways they planned to conserve water at home and at school.
- The school partnered with a local QFC to display in store windows water conservation facts and pledges written on small signs that looked like water droplets. Shoppers had opportunities to fill out water conservation pledges to be displayed in the store windows.
- Fifth-grade classrooms toured the Brightwater Treatment Plant and created a poster to be displayed at school about what they had learned.
- The school only ran dishwashing and clothes-washing machines if they were full.
- Echo Lake placed “turn off the faucet” signs above sinks to remind students and staff to conserve water.
- Green Team students measured the water flow of school faucets in April 2015.
- The school committed to not watering outdoor spaces during long breaks.
- Sixth-grade students sold Brown Bear Car Wash tickets as a fundraiser rather than hold their own charity car wash, which could pollute surface water.

Sustaining Green School recognition

Echo Lake Elementary sustained and built on 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.



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Sustaining Green School 2015-16

- The school color-coded its recycling containers in the lunchroom to help students properly sort recyclables and materials for compost.
- Shari Wennik and the student Eco Team trained the rest of the school on what can and cannot be composted or recycled.
- Eco Team members monitored lunchroom recycling stations. As a result, the school saw a huge improvement in its lunchroom recycling program.
- Through Crayola's ColorCycle program, Echo Lake began recycling the markers in each classroom.
- During Earth Week, students participated in a program based on the book *We Are Extremely Very Good Recyclers*. The book provides recycling tips as well as a tree poster. The tree poster was hung up in the lunchroom where students posted and kept track of their recycling projects.

Sustaining Green School 2018-19

- Teacher Mr. Atencio worked with second- through sixth-grade students to create a core Eco Leadership team. The team promoted a “pride in place and pride in self” school culture and worked to revitalize sustainable behaviors.
- The sixth-grade Eco Leadership team members served as supervisors and trained younger students, leading three waste reduction training sessions focused on why reducing waste and recycling are important and practicing correct sorting of unwanted materials into garbage and recycling bins.
- During school lunches, the Eco Leadership team served as table captains to teach others how to clean up after themselves and to practice how to sort properly.