



McMicken Heights Elementary School

School district: Highline

School location: SeaTac

Began participating in Green Schools Program:
March 2012

Level One of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2013

Level Two of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2019

Level Three of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in June 2020

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- The school achieved a 47 percent recycling rate.
- At the beginning of each school year, students learned about school expectations including correct sorting of recyclable materials in classrooms and the lunchroom.
- Students promoted recycling at school using announcements, posters, and an all-school assembly presentation.
- The school received a King County waste reduction and recycling assembly in fall 2012 and fall 2019.
- Fourth-grade students participated in King County classroom workshops where they learned about making earth-smart choices.
- Throughout 2018-19 and 2019-20, Ecowarriors club members helped students with correct sorting of recyclable materials in classrooms and monitored lunchroom waste stations for contamination.



Ecowarriors student team conducted energy audits to assess energy use and encourage conservation



Ecowarriors student team prepared classroom presentations on energy conservation



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

- To reduce paper use, a copy limit was established and staff members made double-sided copies. In January 2019, teacher Jennifer Walsh set up a G.O.O.S (Good on One Side) paper box in the employee workroom.
- The garden club, which grows pesticide-free organic plants, composted the garden waste on-site.
- Teachers and students collected used markers to be recycled through the Crayola ColorCycle program.
- In 2018-19, the student council made announcements at an all-school assembly and over the PA system to reinforce waste reduction and recycling practices.
- Staff members received reminders and tips about waste reduction and recycling via email and daily bulletins.
- In 2018-29, Kindergarten students cleaned up litter on school grounds and wrote a letter to parents about recycling right and reducing contamination.
- In fall 2019, students volunteered in the weekly School Clean-up Club to pick up litter on school grounds.
- In 2018-19, third-grade students wrote and presented persuasive speeches on how and why to reduce ocean plastic pollution by limiting single-use plastics.
- Teachers encouraged students to bring reusable water bottles and maintained a shared storage space for reusing classroom decorations, posters, and supplies.
- To help reduce plastic waste, Ecowarrior club members made announcements about bringing a reusable water bottle to school and gave Cougar Bucks to students who did so. They also created posters and shared The Story of Bottled Water video in all classrooms.
- Recycling reminders and tips were shared at each lunch and through the school newsletter, staff bulletins, and staff emails.



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- In spring 2019, teacher Jennifer Walsh announced the school's energy conservation goals and shared information about how to conserve energy.
- The Ecowarriors club conducted presentations in classrooms about energy conservation, and completed energy audits throughout the school year to assess and encourage energy conservation practices.
- During Earth Week 2019, students and staff members were encouraged to sign the school's conservation pledge located in the main hallway.
- Third-grade students participated in Brain Pop Junior, online animated curriculum aligned with state education standards, and watched YouTube videos about energy use, energy conservation, and climate change.
- Signs were displayed next to automatic light switches to encourage students and staff to manually turn off lights when not in use.
- Teachers assigned a student "light watcher" role in each classroom to help promote energy conservation practices.
- The school building was designed to take advantage of daylight to reduce the need for electricity. Permanent signs were displayed to explain how access to natural light in the school building helps to conserve energy.
- Vending machine display lights were permanently turned off in the staff lounge.
- Custodians shut down all lights and electronic equipment before weekends and school breaks.

Water Conservation and Pollution Prevention (Level Three)

- Teacher Jennifer Walsh shared past waste reduction, recycling, and energy conservation accomplishments during an all-school assembly in fall 2019.
- In November 2019, during a staff meeting, school employees participated in a Green Schools Program training on conservation practices.
- At all-school assemblies, Ecowarrior club students shared presentations about water conservation and encouraged students to reduce litter to prevent surface water pollution.



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Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

- Third-grade students studied different types of pollution, including water pollution, and then created and displayed posters to educate the school about pollution and actions they could take to prevent it.
- Third-grade students wrote opinion papers on litter and collected data on the amount of litter found around the school before and after Clean-up Club.
- In April 2020, during COVID-19, students and teachers were encouraged to conserve water at home and to sign a water conservation pledge on Google Classroom.
- To celebrate Earth Week, librarian Vivienne Alcantara included climate change and water conservation messages in library programs. Based on grade level, students learned about protecting honeybees, water and energy conservation, waste reduction, natural resources and habitats, pollution prevention, and climate change.
- Students participated in Earth Week reading assignments through the school's digital library and Google Classroom. To protect the planet and reduce climate change impacts, students recommended picking up litter, recycling, turning off faucets to conserve water, and turning off lights to conserve energy.
- Kitchen manager Nancy Parriot initiated and monitored water conservation practices in the school kitchen.
- Hot water and circulation pumps were turned off during extended school breaks.
- In fall 2019, nurse Julie Nguyen shared recommended techniques for handwashing and water conservation at an all-school assembly and visited individual classrooms to demonstrate these practices.
- Water conservation signs were posted near all sinks and water fountains.
- The school has low-flow toilets and automatic faucets.
- Highline School District inspected all irrigation systems in Spring 2020 and made repairs immediately when problems were identified.
- The school used a Rain Bird irrigation controller to set an irrigation schedule. Only sport fields were irrigated. The district landscaped with drought-tolerant plants which do not require irrigation.