



North Hill Elementary School

School district: Highline

School location: Des Moines

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
October 2008

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

Level Two of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2010

Level Three of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2011

Sustaining Green School recognition:
Achieved in

- **2015-16**
- **2016-17**
- **2017-18**
- **2018-19**
- **2019-20**



Students cut up old plastic bags and weave them into more durable grocery bags



Fifth grade students display their model Future Cities made from recycled and reused materials

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- North Hill Elementary maintained a recycling rate of 51 percent.
- The school Ecology Club conducted weekly classroom waste audits and left on the door of each classroom a Recycling Report Card with suggestions for improving waste reduction and recycling. Classrooms that were recycling successfully were provided with a “green classroom” certificate of recognition.
- Students made posters to promote recycling. Student volunteers presented to 18 classrooms to teach students why waste reduction and recycling are important and what can and can’t be recycled.



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

- Classroom recycling bins with signs listing what can and can't be recycled were placed throughout the school.
- North Hill hosted the King County Schools Program waste reduction and recycling assembly and classroom workshops.
- Several worm bins were added to help the school compost food scraps, and teachers incorporated care and feeding of the worms into their curriculum.
- With support from teacher Sherry Edwards and custodian Mary Hanson, the school initiated milk carton recycling and recycled about 425 milk cartons per day. To kick off milk carton recycling, the custodian placed several hundred milk cartons on a tarp in the courtyard and spoke with students about the program.
- Throughout the school, one-sided copies were placed in bins or trays for reuse.
- North Hill initiated recycling of printer cartridges, cell phones, and Capri Sun juice pouches. These efforts reduced waste and generated revenue for the Green Team.
- Teacher Sherry Edwards wrote a PTSA grant proposal and received funds to purchase North Hill Green Team t-shirts. Every Monday the Green Team wears the t-shirts in support of North Hill's green efforts.
- The school continued to reduce paper by making double-sided copies and using one-sided paper instead of new paper whenever possible. Students and staff used so much paper that had been printed on one side that parents were asked to bring in paper that's been used on one side.
- In February 2017 the Ecology Club presented to all classrooms about school waste reduction and recycling practices.
- Students used posters and regular lunchtime announcements which included a question-and-answer session to demonstrate proper recycling practices and speak about why recycling and waste reduction are important.
- The school's Ecology Club met weekly and completed various assignments, including monitoring energy and recycling in every classroom, collecting juice pouches for recycling collection by TerraCycle, and collecting plastic bags and then crocheting them together to make durable grocery bags.



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- The Ecology Club monitored energy use in each classroom and provided reminders to turn off lights and electronic equipment when not in use.
- Teachers were encouraged to turn off at least one bank of lights in their classrooms whenever adequate daylight was available.
- The Green Team conducted a spot check of the entire school to ensure that all classrooms, offices, bathrooms, and other spaces had energy conservation signs.
- Signs were posted on light switches to encourage staff members and students to turn off lights in unoccupied spaces.
- Fluorescent bulbs were removed from the pop machine in the staff lounge.
- Incandescent bulbs were replaced by fluorescent bulbs throughout the school.
- Custodian Brian Parker installed motion sensor activated lights in classrooms, offices, and other shared spaces and programmed the hallway lights to activate at 50 percent capacity to help conserve energy.
- Highline School District tracked the school's energy use and restricted the use of personal heaters, refrigerators, and other appliances in offices and classrooms.

Water Conservation (Level Three)

- From 2008 to 2011, North Hill reduced its domestic water use by almost 12,000 gallons per month. The school reported its water use in monthly school newsletters.
- To encourage students to turn off the faucet when not in use, the school posted water conservation signs on all sinks that don't have automatic shut-off faucets.
- In the fall and spring, Ecology Club members conducted water audits to look for water leaks on school grounds.
- Students studied water quality, salmon, and toured a local wastewater treatment plant.
- Staff and students signed water conservation pledges.
- North Hill collected roof run-off water, which provided all water needed for the courtyard native plant rain garden. With a grant from the school building fund, water quality testing materials were purchased to test the quality of the collected water.
- The school conserved water by using faucet aerators and timed sprinklers.



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Sustaining Green School recognition • Recycle • Rethink

The school 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 did this each year is described below.

Sustaining Green School 2015-16

- The student Ecology Club performed audits of rooms throughout the school to ensure best practices for conservation were being used.
- A King County Green Team specialist provided workshops on environmental stewardship in fifth- and sixth-grade classrooms.
- To divert food scraps and food soiled paper from the landfill, the school community started collecting compostable materials during lunch periods.
- A native plant garden was installed in the former courtyard and classrooms used the garden as an environmental education learning tool.

Sustaining Green School 2016-17

- The school's monthly newsletter included an Earth Matters section devoted to conservation facts and tips.
- First- and second-grade students hosted Native Plant Society workshops.
- The school hosted weekly waste-free Wednesdays in spring 2017. The school newsletter included an article on how to pack a waste-free lunch. The principal made announcements prior to waste-free Wednesdays to remind students to pack a waste-free lunch and follow the "take only what you can eat and eat what you take" guidelines. Students also made posters to display around the school to promote waste-free Wednesdays.

Sustaining Green School 2017-18

- Signs were installed in the drive-through to encourage drivers to turn off cars, reduce idle time, and close gaps between cars during pick-up and drop-off.
- The Ecology Club met with Aviation High's Ecology Club to share their conservation successes.



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Sustaining Green School 2018-19

Use • Recycle • Rethink

- In fall 2018, teacher Sherry Edwards trained Ecology Club students to conduct classroom waste audits, encourage correct sorting, and reduce contamination. Students made announcements and posters to promote correct waste sorting.
- In fall 2018, the King County Green Schools Program presented at an all-staff meeting to discuss Green School practices.
- Fifth-grade students participated in a Green Team workshop where students learned about the importance of recycling and waste reduction and brainstormed ways to share what they learned with other students.
- Students designed Future Cities models using only reused and recycled materials. The models were displayed throughout the school.
- To reduce food waste, the school set up a lunchroom share table on which students could place or take packaged, unopened foods from the school lunch program.
- Staff members collected compostable materials in the staff lounge for transfer to a regional composting facility.
- In spring 2019, the school initiated a pilot program to collect compostable materials in the lunchroom for third, fourth, and fifth grades.
- Sixth-grade students attended Waskowitz Outdoor School and learned about watersheds, water pollution prevention, and water conservation.
- Students completed a salmon project to learn about the salmon life cycle, salmon habitat needs, and water pollution prevention strategies. They also helped maintain a tank to raise and later release Coho salmon.
- North Hill staff members collected used markers to be recycled through the Crayola ColorCycle program,
- The school collected unwanted used candles and donated them to Waskowitz Outdoor School to be used as fire starters.
- Coats were collected to be donated during the fall Coat Drive.



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Sustaining Green School 2019-20

- In fall 2019, students and staff members collected plastic bags and film for recycling through the Trex Recycling Program. Trex uses those materials to produce outdoor decking and fencing.
- Assistant principal May Ovalles initiated a food scrap collection pilot project to help students better understand food waste and to reduce the amount of garbage going to the landfill.
- Fourth- and fifth-grade student volunteers helped their fellow students sort leftover food scraps into a designated container, weighed the collected food scraps, and shared the results with students and staff members.
- The school used the school newsletter to share tips about food waste reduction strategies.

Award

Teacher Sherry Edwards received a King County Earth Hero at School award in April 2009 for her contributions to North Hill's sustainability practices.