



## **Northwood Elementary School**

**School district:** Mercer Island School District

**School location:** Mercer Island

**Began participating in the Green Schools Program:** August 2016

**Level One of the Green Schools Program:** Achieved in May 2017

**Level Two of the Green Schools Program:** Achieved in May 2018

**Level Three of the Green Schools Program:** Achieved in May 2018

**Sustaining Green School:** Achieved in

- 2018-19
- 2019-20

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

- Northwood Elementary School achieved a 42 percent recycling rate, and then increased its recycling rate to 60 percent in 2018-19.
- During the school's start of the year kick off, administrators put together a grade-level competition to see who could waste the least amount of food and keep the cafeteria the cleanest at lunchtime. Rankings were posted and successes were celebrated regularly.
- Green Team members learned how to correctly sort recyclable materials, and made posters about how reducing waste and recycling benefit local communities.
- Waste-free lunches were promoted. A cafeteria share table was set up so students could place unopened packaged foods from the school lunch program for donation to a nonprofit.
- Durable trays and utensils were used in the cafeteria to reduce waste. To reduce paper use, classroom handouts were limited, teacher websites were used to post assignments, and double-sided copies were made.
- The Green Team made regular weekly announcements about practicing the 4R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink).



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## Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- The Green Team made monthly announcements to share energy conservation tips and facts as well as data on the school's energy use.
- Signs were posted near all equipment reminding students and staff members to turn off computers and other equipment when not in use.
- To educate and encourage energy conservation practices, students signed an energy conservation pledge.
- Northwood Elementary became an EPA Energy Star certified school.
- Teachers ensured lights were turned off in unoccupied spaces and used daylight instead of electric lights whenever possible.
- Northwood encouraged all staff members to limit use of personal appliances in offices and classrooms.
- All light fixtures used fluorescent or LED bulbs.
- Northwood regularly encouraged students and staff to dress appropriately for the weather rather than adjust thermostats.
- Teachers ensured that windows and doors were closed during and after school to keep heat in and limit the use of the thermostat.

## Water Conservation and Pollution Prevention (Level Three)

- Water conservation tips and information about the school's water use were shared in the school's newsletter.
- Green Team members posted water conservation signs near all bathroom and classroom sinks to encourage students to turn off the water when not in use.
- Northwood organized a pledge campaign for students and staff members about litter reduction and how to keep storm drains clear of litter.
- Teachers incorporated into curriculum information and discussions about water use and sources in different parts of the world.
- Northwood collected rain water and used a water-saving irrigation system to irrigate school grounds and gardens.



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- The Green Team made monthly announcements to educate students about the school rain gardens and how they can help keep water clean.
- Students were encouraged to report leaking faucets to school custodians.
- Water efficient fixtures were selected and installed.

## **Sustaining Green School Recognition**

Northwood 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 accomplished this is described below.

### **Sustaining Green School 2018-19**

- The Green Team shared its 2018-19 waste reduction goal with the school community and educated the community about reducing waste and recycling.
- The Green Team created two videos on how to reduce waste and sort unwanted items correctly at school, and how to waste less
- Energy and water conservation tips were shared with families regularly via email.

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

- The Green Team created new recycling posters for the lunchroom in September, and worked in the cafeteria to help guide their fellow students to correctly sort materials and to place unopened, packaged food items from the school lunch program aside to donate to OSL, a nonprofit that provides meals to community members in need.
- In October 2019, Green Team students conducted a campaign to encourage composting of pumpkins after Halloween.
- At the end of October 2019, a King County Green Schools Program representative led a waste sort for staff members.
- In November 2019, the team conducted a Waste Free Lunch campaign. Students worked in teams to create a Waste Free Lunch menu and shared food waste facts with their peers.



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- In December 2019, students watched the video “The Big Sort.”
- In February 2020, students focused on ways they could be kind to the earth, connected to Northwood’s Character Trait at School – Kindness.
- At the end of April 2020, the school virtually celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day. Each day of the week centered around a different theme: Monday focused on energy conservation, Tuesday on what ways students were grateful for the Earth, Wednesday on showing support for conservation practices by wearing green or blue, Thursday on reducing waste and recycling, and Friday on a mindful neighborhood walk to observe the world.