



Tahoma High School

School District: Tahoma

School Location: Maple Valley

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
November 2008

Level One of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in April 2010

Level Two of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in April 2012

Level Three of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2016

Sustaining Green School 2017-18:
Achieved in May 2018

Sustaining Green School 2018-19:
Achieved in May 2019



Earth Hero at School Award
Cort Hammond, student, receives the King County award in April 2011.



Students participate in creative upcycling activities during an Earth Week celebration

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Tahoma High increased its recycling rate from 17 percent in 2008 to 53 percent in 2018 by expanding and improving waste reduction and recycling practices.
- Starting in fall 2011, students and staff members began collecting food scraps and food soiled paper to be sent to a regional composting facility.
- The school decreased its garbage dumpster size and switched to on-call garbage collection service, saving an average of \$700 per month.
- Tahoma High diverted 91 cubic yards of recyclable materials and 29 cubic yards of compostable materials from the landfill each month.
- In 2009-10, the school started paper recycling in classrooms and office spaces. Recycling bins were placed in the lunchroom for milk cartons, juice boxes, plastic bottles and aluminum cans.



- To reduce paper use, the principal's welcome back letter to staff was sent by e-mail. The letter focused on sustainability goals and actions.
- Education efforts included waste reduction and recycling presentations at staff meetings and all-school assemblies.
- Students initiated a plastic bottle cap recycling program through Aveda (a company that uses the caps to make products) and also began collecting plastic bags to bring to grocery stores for recycling.
- In the summer of 2009, students, staff members, and the district Superintendent participated in the Sustainability for Education conference in New York.
- Students in the Global Academy program took field trips to Cedar Grove Composting and King County's Cedar Hills Regional Landfill to learn about waste and sustainable actions they can take.
- In 2015-16, the school maintained a vegetable garden. Lettuce from the garden was used in special education classes and sold to the school community in the spring. All funds raised were used to buy materials to maintain the garden.
- Green Team students created and hung posters in the lunchroom to help remind students and staff about what can and can't be recycled and composted.
- In 2015-16, Green Team students trained special education students to serve as lunchroom monitors.
- Regular school announcements were made to remind students and staff how to sort their waste. The Green Team created a video about their school's conservation practices and teachers regularly reminded students to place recyclable items in classroom recycling bins.
- In fall 2016, Tahoma High conducted a 12 Days of Sustainability Program to promote waste reduction, recycling, and other conservation practices.
- Since moving to a new facility in 2017-18, the Green Team set up additional containers to collect recyclable materials, compostable materials, and garbage.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- Tahoma High reduced its energy use by 32 percent between 2008 and 2015.
- The school developed and implemented an energy conservation communication plan that includes print and electronic media for students, staff, and parents.



- The Green Team encouraged students to dress appropriately for the weather rather than adjust the school's thermostat settings.
- All computers and other electronic equipment were turned off after each day.
- In 2016, the school participated in the People, Power, Planet (PPP) program offered by McKinstry, the district's resource conservation management company. To earn power points, the school conducted energy audits in classrooms, created educational posters about energy conservation, invited students to sign pledges to reduce energy use, and displayed quotes about energy conservation around the school.
- All regularly occupied rooms had automatic light sensors. School policy advocated turning off lights in unoccupied rooms and using daylight instead of artificial lighting whenever possible.
- Window blinds or curtains were shut at the end of the day to maintain temperature and opened in the morning to let in daylight.
- The school was inspected for potential energy waste on a regular basis, and issues were addressed promptly by maintenance staff.
- The HVAC system is programmable, and staff followed specific weekend and vacation shutdown procedures to conserve energy.
- The district worked to reduce use of portable heaters, microwaves, fans, and other small appliances in classrooms.
- Students and staff were regularly reminded about energy conservation practices through classroom video announcements, turn off the lights stickers, energy conservation signs, a People, Power, Planet display board and emails to staff.
- The new school facility included motion activated lights that were programmed to turn off in unoccupied spaces. All classroom also featured light harvesters which dim lights in relation to the level of natural daylight.

Water Conservation and Pollution Prevention (Level Three)

- Regular all-school announcements were made to remind students and staff members to conserve water.
- Tahoma High conducted 12 Days of Sustainability that included announcements and information about water conservation.
- Students worked with Shadow Lake Bog to create a native plant garden.



- The school placed Turn Off Faucet signs next to all sinks as reminders to turn off the faucet while soaping hands.
- In 2013, the school installed a rain garden with informational signs. The school collected rain water in containers near the vegetable garden and used this harvested water to irrigate the produce.
- The school continued to check for and report leaky faucets so they could be replaced as soon as possible.
- Student Green Team member Cort Hammond invited the head of the Washington Department of Ecology to address the Green Team about emissions created by idling cars. A “No Idling” campaign was launched in 2012.
- The new school facility included motion activated sinks and a water bottle filling station to help conserve water.

Sustaining Green School recognition

Tahoma High 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.

Sustaining Green School 2017-18

- To establish Green School efforts at the new Tahoma High School facility, Green Team students surveyed the school and identified ways to improve sustainability around campus.
- Based on their observations, the team created and displayed signs to promote waste reduction and recycling, energy conservation, and water conservation. The school also made announcements via the school's news program to encourage students and staff members to recycle, to conserve energy and water, and to report leaks.

Sustaining Green School 2018-19

- Environmental Science students learned about environmental restoration by volunteering at Elk Run Farm and Shadow Lake Nature Preserve.
- Custodian Rick Bergum posted updated signs to help students and staff members sort waste correctly.



- Green Team students created a bulletin board to promote recycling, waste reduction, energy conservation, and water conservation.
- G.O.O.S (Good on One Side) boxes were set up at printing stations to encourage students and staff to use the blank sides of unwanted paper printed only on one side.
- Green Team students and advisor Crystal Asplund collaborated with ASB to plan an Earth Week celebration.
 - Each day was celebrated with a school spirit day and engaging activities. Earth Week celebrations were promoted via morning announcements, the Daily Bulletin, schoolwide text alerts, signs, and message boards.
 - Green Team and ASB students made an Earth Week pledge wall to encourage students to commit to reduce waste, recycle, conserve energy and water, and prevent pollution.
 - Students participated in Upcycling Day in which students created art and a variety of products using old materials, hats off to Mother Earth Day (students wore hats), Water Conservation Day, Energy Conservation Day, and Twin Day (teaming up against pollution).
 - Students made bird feeders with old, empty milk cartons.
- Students were encouraged to bring their own reusable water bottles instead of purchasing single-use plastic water bottles.
- Sean Kelly (supervisor of operations) and Crystal Asplund (Green Team advisor) sent email reminders to staff encouraging them to turn off lights and equipment, unplug appliances, turn off faucets, and check for leaks before school breaks.
- To conserve energy, teachers used daylight and low light whenever possible and worked with custodians to close all blinds before weekends.
- All teachers added the People. Power. Planet pledge to their Google classroom website and encouraged students to pledge to reduce waste, recycle, and conserve energy.

Awards

- The Green Team won the President's Environmental Youth Award from Region 10 of the United States Environmental Protection Agency in 2010.
- Student Cort Hammond received a King County Earth Hero at School award in April 2011.



Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

- In April 2012, Tahoma High received a Green Leader School award from the State of Washington.
- Molly Bricker, student, received a King County Earth Heroes at School award in May 2016.