



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Challenger Elementary School

School District: Issaquah

School Location: Issaquah

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
2005-06, then again in September 2009

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

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

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

Sustaining Green School 2016-17:
Achieved in February 2017

Sustaining Green School 2017-18:
Achieved in May 2018



Teacher Hank Klein made magnets out of recycled orange juice can lids.

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Challenger Elementary School increased its recycling rate to 55 percent.
- Hank Klein, teacher, and Michael Getty, custodian, established a lunchroom recycling program that collects food scraps and other compostable materials. As a result, lunchroom garbage was reduced by 50 percent and lunchroom recycling increased by 60 percent. The City of Issaquah provided assistance with the new lunchroom recycling program.
- Mr. Klein formed a student Waste Watchers group to monitor the recycling program and promote proper recycling practices. 65 percent of the student population participates in the Waste Watchers group.
- Teachers and student Waste Watchers trained new students and kindergarteners during the first weeks of the school year on waste reduction and recycling practices. Education assistants who oversaw the lunchroom reminded all students of proper sorting practices throughout the year.



- The school worked with middle school technology students to create a recycling training video for new students. The video incorporated information on recycling food scraps, milk cartons, juice boxes and paper, and included suggestions for reducing and reusing products.
- In addition to recycling paper, aluminum cans and plastic bottles, Challenger recycled batteries, cell phones, and ink cartridges.
- In January 2014, Care to Share tubs for leftover sealed food and beverages were added to each of the three lunches.
- Issaquah School District provided a recycling container next to the garbage bin located at the school entrance to increase recycling from families and visitors.
- Teacher Marianne Weights presented at a staff meeting to encourage staff to serve as role models to students for recycling and composting behaviors.
- Challenger promoted waste reduction practices through monthly articles in the school's electronic newsletter.
- To reduce paper waste, each classroom used a GOOS (Good on One Side) box to collect paper that could be used on the other side.
- Each classroom collected paper towels and other compostable materials to be composted at a regional composting facility.
- Students hung educational and instructional signs near all waste containers.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- Energy conservation signs were posted on light switches, computers and monitors to remind staff and students to turn them off when not in use.
- Students from each classroom were assigned as energy conservation Power Rangers and followed a checklist to ensure that lights were turned off and computers shut down at appropriate times.
- The school modified the King County Green Team Energy Pledge and distributed it to teachers to implement with their students.
- The vending machine in the staff lounge was equipped with a vending miser to reduce energy consumption.
- Timers were used in the library, computer lab and classrooms to automatically turn off lights when the rooms are unoccupied.



- Thermostats were programmed for 68-70 degrees, and timers controlled portable classroom electric heaters to allow the heat to go down when those areas are not in use.
- Challenger promoted energy conservation practices through monthly articles in the school's electronic newsletter.

Water Conservation and Pollution Prevention (Level Three)

- During lunches in March 2016 students signed water conservation pledges which were then displayed in the school atrium.
- In partnership with King County's Don't Flush Trouble wastewater campaign, signs reminding students and staff members that toilets are not trash cans and that only the three Ps (pee, poop, and toilet paper) should be flushed down the toilet were posted in all school restrooms.
- Water conservation announcements were made during school lunch periods and posted in bathrooms.
- Mr. Klein's classes took a field trip to Issaquah Fish Hatchery which promotes healthy waterways.
- In 2017, third grade classes received the City of Sammamish's Healthy Watershed, Healthy World workshop.
- Water flow from each faucet was measured and any water leaks or missing faucet aerators were reported to the district for repair.

Sustaining Green School recognition

- Challenger 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.

Sustaining Green School 2016-17

- The Green Team partnered with the after-school student Comet Club to promote recycling and composting before and after school.



- Teacher Hank Klein created a training video to share in each classroom outlining Green School practices at Challenger and what students and staff members can do to help conserve natural resources and protect the environment.
- Mr. Klein completed a cost comparison and case study on how school cafeterias can switch from disposable to reusable metal utensils. He presented the case study during a district-wide staff Green Team meeting and shared it with district staff members in charge of purchasing for school kitchens and cafeterias. The school tested reusable utensils during a pilot.
- All school portables switched to LED light bulbs to conserve energy.

Sustaining Green School 2017-18

- The PTA STEM fair included a Green School information and activity booth which focused on waste reduction and recycling and distributed “Go Green” magnets to families.
- Staff members switched from promoting Waste-free Wednesdays in the cafeteria to daily Waste Free Weekdays. Mr. Klein monitored school progress by weighing cafeteria waste each Monday and results were shared through weekly comparison graphs hung in the cafeteria and sent to teachers via email.
- The Green Team began a Crayola marker recycling program.

Awards

- 2009 King County Earth Hero at School award: Teacher Hank Klein and custodian Michael Getty received this award for establishing a cafeteria recycling program.
- 2016 King County Earth Hero at School award: Teacher Hank Klein received this award for reducing waste in the school cafeteria and leading conservation efforts at the school.

For more information about this school’s conservation achievements and participation in the Green Schools Program, contact:



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