



## Issaquah Middle School

**School District:** Issaquah

**School Location:** Issaquah

**Began participating in the Green School Program:**  
2005-06

**Level One of the Green Schools Program:**  
Achieved in November 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 2014-15:**  
Achieved in May 2015

**Sustaining Green School 2015-16:**  
Achieved in May 2016

**Sustaining Green School 2016-17:**  
Achieved in May 2017

**Sustaining Green School 2017-18:**  
Achieved in May 2018

**Sustaining Green school 2018-19:**  
Achieved in May 2019

### Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- In 2018, the school achieved a 73 percent recycling rate through on-going recycling education and awareness.
- More than 30 students volunteered to serve as lunch time recycling monitors and educate fellow students on how and what to recycle.
- Green Team advisor Kurt Wieland assisted students with proper sorting at lunchroom recycling stations.



Olga Haider and Michelle Pickard, teachers, receive award from King County in April 2011.



Students empty classroom recyclable materials into larger containers.



A King County Representative helped the student Green Team perform a waste audit.



# Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

---

- Green Team recycling tips were included in the school announcements weekly.
- A representative of the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County, along with researchers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, visited the Green Team to educate students about where trash ends up.
- In 2006, with assistance from City of Issaquah, the school piloted a food scrap collection program that served as a model for other schools in the district.
- Thanks to improved recycling and the addition of food scrap collection, the school's garbage container size decreased from 24 to 8 cubic yards per week.
- The school's average annual garbage collection cost from 2000 - 2006 before recycling began was \$13,824. As recycling improved, the annual garbage cost averaged \$8,749 – a cost savings of 37 percent.
- The school's weekly recycling volume increased from about 7 cubic yards to 22 cubic yards, including 7 cubic yards of food scraps and food soiled paper collected for composting.
- Students from the Associated Student Body (ASB) collected the school's paper and plastic recyclable materials twice each week.
- The school's kitchen staff replaced disposable trays with durable trays that are washed and reused after each lunch.
- Students verified that there is a recycling bin in every classroom and placed stickers that list what can and can't be recycled on all recycling containers.
- ASB students and staff members participated in a recycling education skit that was performed at the first assembly of the school year.
- In January 2010, the Issaquah Press wrote an article about [Issaquah Middle School's recycling outreach efforts and holiday recycling](#) (external).
- The National Junior Honor Society and ASB organized and carried out a locker clean-out in which students recycled and donated their school supplies at the end of the school year.

## Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- Green Team students posted signs near lights and electronics reminding staff and students to turn them off when not in use.
- Green Team participants calculated their personal carbon footprints.



# *Success Story*

*Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink*

---

- Students made “green tip of the week” announcements over the PA system to promote energy conservation practices such as keeping windows and doors closed when the heat is on and closing window blinds at the end of the day.
- Natural gas consumption decreased by 27 percent, from a high of 41,370 therms per year to an eight-year annual average of 30,515 therms.
- Electricity consumption decreased by 22 percent, from an annual high of 957,240 kWh to an eight-year annual average of 745,975 kWh.

## **Water Conservation and Pollution Prevention (Level Three)**

- All seventh-grade science students participated in a workshop sponsored by Cascade Water Alliance, an organization of municipalities providing clean, safe water for residents and businesses. During the workshops, students
  - Learned where the school’s drinking water comes from, where it ends up after it goes down the drain, and where the school is located in the watershed.
  - Measured the flow of faucets in the science and humanities classrooms equipped with two gallon-per minute aerators.
  - Measured the flow of these faucets after being refitted with high-efficiency half gallon per minute aerators.
  - Pledged to conserve water at home and at school.
- Green Team students and Issaquah School District plumbers installed high-efficiency aerators, donated by Cascade Water Alliance, throughout the school.
- With support from a King County Solid Waste Division grant and Cedar Grove Composting, Green Team advisors and students constructed, filled, and planted an organic garden to demonstrate ways to conserve water. The project demonstrated how:
  - Waste can be turned into fertilizer with the aid of on-site worm bins.
  - Organic gardening uses compost to grow nutritive vegetables.
  - Organic matter from the garden can be composted.
- The Green Team designed and posted water conservation posters next to all the sinks on campus and in common areas.
- Throughout the school year, Green Team members broadcast water conservation tips through skits and weekly school-wide announcements.



# *Success Story*

*Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink*

---

- Cascade Water Alliance donated a water-conserving irrigation system to the school, consisting of a cistern connected to retrieve run-off from the roof of the school building and a solar-powered pump to deliver filtered water to drip tubing placed in the raised garden bed. Students learned about harnessing alternative energy and sustainable methods of irrigation from this demonstration project.
- The Green Team took walking field trips to the local Issaquah Creek to conduct turbidity tests of the water near run-off entry points along the creek.
- All students and staff brought only reusable water bottles to school on Water Conservation Day, as part of Earth Week Activities organized by the ASB.
- Sixth-grade science classes studied Lake Sammamish and looked at how invasive species compare with native plants.
- Seventh-grade science students learned about ocean currents and gyres, and studied plastic garbage waste in the ocean. They studied catastrophic events and investigated global warming and climate change.
- Eighth-grade science students participated in King County's "Earth Impact" and "Think Twice" classroom workshops.
- The Green Team planted worms and bulbs, and used the campus gardens as learning tools to understand the importance of soil conservation.

## **Sustaining Green School Recognition**

- Issaquah Middle School sustained 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 practices each year is described below.

## **Sustaining Green School 2014-15**

- In 2014-15, Green Team students made three all-school video announcements with messages, tips, and reminders about waste reduction, recycling and conservation.
- Three Green Team students attended a Sustainability Ambassadors summit and shared the information they learned with the rest of the school Green Team.



# *Success Story*

*Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink*

---

- For Earth Day 2015, the Green Team organized and presented an all-school assembly at which they gave “Green Awards” to six teachers who embraced green practices in their classrooms and curriculums. The assembly also included an interactive recycling trivia and relay race.
- The school included a public service announcement project in the TV production/visual media class, an elective open to grades six through eight.
- Students were required to choose a topic related to environmental conservation and to educate the school community using visual media tools. The public service announcements were shared with the school community through the morning newscast program. The goal was to continually educate or remind students and staff members about how to be better stewards of the planet.
- In 2014, the school began collecting foil juice pouches in the lunchroom through the TerraCycle program, which uses them to make new products. This helped maintain a lunchroom recycling rate of 90 percent.

## **Sustaining Green School 2015-16**

- In January 2016, a representative from King County worked with the Green Team to complete a waste audit and share the results with the school.
- The Green Team completed a Plant Amnesty project. They saved trees by removing ones located on current Tiger Mountain High School property before those trees were destroyed to make way for the school’s future athletic fields. Trees were donated for replanting elsewhere.

## **Sustaining Green School 2016-17**

- Sixth-and eighth-grade classes participated in King County's waste reduction and recycling classroom workshops.
- Some classrooms began to collect paper towels for commercial composting.

## **Sustaining Green School 2017-18**

- The Green Team participated in local invasive species removal projects such as pulling all the invasive Scotch broom along the railroad trail behind the school. Afterwards students planted fir trees in newly cleared land.





King County Green Schools Program

# *Success Story*

*Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink*

---

- In October 2017, Issaquah MS student representatives participated in the Sustainability Summit.

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

- The school participated in the district-wide cafeteria waste-free lunch challenge.
- Classes received King County Consumption Junction classroom workshops.
- Green Team and ASB students co-hosted an Earth Day assembly.
- The school installed a new school garden. To reduce water use, the top layer of soil was replaced with Cedar Grove compost and soaker hoses were installed.
- In March 2019, the school constructed a nature trail and planted native plants in a small Douglas fir woodland located on the north side of the campus.

One class worked with Issaquah High and Briarwood Elementary on a project to encourage students to use reusable water bottles. Students produced educational information and shared them via Seesaw website. **A leader in the district**

- Issaquah Middle served as a model for other schools in the district by piloting food scrap recycling collection.
- The school was the first school in its district to complete Level Two of the Green Schools Program.

## **Awards**

- Teachers Olga Haider and Michele Pickard received King County Earth Heroes at School awards in April 2011 for their leadership in coordinating completion of Levels One, Two and Three of the Green Schools Program.
- Issaquah Middle School received a King County Earth Heroes at School award in April 2009 for its successful recycling program, which was due to dozens of committed staff and students that fine-tuned an existing program in 2006, enhanced it in 2007 and expanded it once again in 2008.