



King County Green Schools Program

Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

Lakeridge Elementary School

School District: Mercer Island

School Location: Mercer Island

Began participating in the Green Schools Program:
December 2009

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

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

Level Three of the Green Schools Program:
Achieved in May 2013

Sustaining Green School 2015-16:
Achieved in February 2016

Sustaining Green School 2016-17:
Achieved in May 2017

Sustaining Green School 2017-18:
Achieved in May 2018

Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Lakeridge maintained a recycling rate of 52 percent.
- Students used posters and announcements to educate the school community about how to sort waste correctly.
- The Green Team placed stickers listing what can and can't be recycled on classroom and lunchroom recycling bins.
- Parent volunteers introduced a waste-free lunch initiative to educate students and their families about choosing reusable containers and buying in bulk to reduce packaging waste in lunches from home.
- The school reduced lunchtime garbage volume by recycling plastic bottles, aluminum cans, juice boxes, and milk cartons.



Student show off their 3-D posters



Parent volunteers Carolyn Berkley Counihan and Nancy Weil at 2010 Mercer Island Leap for Green Fair.



Lakeridge Recycling Club.



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- Lakeridge began lunchroom collection of food scraps, which were collected each week by Cedar Grove Composting. The school's weekly lunchroom trash volume was cut from 700 pounds to 85 pounds.
- Student and parent volunteers monitored the food scrap bins when students lined up to throw out their scraps at the end of each lunch.
- Green Team members wore King County Green Team aprons to identify themselves as waste station monitors.
- At the annual fundraising breakfast in 2013, Lakeridge generated only a single container of landfill trash after feeding close to 400 attendees.
- The PTA mandated that compostable utensils be used at all-school events, such as Bingo night, fundraising breakfast, and the fall picnic. Parent and Green Team volunteers were assigned to assist with proper sorting and disposal of the waste at each event.
- In 2012-13, Green Team students collected bottle caps that each classroom used to create bottle-cap mosaics to display in the school library.
- The PTA purchased reusable water jug containers to discourage disposable water bottles and to encourage school groups to use the water jugs with durable or compostable cups at school events.
- Classroom parents were encouraged to host parties that generated less waste by using finger foods, unpackaged items, and reusable decorations.
- Prior to class parties, the Green Team delivered compostable utensils, plates, and cups with a yard waste bag and instructions to each classroom.



Green Team members helping students sort during lunch.



Students working in the school garden.



Students working on art for their waste less food pledge wall.



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- Lakeridge ordered beginning-of-the-year student school supplies in bulk. Parents paid a set fee and the school supplies were delivered to each classroom, thereby avoiding the packaging and energy waste involved in each student traveling to a store and buying school supplies separately.

Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- Green Team members patrolled classrooms to ensure all lights and equipment was turned off when not in use.
- The district received a grant from Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to use software to analyze energy use. Thanks to parent volunteer and district Green Team member, Mark Li, the energy conservation analysis was accomplished using monthly data reports for gas and electrical meters provided by PSE.
- Lakeridge kept staff members informed of their energy conservation progress by publishing and posting the school's energy use data.
- On the PTA website, the school informed parents and staff about the monetary cost of its energy use and how to reduce energy consumption both at home and at school.
- For the week surrounding Earth Day in April 2011, students read a "tip of the day" on how to conserve energy.
- Lakeridge enabled sensors that detect movement and sound in each classroom to automatically turn off the lights when the room is empty.
- The school's vending machine display lights were permanently turned off.
- Incandescent lights were replaced with fluorescent bulbs throughout the school.
- Through the school newspaper and via email, Lakeridge parents and staff members were notified about energy conservation efforts.
- With support from students, custodians, parents, faculty, and the principal, the school established a schoolwide conservation theme of "Together We Can Save Energy!"
- Lakeridge participated in the district-wide PSE Green Power Challenge. The PTA staffed tables at school events and published articles in the school newsletter to educate and recruit families for participation. Thirty-six Lakeridge families signed up for the challenge, thereby earning \$360 for the Green Team.
- Environmental attorney David L. Benson presented at a monthly Green Team meeting on energy and its ramifications for the planet.



- In 2015-16 all exterior lights were switched to LED.

Water Conservation and Pollution Prevention (Level Three)

- Students made morning announcements with tips on reducing water pollution, avoiding disposable, single-use water bottles, and encouraging water conservation.
- Green Team students tested school water faucets for drips and malfunctioning equipment. They reported their findings to the head custodian.
- Third- and fifth-grade students participated in a watershed marine unit.
- Green Team students and their parents applied storm drain stencils reading “Dump No Waste, Drains to Sound” on all outdoor school drains.
- The Lakeridge Learning Garden, which the Garden Committee completed in spring 2011, included areas for each grade level to plant and maintain.
- The school’s Healthy Ways to School Program encouraged students and their families to walk, bike, carpool or take the bus to school once each week in order to reduce their carbon footprint.

Sustaining Green School recognition

- Lakeridge Elementary School sustained and built on its Level One waste reduction and recycling practices, Level Two energy conservation practices, and Level Three water conservation and pollution prevention strategies.
- How the school did this each year is described below.

Sustaining Green School 2015-16

- Students created signs to remind the school about best conservation practices such as packing lunches with reusable and recyclable materials and strategies to conserve water and energy.
- In September 2015, Lakeridge hosted the King County Earth Challenge assembly which taught students about waste reduction and recycling practices.
- In the December 2015 parent newsletter, the Green Team educated parents about the benefits of repurposing old items and of making gifts from recyclable and used materials. Students created gifts and other items made from discarded materials and certificates were awarded to the top designs.
- The school participated in a clothing donation drive.



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- The PTA hosted zero waste holiday and school-wide events at which only compostable and recyclable materials were used.

Sustaining Green School 2016-17

- The Green Team created a video with the help of parent volunteer Nancy Weill to promote green and sustainable practices.
- Ms. Weil and teacher Heather McLyman submitted an application for the U.S. Green Ribbon School program.
- For Earth Week 2017, the Green Team created a video focused on ocean plastics and what to do about them. Video: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=GZG9Ndr8Mxo>.

Sustaining Green School 2017-18

- The Green Team started a petition in the school and community to reduce the amount of polystyrene (also called Styrofoam) and proposed a Styrofoam ban for Mercer Island. Students put together educational materials about the environmental benefits of reducing Styrofoam waste and shared them with the community.
- The Green Team created a “waste less” pledge consisting of three food waste reduction actions. Students made a food waste pledge wall where students signed their names. The project was presented during Earth Week along with the tally of total pledges.

Award

- Lakeridge Elementary School received a US Green Ribbon School award in 2017.

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

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