

The Green Wire

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Conservation Reports

In January every school was e-mailed a Conservation Report reflecting energy use for the last year. The report was designed to help identify opportunities and to help motivate the school community to increase efforts to save money and power. With the school year only half over, there is still time for most schools to achieve an overall reduction in energy usage, even if use has been allowed to recently increase.

Here is the summary of the conservation report findings:

- ◆ Six super schools are already saving energy this year.
- ◆ Four schools are only a little way from saving.
- ◆ Nine schools have had significant increases in energy usage. For these schools conservation is critical, since they are paying high energy bills.

Electricity and Natural Gas Costs

One good reason to save energy this winter is to save money. In one year the District spends over \$1.5 million on electricity and natural gas. Every 5% in savings translates to \$75,000.

Energy History Fact

In 1978, President Carter asked the nation to set thermostats no higher than 65 degrees and limit discretionary driving. Many schools accepted the challenge and saved energy. In some places, saving energy and bundling up is still a way of life.

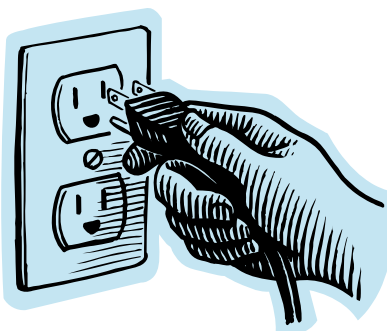


These girls attend school in China where their classroom is unheated.



This teacher bundles up before students arrive, when the school is first heated.

Laptops, Desktops, Printers and Plugs



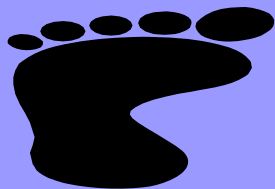
This year let's change our habits. Bending and stretching helps keep us fit and can save energy too. Don't take the easy way out and turn off electronics- instead unplug them. Many appliances stay warm and ready unless they are actually unplugged. Some, like cell phone charges continue to drain away energy even when not attached to a cell phone. So the solution is to bend and stretch and reach for the plug when you leave work. First thing upon

arriving at work you can decide what items need to be used. Plug in each item, if and when it is needed throughout the day. Teachers may assign students to this task and share the responsibility.

For more information, please contact Resource Conservation Manager

Bonnie Meyer (360) 596-8566

OSD's Carbon Footprint Bloats



Here at the OSD, we want to decrease our impact on the planet. One way to measure impact is our carbon footprint. When we measured our carbon footprint from 9/2007 through 9/2008 we were in for a rude awakening. The CO₂ Emissions from our activities had increased by at least 15%. We calculate this number based on the amount of natural gas and electricity we use multiplied by the environmental impact of their production and distribution.

In 2008, we generated an extra 631 tons of carbon emissions. Now we really need to work harder to reduce our



impact on the earth. We can reduce our carbon footprint by taking responsibility for energy and resource use in our schools and classrooms.

Each school has a report

- ◆ In February each school was sent a carbon footprint report. For copies or more information please call Bonnie Meyer at 596-8566.

⚡ The Conservation Challenge ⚡

Every OSD school is invited to participate in the 2008-2009 Conservation Challenge incentive program. Cash incentives will be awarded to each school that shows a net utility cost savings compared to last year's utility bills. Your school can earn points for reducing waste, recycling, conserving energy, reducing water consumption, and promoting environmental education and stewardship.



Here are examples of super Conservation Challenge Activities:

- ◆ Document that each classroom uses the checklist below.
- ◆ Ask the Head Custodian to turn down the maximum heat for the school.
- ◆ Assign student helpers to assist in daily classroom turn-off procedures.
- ◆ Start a Food to Flowers food composting program.

Classroom Check

Beware of the Energy Thief

Over the Mid-Winter break prepare each room to save energy by making sure you aren't allowing the *energy thief* in by using unnecessary power.

Turn off or unplug :

- ◆ Chargers for phones and appliances
- ◆ Computers
- ◆ Overhead Projectors
- ◆ Televisions
- ◆ Lights
- ◆ Kitchen Appliances
- ◆ Coffee Makers
- ◆ Refrigerators
- ◆ Space Heaters

Also:

- ◆ Close curtains or blinds
- ◆ Take out recycling and composting



Food to Flowers Takes Over Hansen



This January students and staff at Hansen Elementary School launched a program to turn food and paper waste into compost. The *Food to Flowers* Program, developed by the Thurston County Department of Water and Waste Management, is part of Hansen's conservation

program. All students saw a special presentation followed by a lunch sorting demonstration by student volunteers.



The new program takes food, paper and milk cartons to be composted into a rich soil amendment. Students learned that our garbage now travels by truck and train to a large landfill 240 miles away. Sorted food waste from the school will now be taken instead to Silver Springs Organics, in Thurston County. Transportation costs will be lower and the food will be made into reusable compost.

- ◆ Fifth grade student volunteers from Mr. Watters' class and Green Team parents are monitoring lunches to help students decide where to toss items. The fifth graders use tongs to remove incorrectly sorted items and place them into the right container to keep the compost uncontaminated.
- ◆ Principal Ernie Rascon, watched students deftly sort their waste and said that he is very proud of the girls and boys who are helping care for the earth.
- ◆ Head Custodian Cheryl Cregar, who sets up the sorting line every day, says that it's worth the trouble. She was glad to see how carefully students sorted through and placed their materials in the correct containers.
- ◆ Ms. Cregar provides bins for student helpers to fill with used paper towels collected in each classroom. LeMay, Incorporated, our recycling and composting hauling company, supplied individual classroom bins for this task.
- ◆ According to LeMay's Recycling Coordinator Emmett Brown, *Food to Flowers* is a Certified Green Program, designed to help the school be environmentally conscious and to help lower garbage disposal rates.
- ◆ A special thank you to the hard working composting team: Principal Mr. Rascon, Teacher Mr. Michael Watters and his fifth grade volunteers, parent Ms. Holly Reeves, Head Custodian Ms. Cheryl Cregar, Night Custodian Mr. Corey Greene, Kitchen Manager Ms. Penny Henry, Education and Outreach Specialist Ms. Allyson Ruppenthal, Thurston County Department of Water and Waste Management, and Recycling Coordinator, Mr. Emmett Brown, LeMay, Inc.



What goes into the food composting bins?

The most important item is food: leftovers of all kinds, including meats, orange peels, bones, gravy, milk cartons, paper napkins and worn-out paper bags. Unlike your home compost or worm bin, the new food composting program can accept items that are difficult to compost. Students using compost bins try not to waste food. If they are not able to eat unopened fruit or food they may bring it home for someone else to enjoy.

How the sorting line works

Students sort materials at lunch. Each school is a little different. Hansen has a five step process:

1. Milk containers and soup bowls are drained and straws removed.
2. Milk cartons, napkins and food go into the food and paper composting bin.
3. Drinking straws, plastic and Styrofoam go into the garbage.
4. Cans, bottles and yogurt containers go into the "Commingled" Recycling clear-stream container.
5. Utensils, bowls and trays are stacked by the dishwasher.

Congratulations to schools starting food composting programs in February:

- ◆ Centennial Elementary School
- ◆ Olympia High School



Students eat lunch in a chilly room after conservation measures are adopted in the 1970's.

Terry Husseman Sustainable School Awards

This annual program in Washington provides an opportunity to show your success with environmental stewardship. The awards program is coordinated by the Washington Department of Ecology and the application deadline is **February 26, 2009**. Find all the details for the Terry Husseman Sustainable School Awards at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/terryhusseman.html>

For information on the awards program, criteria, or ideas to foster sustainability in your school, contact the Awards Coordinator, Michelle Payne, mdav461@ecy.wa.gov or (360) 407-6129.

Grants and Financial Aid Compilation

The region 10 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offers a compilation of "Grants for Environmental Education in the Northwest." This resource contains details about over fifty granters, including what they do and do not cover. For a copy, contact the local EPA office at (206) 553-4973 or 1-800-424-4EPA.

Grants and Contests Teaching Funding Opportunities

The **Captain Planet Foundation** offers funding for youth environmental projects. Their objective is to encourage innovative programs that empower youth to work individually and collectively to solve environmental problems in their neighborhoods and communities. They offer small grants of \$500 or less, as well as a limited number of grant awards of from \$500 to \$2,500. Applicants must be at least 18 years old to submit a proposal. For information go to:

<http://captainplanetfoundation.org> Deadlines for submitting grant applications are June 30, September 30, December 31, and **March 31, 2009**.

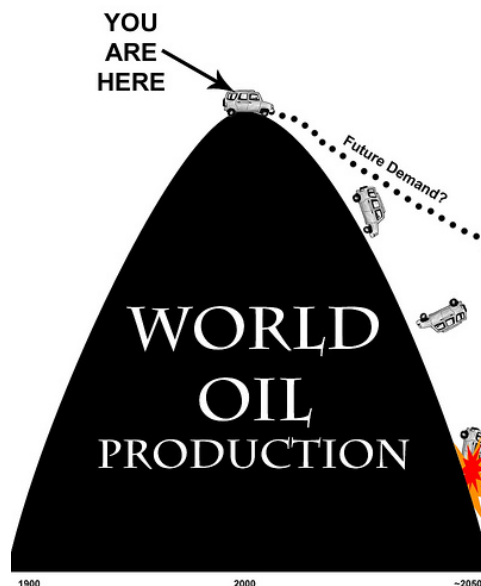
The **Igniting Creative Energy National Student Challenge** is an educational competition designed to encourage students to learn more about energy conservation and the environment. Entries must show understanding of what an individual, family or group can do to make a difference in their home or community. Ideas may be expressed in the form of a documented science project, essay, story, artwork, photograph, music, video or web site. See link for more details:

<http://www.ignitingcreativeenergy.org/> Entries are due by **March 13, 2009**.

The **Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge** is designed to: engage students in identifying and solving local environmental problems; utilize their creativity, and to involve their community. Problems or issues that students choose should be local and of manageable size for middle school students to take on. It is not essential that the solution be carried out to full completion, but the process should be started and some results collected. The *Challenge* is also aimed at promoting good use of science practice. Teams should consist of a teacher or other adult mentor and two or three students. The mentor can enter multiple teams into the challenge, but each team should have its own unique solution and results, and may choose to work on different local environmental problems. Entry forms are available at:

<http://www.wecanchangetheworldchallenge.com> Entries must be received by **March 15, 2009**.

Just Do One, at <http://www.JustDoOne.org> is an online community for sustainable living that has issued a global call for personal green solutions. The Just Do One organization invites ideas summarized in short YouTube-style videos. The organization will share the entries online, and the best video entry, as judged by an expert panel, will win \$5,000. Video entries may be up to three minutes in length. Entries will be accepted until **March 1, 2009**.



Take Just Ten Steps

1. Adopt building temperature set points
2. Keep windows and doors closed when the heating/cooling is on
3. Keep HVAC vents and grills unobstructed
4. Use window blinds during the day to help heat/cool
5. Close window blinds when rooms are unoccupied
6. Don't tamper with thermostats
7. Use overrides for heating and cooling after school hours
8. Minimize points of entry when heating and cooling
9. Report maintenance items to the building head custodian
10. Dress appropriately for the season

Adapted from Kent School District RCM Program



Olympia School District

Resource Conservation Program
1113 Legion Way SE Room 300
Olympia, WA 98501

Bonnie Meyer
Resource Conservation Manager
360-596-8566
http://osd.wednet.edu/schools/resource_conservation/main

Answers to Conservation Questions



Q:What happens when I open the window in the winter?

A: Cold air rushes in while warm air rushes out. The thermostat registers that the room is too cool and forces more hot air into the room. The hot air goes out the window and the heater works harder to replace it.

Here is what to do instead of opening the window:

- ◆ Close the blinds or curtains on rare days when sunshine overheats the room.
- ◆ Shed a layer of clothing.
- ◆ Ask the custodian to check the temperature gauge to make sure it is not malfunctioning.

Q: Does it make any difference if I set the temperature at 68 or 69 degrees?

A: For every degree you lower your heat in the 60-degree to 70-degree range, you'll save up to 5% on heating costs. Wear warm clothing like a sweater and set your thermostat to 68 degrees or lower during the day and evening, health permitting. Setting the thermostat back to 55 degrees at night or when leaving for an extended time can save 5-20% of your heating costs.

Q: What does it take for my school to participate in an off-site composting program?

A: Schools may participate if they meet these criteria:

1. Students and staff must agree to sort waste, and the utility must agree to provide the service.
2. Thurston County Waste Reduction staff or OSD's Resource Conservation Manager must provide training in the form of 1/2 hour interactive presentations to the school community.
3. A sorting station must be set-up in the lunch room.
4. For the first two weeks the lunch line must be monitored to help students with sorting techniques.
5. The hauler must provide bins and take the food waste to the composting facility.
6. After the food is composted, the loop is completed when the compost is applied to a garden where it helps amend the soil and grow healthy plants.

