

Cool School Challenge



The **Cool School Challenge** engages students, teachers, and school districts to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions school-wide. Through improved energy efficiency, reduced consumption, increased recycling and changes in transportation choices, *Challenge* participants will learn how simple actions, taken together, can create a world of difference.

Cool School Challenge Goals:

- Educate young people, and by proxy their families, about climate change and everyday actions they can take to reduce their local and global impact;
- Reduce carbon dioxide emissions and other greenhouse gas emissions in and around schools;
- Encourage student leadership and empowerment;
- Develop a community of teachers and students working together to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Foster a new generation of environmental/air quality advocates.



"My goal with the Cool School Challenge is to show that instead of trying to save money by cutting school programs, you can save money by reducing energy costs and waste in each classroom." - 12th grade student shown here plugging electronics into a power strip.

Who can participate?

The *Cool School Challenge* can be administered by science, math or other teachers, administrators, and student leaders in grades 3-12. These "Challenge Coaches" train and support student teams as they implement the program at your school.



"The Cool School Challenge is really fun and it does a lot to help save the environment," said a 4th grade student shown here implementing his school's recycling program with his classmates.

How it works:

With the guidance of a "Challenge Coach," student teams:

- learn how to **conduct a classroom energy audit** and identify major sources of CO₂ emissions and opportunities for shrinking them;
- recruit other classrooms into the *Challenge*, conduct audits for those classrooms, and based on findings, **set a CO₂ reduction goal**;
- **create an action plan** and timeline for achieving that goal;
- **calculate the emissions, kilowatt hours and dollars saved** as a result of the program; and
- **share findings** with participating teachers, administrators, peers and on the *Cool School Challenge* website.

Cool School Challenge Successes!

Since Fall of 2007:

- Participants have reported potential greenhouse gas **reductions of more than 1.8 million lbs. of CO₂**.
- Over **2,300 students** have been engaged as "Challenge Leaders."
- Nearly **100 schools** are participating across Washington State, as well as in Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New York, Oregon, California and Dubai.
- **\$22,500 saved** on electricity bills at one participating school.

"The Challenge was an **opportunity** to decrease our carbon footprint by making small **changes** like turning off lights and power strips. Not only did the students learn from this experience but even teachers confessed they had no idea these changes could **make a difference**."
-10th Grade Student

The Cool School Challenge program components include:

- **an online classroom carbon reduction toolkit**
- **a classroom carbon calculator**
- **promotional materials for schools**
- **teacher training workshops**
- **a website full of activities and educational resources**

For more information about the Cool School Challenge, upcoming workshops and more, visit: www.coolschoolchallenge.org or contact Katie Fleming, at KatieF@re-sources.org or 360-733-8307.



Whatcom County Community Energy Challenge Collaboration:

The combined efforts of two local non-profits, the Opportunity Council and Sustainable Connections, have created a one-stop-shop for energy efficiency, providing homes and businesses the information, technical expertise, financial assistance and quality assurance to cut back energy use and start saving. A consortium of Whatcom County partners are collaborating to bring the *Cool School Challenge* and the *Community Energy Challenge* to Whatcom County schools. Participating schools will realize energy savings and students will bring the energy efficiency message home to their families – all helping to make Whatcom County the leading energy efficient community in America! Visit www.communityenergychallenge.org for more information.

In addition to the suite of resources already provided by the *Cool School Challenge* program, Whatcom County partners are offering **\$200 stipends for participating teacher "Challenge Coaches"** and **energy efficiency toolkits** to help their school get started.

Whatcom County Cool School Challenge and Community Energy Challenge Partners:

City of Bellingham, the EPA Climate Showcase Grant, Northwest Clean Air Agency, Puget Sound Energy, RE Sources for Sustainable Communities, Sustainable Connections, and the Whatcom County Solid Waste Division

The Cool School Challenge was developed by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency in partnership with Puget Sound Energy and the Northwest Clean Air Agency.