

Winter 2009

**Quality Learning
Every Day
In Every Classroom
For Every Child**

*One cannot foresee
the world in which
the child we
educate will live.*

John Dewey

Problem solving differs from creating, though both matter, the vast changes required for creating a regenerative society will not be achieved just by reacting to crises after they arise. They will require inspiration, aspiration, imagination, patience, perseverance, and no small amount of humility.

Peter Senge
The Necessary Revolution

Creating a Better Future Learning in the 21st Century

The Tahoma School District is committed to educating responsible citizens who will contribute in positive ways to the local and world community. We believe that one of the most critical issues facing our young people is the issue of sustainability. If our environment is to support future generations, then our young people must have the knowledge, skills and ability to find creative solutions to the problems we have created and make choices today that preserve and protect tomorrow's world. We believe that sustainability education must be integral to our curriculum. To this end, we are creating a scope and sequence of units beginning in kindergarten and culminating in grade 12 that use the environment as a context for learning, investigate environmental challenges, promote critical and creative thinking, and incorporate a call to action where students contribute to improving the local and world environment. Students must encounter the environment in personal ways through field experiences, learn strategies for decision making and problem solving, and work collaboratively to solve complex problems that challenge the well-being of our world.



A Glimpse into the Tahoma Sustainability Curriculum

Grade 3 Puget Sound Communities

How can we contribute to preserving and protecting our local ecology while practicing the skills of community contributors? (Salmon cycle, dangers to salmon, problem solving thinking skill, community service projects)

Grade 7 Sustaining Our World Water Resources

What are the world water issues and what can we do as concerned citizens to preserve and protect our environment? (Worldwide water access and quality, sustainability, global challenges and solutions, improving our local environment- Green Schools, Outdoor learning sites)

Grade 9 Sounding off on the Puget Sound

What is the state of our Puget Sound and what can we do as concerned citizens to raise awareness of local issues and to take action steps? (Water quality, interdependence, cultural concerns, current legislation, "Sounding Off" community awareness projects)

Grade 12 Humans and the Environment

How do we influence future generations to make sustainable choices regarding our local environment? (Sustainability and environmental footprints, position papers, Choices for Tomorrow projects)

Students must acquire thinking skills and Habits of Mind that support sustainable choices for the future. Our curriculum is designed to investigate real world challenges, teach thinking skills and Habits of Mind, and provide for a call to action where our students practice citizenship through community contributions.

Tahoma District Outcomes

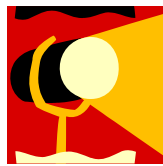
Self-Directed Learners
Collaborative Workers
Effective Communicators
Community Contributors
Quality Producers
Complex Thinkers

The story of the Energy-Climate Era doesn't stop with the perfect storm of hot, flat, and crowded. The convergence is driving those five big problems – energy supply and demand, petrodicatorship, climate change, energy poverty, and biodiversity loss – well past their tipping points

Thomas Friedman
Hot, Flat, and Crowded

The Call to Action

At each grade level, exploring issues and points of view culminates in a *call to action*. Students extend their learning and engage as active participants of a democratic society to impact their school, local community, state, nation or world around an important sustainability issue. Students hone their skills to inform and influence authentic audiences and positively impact the world in which they live.



A Curriculum Spotlight

Outdoor Academy

This year long integrated program uses the natural environment and field experiences to provide a common focus for student learning in science, language arts, and health and fitness at the high school level. Outdoor Academy develops connections between students and the natural world, engaging them in high-interest outdoor activities like fly fishing, rock climbing, and stream restoration.

Humans and Nature

- Why does nature call to us?
- What forms do these relationships take?
- What is the significance of stewardship in the relationship between humans and nature?
- What is our responsibility to safeguard nature from ourselves?

The program fosters through practice, discussion and action a sense of the delicate relationship between man and nature. The overall goal is to ignite a sense of thoughtful and active stewardship in our students.

There are four curriculum units in the Outdoor Academy year. These include *Man and Nature*, *Equilibrium*, *Insight*, and *Self-Reliance*. Each unit is framed by essential questions and identifies specific Habits of Mind and thinking skills for instruction.

What You Will See in Tahoma Classrooms

Thinking and Problem Solving

- ◆ Learning is focused on key concepts and skills.
- ◆ Habits of Mind are explicitly identified and taught.

Effective Engaged Learners

- ◆ Students can identify and discuss the what and why of their learning.
- ◆ Teachers consistently use best instructional practices.
- ◆ Students receive frequent feedback on their learning and see examples of quality work.
- ◆ Students have authentic audiences for their work.

Lifelong Learning

- ◆ Projects and activities are linked to real world problems.
- ◆ Students use technology in a variety of ways that enhance learning.
- ◆ Students learn to work as effective members of a team.
- ◆ Students are expected to stretch themselves to learn and achieve at high levels.
- ◆ Units reflect a focus on the Tahoma District Outcomes and Indicators.
- ◆ Sustainability issues are explored across grade levels and content areas.

Tahoma Partners

We recognize that community outreach is critical to achieving the ambitious expectations we hold for our students.

Partnerships Include:

- ◆ Pacific Education Institute
- ◆ Office of the WA State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- ◆ Maple Valley Creative Arts Council
- ◆ Maple Valley Arboretum
- ◆ Friends of Shadow Lake
- ◆ King County Department of Natural Resources
- ◆ Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
- ◆ Cascade Land Conservancy

Our success is dependent upon expanding our resource base. If you are interested in becoming a part of this collaborative project please contact Nancy Skerritt, Assistant Superintendent at 425-413-3422 or at nskerritt@tahomasd.us



Field experiences begin at elementary in the school yard.



Partnerships provide opportunity for students to use the world as the classroom while engaging in real work that benefits our community.