

IRVINGTON VIKINGS SAIL TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

Ever since the 1kW PV installation donated by PG&E, Irvington High School has become more determined in recommending energy efficient modifications for the campus and community. Irvington was given the honor of accepting the Flex Your Power Award, which recognized a 33% reduction of electricity use, saving 129,000 kWh, the top in the state. At the same time, Irvington became the second high school in the whole state of California to be recognized as an Energy Star school. This was accomplished by connecting the school wide computers and peripherals into power strips, installing timers on exterior lighting, reprogramming classroom thermostats, and updating our gym lighting with timers and motion sensors. We have replaced almost 200 old desktop & CRT monitors that consume up to 330 watts with newer computers. These include Dell Hybrids, which only use an average of 33 watts, resulting in a 90% energy reduction. Blackle.com has been set as the default search engine as an alternative to Google. Blackle utilizes a black background, which reduces the amount of energy needed to power the LCDs during web searches. A group of students have been pursuing the concept of painting the school's roof white to enhance the albedo effect, or reflectance, of the roof, translating into savings from cooling costs throughout the warmer seasons.

This year, Irvington's goal has been incorporating energy efficiency through our four school wide outcomes: personal responsibility, communication, critical thinking, and social responsibility. Students are encouraged to recycle, which has been facilitated through the new recycling system by the green advisory. Weekly recyclables are sorted by student volunteers and placed in the appropriate bins. In addition, Irvington also earned the distinction of being the first out of 43 schools in the district to adopt a food scrap recycling program to further divert our waste from the landfill; it has caught the attention of several neighboring schools which are in the process of copying our model.

As a large portion of the community outreach, Irvington is planning on a large scale solar celebration in mid September that will encompass a plethora of themes. Word will be spread through the local newspapers, an online blog, the marquee board, announcements, and by word of mouth. Irvington will personally invite other schools, especially elementary schools, to view our green fair as a supplement to class.

Additionally, the School's High Tech Militia Club hosts monthly E-waste collection events, which not only provide a safe, easy way for the public to dispose of their old electronics, but also generates money for the club to replace components of the school. One of the components that have been replaced are the ethernet cables, which transfer data with reduced power expenditure.

Students with a profound interest have formed a Green Advisory, where they brew up new ideas to reduce energy usage. Reusing paper which only has printing on one side, switching to paper based dance decorations, and promoting biking to school are among the many proposals that have been made and enacted.

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