

# Renton Technology Coordinating Council

Meeting Minutes

3/19/19

## ATTENDING

Rahman Abdul, Kalisa Amparo, Suzie Bradford, Ellen Dorr, Bob Ettinger, Colin Falk, Barbara Folmer, Cathy Gonzalez, Damon Harris, Tom Howley, Shari Mann, Gioia Pitts, Jason Franklin, Mark Sabo, Rachel Sherin, Jerry Sidwell, Pam Teal, and Kerrie Thornton

## AGENDA

- [Introductions and Review](#)
- [Internet Filtering](#)
- [Updates on Projects](#)

## INTRODUCTIONS AND REVIEW

### **Introductions:**

Each attending shared their name, role, and most exciting use of learning technology they have seen recently. To see the addendum for individual RTCC member responses, click [here](#).

### **Review:**

Ellen reviews information gathered at the December 2018 RTCC meeting including:

- A review of what is going well in the Technology Services (TS) department
- A review of the challenges and priorities for TS
- The “Why” of the department:
  - To support the District Core Values of service, excellence and equity
  - To ensure teachers and staff have the tools required for student success in and outside of the classroom
- How these fit into the TS Strategic Framework:
  - Increasing 2-way communication
  - Helping teachers and administrators in professional learning
  - Creating welcoming schools for all students, families, staff, and communities through accessibility
- The primary goals of TS:
  - Modernizing technology

To see the RTCC 3.19.19 Presentation for details, click [here](#).

## INTERNET FILTERING

### **Goal:**

In today’s meeting, RTCC is asked to evaluate and provide feedback regarding Internet Filtering.

### **How filtering works:**

Barbara gives an overview of how filtering works.

- Websites are broadly categorized into groups based on their content (ex: academic, adult themed, religious, photo sharing, etc).
- When we filter, we essentially turn a category on or off, which determines how much access a user has.
- At the school level, we give users access accordingly:
  - Grades 9-12 have the same internet access as staff.

- Grades K-8 have more limited access.
- Unauthorized Users have the most limited access.
- A committee reviewed all the restrictions made for each access level. The committee was made up of teachers, staff, community members, and even some students (temporarily). This committee has since been dissolved, and as a result, RTCC is responsible for decisions regarding filtering and access.
- “Games” is a very broad category. While blocking another category such as “Violence” should automatically block all games that include violence, this is not always the case.
  - What has happened in the past is one teacher would like a game blocked, and another would like access to it.
  - Our goal is to have a consistent policy.

### Internet Filtering Discussion

The team is given time to read the “Internet Filtering Requests” portion of the [April 18, 2018 RTCC Minutes](#) and the article [“Are School Filters the Forgotten Equity Battleground?”](#). Then the team is asked to have a table discussion on the following questions:

- What confirms your thinking?
- What challenges your thinking?

Bob uses the Roblox scenario as a test case for what we are considering. Roblox was identified as a first-person shooter game, and a teacher requested to have it blocked. However, another teacher wanted access to it. Bob was confused why this would be the case, and then he learned that Roblox is also a website that includes many games, some of which are educational. He states that right now “Games” are open. The question is, do we want to leave them open or block them as a category? If the “Games” category stays open, we can block individual games as needed. If the “Games” category is closed, we could create a whitelist of what is allowed. Bob gives the staff the opportunity to explore this question independently and collaboratively through the following activities.

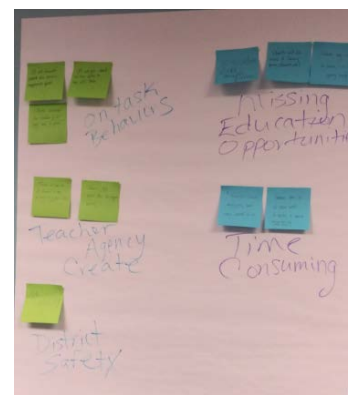
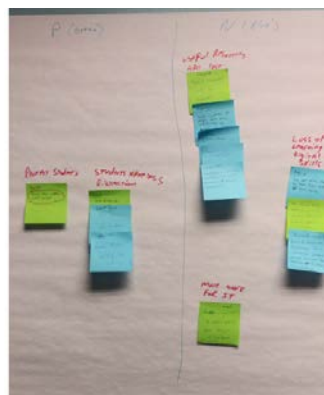
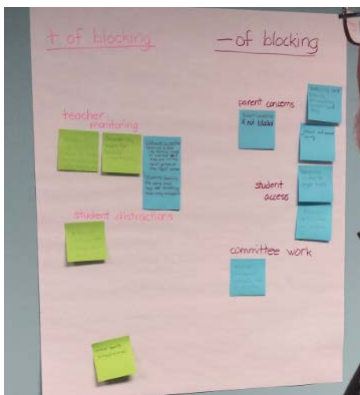
### Pros and Cons Activity:

The members are given green and blue post-its and asked to independently consider the pros and cons of blocking “Games” from RSD devices.

- On the green post-its, the members are asked to write the positive intended and unintended results of blocking.
- On the blue post-its, the members are asked to write the negative intended and unintended consequences of blocking.

Bob asks each table group to place their post-its onto chart paper, determining one side as positives and one side as negatives, and then putting the post-its into categories.

- Bob asks that the categories be labeled with a descriptive title or phrase using a noun and a verb.



### Opinion Spectrum Activity:

#### Instructions:

- Bob asks the team to identify their own professional opinion about internet filtering by physically placing themselves along an imaginary line based on the following criteria.
  - Stand at the front of the room, if you think we should keep “Games” completely open, and block specific things as needed.

- Stand in the back of the room if you think we should block “Games” and add them on as they are needed.
- Stand closer to the front or the back respectively if you lean toward keeping “Games” open or blocking them entirely.

#### Clarification Conversation Q&A:

Ellen clarifies that in the last meeting RTCC decided to keep “Games” open as a category and then block specific games as needed. If we do block “Games”, there may be other things that get filtered out as a result.

Q: Gioia: If “Games” are blocked, would we need to request access for all the educational games we use?

A: Ellen: Yes, all these would need to be whitelisted.

Q: Rachel: Based on the filtering chart, it seems that if the games fall into another category such as “Violence” they will be blocked, but other safe games can get through, correct?

A: Ellen: Yes, but some of these violent games are still getting through, so it seems like the “Violence” category is not blocking enough.

Q: Kalisa: Is the filtering happening on the Chromebook itself or on the Wi-Fi?

A: Ellen & Bob: The Chromebook will filter on its own, but at school both the Wi-Fi and Chromebook filter.

Q: Susie: How easy is it to add a game?

A: Barbara: According to our policy, adding a game goes through the Principal.

Q: Damon: How quickly could a teacher access a game? If they needed it next day, could that happen?

A: Ellen & Barbara: it would really depend on the workload. We try to respond quickly, but there would be no guarantee due to many variables.

Q: Damon: Will staff members be able to see what is blocked for the students?

A: Tom: You can do a test by logging onto Guest Wi-Fi at your school, and then you can see exactly what content your kids have access to because it is the same filter.

Q: Can we have a game accessible temporarily?

A: Ellen: Once the game is whitelisted, it will stay whitelisted.

Q: Damon: After about a month, wouldn't we have a pretty solid idea of what needs to be whitelisted?

A: Ellen: Yes, but the first month will be pretty messy as we learn what all gets filtered out with “Games”.

#### Results and Reflection:

The staff places themselves on the spectrum according to the criteria specified above. The results show that the majority would like to keep “Games” open and block things as needed. One member wished to block “Games” entirely and create a whitelist of requested/safe content. Two members were in the middle. The staff discusses their reasoning for their decisions.

##### No Block Group:

- Kalisa describes an experience she had when “Games” were blocked. She would find an online resource to use with her kids in class, and then find out during the class that they could not access it, which meant she needed to come up with an alternative on spot.
- Sherri adds that when “Games” were blocked previously, a lot of other things were also blocked. From her perspective, the list of things to unblock would be extensive.
- Sherri also discussed how games can be useful for certain learning styles and can generate enough interest in a subject matter that kids will do independent research.

##### Central Group:

- Mark notes that in high school, the access to games has become a classroom management issue. On the flip side, games are also used as an incentive, and teachers need them to motivate their students.
- Mark also notes that he doesn't want his kids to have access to really violent games.
- Susie notes that even if they can't play on a Chromebook, they still have cell phones that they can use. If they really want to play, they can find a way.

##### Block Group

- Gioia states that some of these games are extremely violent and cause competitiveness among students. She also considers the classroom management piece but notes that the kids will find ways to distract themselves if they really want to.
- Damon states that there are online resources that teachers use which are pretty common and can be made available even if we block “Games”. He also notes, that kids already see these devices as another tool for gaming, as opposed to academics. If games are inaccessible, then the distraction is removed, and the kids will disassociate the Chromebooks from that kind of use.

### CLOSING STATEMENTS:

Ellen closed the meeting with the following notes:

- For the time being, the “Games” category will remain open and the discussion will continue in the next meeting.
- Updates on projects will be addressed at the next meeting.

### ADDENDUM– RTCC Member Responses

- **Ellen Dorr, Chief Technology Officer:** Ellen is excited about GoGuardian monitoring software on 1 to 1 Chromebooks that will block explicit content, send a notice to the student of misuse, and send a notice to School Principal. Ellen is also excited about the new configuration of the Computer Lab to make it more accessible and multipurpose.
- **Rahman Abdul, User Support Manager:** Rahman is excited about Googlecast which will allow teachers to project what is on their screen to their students or to other screens.
- **Kalisa Amparo, Maplewood Heights Elementary:** Kalisa highlighted the Author Study project her students participated in where they read 3 books by the same author and then used Google to create their own small websites about the author. The website portion really motivated the students to complete the reading.
- **Suzie Bradford, Field Support Specialist:** Suzie talked about the successful technical training they had for Bus Drivers where the technology worked effectively even among a group of people who are not tech savvy.
- **Bob Ettinger, Director of Digital Learning:** Bob is excited about how tools for assessment allow teachers to ask a question and quickly compile and analyze data. He is also excited about Digital Libraries that allow students to read more books through the power of their Chromebook.
- **Colin Falk, Nelsen Principal:** Colin is excited about the use of technology to streamline work and make it more accessible to students. He specifically spoke about a math teacher that has been learning how to record her lessons and how to post assignments and announcements for her students to see.
- **Barbara Folmer, District Web Coordinator:** Barbara is excited that there are little to no errors in the adult learning module.
- **Cathy Gonzalez, Systems Analyst:** Cathy is excited about the Destiny tracking system used to track all our assets in the District.
- **Damon Harris, Assistant Principal, McKnight:** Damon is excited about the Science Dept using green screens to have students record weather reports and weather patterns.
- **Tom Howley, Manager TS Infrastructure:** Tom is excited about sending home Chromebooks full time through 1 to 1 and the Computer Access Program (CAP); directly affecting students and their families through this project.
- **Shari Mann, Tiffany Park Elementary:** Shari was excited to see a 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Robotics class where the students were working and coding independently.
- **Gioia Pitts, Dimmitt Principal:** Gioia was excited to share a teachable moment for both a parent and a student about the importance of at home access to technology. For the parent, understanding that the Chromebook is not just a device where their child can access games but is also a tool for their learning that may require monitoring, but not necessarily full restriction. For the student, teaching them that advocating for themselves should not include taking things that do not belong to them.
- **Jason Franklin, Director of Business Services:** Jason attended his son’s Robotic competition and was impressed by how children could work with the tools available; accomplishing their goals and working together.
- **Mark Sabo, CTE Facilitator:** Mark discussed seeing technology used to improve efficiency, and function as a learning tool. He attended a Project Based Learning meeting and the high school teachers discussed all the ways they are starting to use Canvas. A specific example was one teacher was using the recording function to get student feedback, which saved time and allowed for the teacher to pick up student inflection in their responses. He also got the opportunity to see kids working on a water rocket project where they utilized technology to launch their rockets, activate the parachutes, and to collect data for the launch.
- **Rachel Sherin, Librarian, Sierra Heights Elementary:** Rachel talked about how she utilizes the Destiny website to find books for certain grade levels. She also uses technology when building presentations.

- **Jerry Sidwell, Community Member:** Jerry shared that he has had conversations with veteran teachers who have been in the district for a long time and learned that they are using technology for reproducing lectures and things.
- **Pam Teal, Board of Directors:** Pam is excited about Digital Libraries at elementary schools, and the collective positive response from a group of children who just learned that she and her committee purchased myON, which is the tool the kids read on.
- **Kerrie Thornton, Administrative Assistant:** Is excited to be a part of the distribution process for Mobile Hotspots and home devices.