

Renton Technology Coordinating Council (RTCC)

Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2020

ATTENDING

Ellen Dorr, Stefanie McIrvn (*Conference Call*), Rahman Abdul, Kalisa Amparo, Dr. Bob Ettinger, Barbara Folmer, Cathy Gonzalez, Madison Hammond (*Guest*), Thomas Howley, Gioia Pitts, Mark Sabo, Rachel Sherin, Kevin Smith, Kevin Takisaki, Kerrie Thornton, and Dominique Tryon (*Conference Call*)

AGENDA

- [Welcome and Introductions](#)
- [Summer Chromebook Survey](#)
- [RTCC Project Feedback](#)
 - [Input](#)
 - [Project Updates](#)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ellen welcomed the RTCC members and offered some suggestions for social distancing while in attendance. She also clarified that the upcoming Board Meeting would take place as scheduled, but the Outstanding Employees Recognition portion of the agenda had been removed to avoid larger crowds.

Each RTCC member introduced themselves by giving their name, role, and sharing one example of creative communication they have witnessed recently. See [addendum](#) for individual responses.

Ellen reminded the members that the role of RTCC is to examine how we use technology in the district, and how it aligns with the District goals and mission.

MINUTES REVIEW

One RTCC member who was absent at the previous RTCC meeting inquired about the project update template. Ellen clarified that the template was selected by RTCC members as the preferred way they would like to get updates from Technology Services (TS) and noted that TS would be exercising that template in today's meeting.

No further updates, clarifications, or corrections.

SUMMER CHROMEBOOK SURVEY

The TS team had been considering how to maximize student Chromebook access over the course of the school year. With an annual collection of Chromebooks, the final portion of the school year left students without devices during important examination periods. After discussions with high schools, it was decided that students would keep their Chromebooks for the duration of their high school tenure, including the summer months.

For middle school, it was decided that families, staff, and students should be surveyed to see if the same option should be made available. Ellen presented the data collected from that survey and gave the council an

opportunity to review and consider the results. She mentioned that these results were sent out to staff and families today, so they too would have the opportunity to see the feedback.

Survey Results Summarized

The council noted a range of response between different factions. Families demonstrated strong agreement to the take-home option, whereas student responses were relatively neutral. However, only 30% in both groups disagreed with the option of students taking Chromebooks home for the summer. The staff response was more varied and showed a 44% disagreement rate.

Open Ended Survey Responses from Students and Families

- This is a great idea! This would allow the children to have access to familiar tools over the summer and reinforce the skills they learned during the long break.
- It will be easier for students to have the chrome book on hand at the first day of school and easy transition for them for the school year.
- For students who wouldn't otherwise have access to a computer at home, this is a great way for them to build digital skills and access learning resources!
- Having my daughter keep her Chromebook over the summer will definitely help her continue her education throughout the summer months since our family does not have a home computer currently.
- I know that a lot of students are not able to access computers. I want to speak up for them. Over the summer say that they failed a class like maybe algebra. They might not have the money to buy special books like me and my friends could.

Common Concerns and Considerations from the Survey

- Several respondents expressed concern regarding potential damage to the devices over the summer months.
- Some families expressed concern over screen time use over the summer.

RTCC Response

- Kerrie commented that the family and student response resonates more strongly with her because it demonstrates where the actual need is. Our goal is to provide equitable access, and only families can know what they need to ensure their child has access to information and learning (even during the summer months). Staff cannot know what individual family's needs are, and come from a more logistical perspective, such as whether or not students can appropriately care for their devices over the summer. However, to remove the option of being able to take Chromebooks home over the summer due to logistical concerns would not be equitable when families have demonstrated need.
- Rachel highlighted the third parent comment about students being able to build their digital skills over the summer with these tools available to them. Students who already have devices at home (outside of the district devices) continue to have that access regardless of whether or not their Chromebook comes home with them, and that is where the equity issue comes into play. Rachel thinks all students should have the chance to explore different options and tools available to them outside of school.
- Gioia noted that Kerrie's comment helped her to reframe her response to the data. She was struck by the teacher response to the Chromebook take-home option but feels that the needs of her students are more important. However, she feels strongly that she needs to understand more about why the staff is showing the most resistance to students having this option.

- Kevin T. agreed, stating that it tends to be easier to focus on obstacles as opposed to considering the opportunities we are s for students.
- Stefanie shared that the feedback from teachers is really important and should be considered. She also stated that we need to support families to ensure devices are being used appropriately over the summer.
- Dominique added that it is important to understand more about the reasons why those who disagree feel the way they do, in order to ensure that those voices are heard, that improvements are made, and the proper supports are put into place.

Addressing the Concerns

Ellen went into further details regarding the concerns that came up from the survey and how TS can respond to them.

- Several respondents expressed concern regarding damage to devices.
 - We will continue to teach and support students in proper care of devices.
 - Families can purchase the [Chromebook Protection Plan](#) at any time to mitigate those potential fines. (Additionally, we are committed to working with families for whom this is an undue burden.)
 - We have repair processes and loss protocols in place.
- Some families expressed concern over screen time over the summer.
 - It is up to every family to develop their own rules and procedures for technology use in their homes, much like their own rules around cell phone usage.
 - School filtering will continue to be applied on Chromebooks over the summer.

Continued conversation and comprehensive support will be required to ensure that other concerns are being addressed and families feel confident moving forward. This support will be managed by Principals at schools. In addition, Ellen reminded the council that families can opt out from participation in summer take-home, as each family must decide what will be best for their student.

RTCC PROJECT FEEDBACK

Input: Talley High School Student and Staff Feedback

The Talley High School Leadership class in collaboration with the Multi-Media Class produced a student and teacher feedback video that was presented at the meeting. The students originally did a video that included parent voice, but that version was accidentally deleted. To learn more about the information in the video, please read the [Video Transcript](#).

Video Response:

- Students are demonstrating that while they are accessing games and other distractions, they are also accessing what they need. Both teachers and students report an increase in work being completed and turned in because of the ease of tracking assignments online.
 - We need to continue to support students in learning how to monitor their own digital behavior and how intrinsic motivation can really play into that.
- The use of a Chromebook has become the norm for both students and teachers.
- Students are aware when their teachers/leaders are distracted by their technology as well. It is necessary for us to model for the students the behavior we expect.

- How do we integrate technology and not lose human connection? It is important to recognize that there are times we need to put technology away and engage meaningfully with each other.
- This kind of feedback provides more context to conveying individual experience. However, it may limit our ability to get a wide-reaching broad sense of student experience.

TEAM UPDATES

Infrastructure, Tom Howley

Tom shared a completed project template with the council regarding the following projects:

- **Elementary Wi-Fi Project:** This project was to increase the number of access points in schools so that wi-fi could be accessed from any location. In addition, the guest Wi-Fi has been enhanced.
 - In the future we would want to have budget information included with this project.
- **At Home Access Program:** This is an ongoing project designed to provide hotspots to middle school students who do not have internet access at home. Families that need access can submit a paper application to their school's Technology Resource Specialist, who distributes a device that they can use for the duration of the year at 2 gigabits per month. The next step for this project is to look at the data and analyze usage.
 - Ellen added that what is being found when the usage data is reviewed in projects like this (such as the 1 Million Project used for high school students), is that less than half the devices are being used. The District Advisory Council for the 1 Million Project has done a logic tree by contacting some of the students who are not using their hotspot. Some of the questions that were asked are: "Do you still have the device?", "Do you need the device?", and "Do you know how to use the device?". As we move forward, we will want to consider how to target students with genuine need and ensure that the information we give them is supporting them well enough to use the hotspots.

Customer Service, Rahman Abdul

Rahman did not use the project template but did share the progress of the interactive panel installation. The team has fifth schools completed to date and are about to finish the sixth school. They expect to have 14 schools completed by the end of this year. The installations have gone smoothly with the vendor. Some of the larger classes were put on hold until the larger panels arrived, but now that we have them, we can complete those installations as well.

- Ellen added that we prioritized schools that had most of their projectors on carts. She also revisited Rahman's check-in response where he commented on the value of Google Sheets for doing collaborative work and shared how different teams have been able to manage the school installations using these tools. For example, Kevin in CTE can highlight which rooms are larger on the spreadsheet and will require bigger panels, the individual who is working on the actual installation can make a note on which classroom was completed each evening, etc.
- A council member asked about whether or not the teachers can request moving their white board so that they have use of the whiteboard and the panel.
 - Rahman explained that at each school they went through a walk-through with the vendor to determine the best location for the panel based on what would work for actual installation, but also where the best vantage point would be for students and teachers.
 - Ellen added there are other things we have to keep in mind, such as data, power access, and whether or not we can drill into the wall, which effect the location of the panel. TS did investigate moving whiteboards initially, but it was an added expense of \$600 per classroom and therefore not a part of the project. If teachers want to move their white boards, they will have to make a request with their school to determine if there is enough budget for that. Although realistically, these individual requests would likely be low priority due to the number of projects happening. The good news is that many teachers are

finding they don't really need as much whiteboard space as they had originally thought. Ellen sought feedback from RTCC members who have panels in their schools.

- Gioia responded that she has not received any pushback regarding the white boards, but she wishes her school had followed the original planning from TS because they are now running into issues with getting Wi-Fi connected.

CLOSING

Our next meeting will be May 14th. Ellen asked if people could gather more input during the interim to share at the next meeting. She advised the members to send the information gathered to herself and Kerrie so that it can be included on the agenda.

ADDENDUM

Ellen Dorr, Chief Technology Officer

Ellen shared that Cabinet has been using Google Docs to work on communications. Google Docs is a helpful tool because it allows them to view and work in the same document simultaneously.

Stephanie McIrvine, School Board Director

Stephanie shared that Skype for Business has been a useful tool for working with faculty and staff both on and off campus. She was also excited to share that the program she directs (Information Technology Program) is going fully online starting March 11, 2020 through the end of the quarter and possibly into Spring quarter. They will be using Zoom and the lesser known Zoom whiteboard feature.

Rahman Abdul, Director of Customer Service

Rahman shared that his team uses Google Docs and Google Sheets to engage in projects that involve multiple parties and multiple departments in order to keep all the information in one place and to easily track changes / developments.

Kalisa Amparo, Maplewood Heights 4th Grade Teacher

Kalisa shared how her students are independently accessing Google Classroom and sharing their work through that platform, especially in the last couple weeks when more students are staying at home.

Dr. Bob Ettinger, Director of Digital Learning

Bob reminded the RTCC members that Creative Communication is something that he and the Technology Integration Specialists (TIS) have been working on all year. He shared one example from a middle school social studies class where the students used one of three communication options to engage with the US Constitution:

- Instagram campaigns
- Letters to a public official
- Infographics using an app like Canva

Barbara Folmer, District Website Coordinator

Barbara shared that she has been receiving positive feedback regarding the quality of communication generated by Community Relations about COVID-19, and the use of Finals site pop-ups to send information to families.

Cathy Gonzalez, Systems Analyst

Cathy shared that her team uses Microsoft Teams to monitor the re-imaging process and finds it to be a helpful tool.

Madison Hammond, Student Teacher at Maplewood Heights

Madison shared a form of creative communication she learned at the TIS meeting where students use a program called Flipgrid to communicate their work and ideas in video form.

Thomas Howley, *Infrastructure Director*

Tom shared that he is part of a regional consortium that was expected to meet at KEC in the coming weeks. Since they won't be able to meet in person, they will be doing their meeting via Skype.

Gioia Pitts, *Principal at Dimmitt Middle School*

Gioia shared that while her students are digitally savvy and are used to using social media, they are less familiar with using e-mail. Recently, with social distancing in place, her students have been engaging and collaborating via email to complete group projects.

Mark Sabo, *CTE Facilitator*

Mark shared his appreciation for the dedication of the teachers he works with at Hazen. They have been working to build the framework for new courses and regularly communicate and collaborate through phone calls, text messages, OneNote, and OneDrive.

Rachel Sherin, *Librarian at Sierra Heights*

Rachel shared an example from another school district which recently closed due to COVID-19. The teachers of the district have been sending communication and schoolwork digitally, with an understanding that not all students will be available at their remote locations during scheduled class time.

Kevin Smith, *CTE Director*

Kevin shared that he has one team member working remotely at this time, and they have set up this individual to be able to work and collaborate from a distance.

Kevin Takisaki, *Assistant Principal at Talley High School*

Kevin shared that his Restorative Justice Team has been using OneNote to collectively document research they have gathered on implementing restorative circles at Talley.

Kerrie Thornton, *Administrative Assistant*

Kerrie shared that she attended a TIS meeting and learned about a 1st grade teacher who had her students use SeeSaw to create literary reports with video, cartoons, or still images.

Dominique Tryon, *Risdon Parent*

Dominique shared that she witnesses creative communication on a regular basis in all the ways we interact.