

Renton Technology Coordinating Council (RTCC)

Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2020

ATTENDING

Ellen Dorr, Pam Teal, Rahman Abdul, Kalisa Amparo, Bob Ettinger, Colin Falk, Barbara Folmer, Tom Howley, Keith Peck, Genevieve Ramsey, Kevin Takisaki, and Kerrie Thornton

AGENDA

- [Welcome and Introductions](#)
- [Review Input](#)
- [Home Connectivity Update](#)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ellen opened by sharing the agenda. She then asked everyone to introduce themselves with their name, role, and highlight from the long weekend.

MINUTES REVIEW

Ellen invited the council to review the minutes, alerting them to the various links to other resources within the minutes, such as the Padlet responses and Project Status Report.

Ellen asked for questions, clarifications, or corrections. There were none.

REVIEW INPUT

In the last meeting, the council discussed the importance of gathering feedback: that student voice and representation from schools is necessary to inform technology decisions. As a result, the council members were tasked to gather feedback around 6 questions regarding the start of the school year.

- What has been the biggest challenge you have had with starting school fully remote?
- What is something new you learned as a result of starting school fully remote?
- What is the most common technology challenge your students/classmates/colleagues experience?
- What has been the most positive impact of technology access for you, your students, or your colleagues?
- What digital resources have you been using? What has been helpful?
- What improvement to technology resources or support would you like to see?

Before reviewing the responses, Ellen asked if anyone would be willing to share their experience gathering feedback.

Genevieve Ramsey interviewed primarily 4th and 5th grade students. They were nervous and wanted to make sure they had good answers. The most common feedback she received was that the students were excited to learn and explore the new technology tools their teachers introduced. They identified Jamboard and Breakout Rooms as two tools they really liked. The biggest thing she took away from the interviews was a sense of student empowerment; that the students could manage their own learning with the tools provided. Genevieve was also able to interview a couple tech savvy parents and she learned that they were all using home devices for Zoom

meetings because they found they had better connectivity than on Chromebooks. They only used Chromebooks for Google Classroom. This was information she had not encountered before.

Kevin Takisaki interviewed THS students and received consistent feedback. Pretty much all the students identified connectivity issues as an obstacle, but they felt the platforms are easy to navigate and that they can organize themselves in Google Classroom easily.

Ellen gave the council members 10 minutes to review the interview responses. After independent review, the members were moved to Breakout Rooms to discuss the following:

- What trends do you see in this feedback?
- What actionable Items do you see?

Trends Discussed	Actionable Items
Internet Connectivity issues	See TLT Updates for actions being taken on this matter.
There are a lot of options for digital tools that can be used for in-home learning and some of the feedback indicates a desire for consistency regarding what is used among schools/teams.	There were no actionable items determined, but some discussion about finding the right balance between too much flexibility and not enough flexibility in what tools are used and recognizing that this balance will look different from person to person and for school communities.
Some students report eye fatigue from screen use, particularly from blue light.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an app that will automatically adjust your screen to have less blue light come through. • Some folks are also looking at blue light filtering glasses.
It is difficult for ELL students and students with special needs to get connected and navigate technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more student-facing video tutorials. Students, families, and staff report that these have been helpful. • Streamlining the collection of resources created so they are accessible to everyone. Gather materials developed at schools. Put everything in a place that is easy for staff and students to find.
Students have learned to navigate platforms and digital tools; moving toward a digital based culture.	
Students are utilizing technology to enhance their product and demonstrate their learning in creative ways.	
There is feedback from families that they are overwhelmed by the amount of communication and struggling to find answers to their specific questions/needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlining communication: how often and who will be sending the communication. • Making sure we address a family's specific needs/questions.
Teachers and students are finding multiple ways to engage despite challenges.	
There is an increased ability for differentiation in a digital learning model.	
From necessity comes the motivation to approach student learning in a new way and explore options that had not previously been considered.	

TLT UPDATES

Home Connectivity Project Update

- In the spring of 2020, there was a worldwide shortage of hotspots. When Technology Services received the offer to get some, they jumped on that opportunity. However, the hotspots received came with eligibility restrictions, and had a data limit that was insufficient to support students when fully remote.
- The Technology Services Infrastructure team completed signal testing out in the community to determine which carrier had the best signal, and evaluated the options based on who was prepared to support K-12 and who had inventory available.
- Sprint is now a part of T-Mobile. Most of the devices in the district are Sprint devices and are connected to the old Sprint towers, resulting in low connectivity in addition to the low data cap. So, RSD is transitioning from the Sprint 1 Million Program to the T-Mobile 10 Million Program. The goal of the program is to get 10 Million households connected to the internet. The Renton School District is one of the first districts to participate.
- The new T-Mobile hotspots are expected to arrive in the district just before Winter Break. Once the devices are secured, the district will be swapping out all the old devices for new ones, as well as fulfilling new requests.
- T-Mobile is subsidizing some of the hotspot service (enough for homework). The District will be paying additional funds to ensure these devices can meet the needs of students while in remote learning. As a result, the budget for this project has increased significantly. However, we have received generous donations from Amazon through the InvestEd program and the Renton Schools foundation to apply toward digital equity and home access.
- In addition to the hotspots, OSPI has come out with new home access options for eligible families. To help families navigate these options, Technology Services created the [RSD Internet Support Request](#) webpage to share information about all the programs. On this page, families can request internet support and receive guidance from Technology Services staff regarding how to proceed with OSPI or the RSD options.

General Updates:

- Next week at the Board Meeting, Ellen & Bob will be presenting the Technology Plan Annual Update.
- Technology Services will be submitting a report to the Office of Civil Rights regarding the work that has been done toward ADA Accessibility on the website. The report is currently being reviewed by the RSD legal team.
- Bob invited the council members to explore and try out some [Hour of Code](#) activities available on the RSD website.
- The next meeting will be at the beginning of February. Ellen may be in touch with school-based people to gather more information about what is going on in schools to share at the next meeting.

Ellen closed the meeting by asking the council members to share a word or phrase they are keeping in mind this month. See [addendum](#) for individual responses.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Meeting adjourned at 5:44pm

ADDENDUM

Ellen Dorr, Chief Technology Officer

“Gratitude.” In specific, Ellen wanted to express immense gratitude to Pam Teal for the contributions she has made to the District.

Pam Teal, Board President

“It’s all good.” Pam also expresses her gratitude to everyone on the council and in the district for their accomplishments and management of in-home learning.

Kalisa Amparo, *4th Grade Teacher, Maplewood Heights*

“Patience.” In Elementary School there are two groups: A&B. The B Group is very quiet, and unless they contribute via chat, it is hard to know who is engaged. So, while it can be frustrating, Kalisa is focused on being patient with this group and encourage them to engage more.

Kevin Takisaki, *Assistant Principal, Talley High School*

“Patience.” Patience is something Kevin is trying to be more mindful of; patience with himself, his community, staff, students, systems, and with everything.

Colin Falk, *Assistant Principal, Lindbergh High School*

“Proactive.” With all the new things, Colin finds that he and his team have mostly been reacting to changes. In second trimester, he would like to see everyone get to a place of being more proactive and forward thinking.

Genevieve Ramsey, *Assistant Principal, Tiffany Park*

“Find the joy.” Genevieve reflects on the idea that even when you are in a breakout room with a student who is muted and has their camera off, you can still find ways to connect, engage, and enjoy time together, even if just for a second.

Tom Howley, *Infrastructure Director*

“Major Improvement.”

Bob Ettinger, *Director of Digital Learning*

“Engagement.” We are finding ways to engage our students and each other in more diverse ways.

Barbara Folmer, *District Website Coordinator*

“Thankful.” Barbara is thankful for the health of her friends and family, the ways she can stay connected, and to have meaningful work to do.

Rahman Abdul, *Director of IT Customer Service*

“Stay focused.” There is a lot going on in terms of support in Technology Services, so for Rahman, it is important to stay focused and keep moving forward.

Kerrie Thornton, *Administrative Assistant to CTO*

“Go the distance.” Kerrie is focusing on keeping the same momentum and determination, even with the finish line in view (Winter Break).

Keith Peck, *Computer Science Teacher, Hazen High School*

“Growing Together.”