Renton Technology Coordinating Council (RTCC)
Meeting Minutes
March 30, 2021

ATTENDING
Ellen Dorr CTO, Alisa Louie, Rahman Abdul, Kalisa Amparo, Dr. Bob Ettinger, Colin Falk, Barbara Folmer, Tom Howley, Keith Peck, Gioia Pitts, Genevieve Ramsey, Kevin Takisaki, and Kerrie Thornton

AGENDA
- Connector
- Plus, Delta
- Review Technology Decisions
- Updates

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
Ellen welcomed the members of the council and went over the agenda. She reminded the council about the role of RTCC: to provide a forum to review technology decisions and ensure that they maximize student performance and achievement. Ellen then asked the council members to introduce themselves with their name, role, and what they plan to do next week during Spring Break. See addendum.

PLUS/DELTA
With all the changes that have happened this year, RTCC was asked to discuss the following:

- PLUS: What is going well?
- DELTA: What could be improved?

Team Sharing
- The in-home learning model is working well for some students. The question is: How can we maintain that momentum when students return in person? Those coming in person will be starting over in some ways; entering the class environment for the first time in a long time, learning classroom routines, etc. Whereas the remote group is just rolling along as normal. How does that affect pacing?
- This group discussed the challenges of teaching in a concurrent model, with two classrooms happening simultaneously (one online & one in-person).
- Everyone seems to be maintaining a positive attitude. Across the district, staff has found was to make it in-home learning work. When it wasn't working, staff found new solutions to better serve students. The goal moving forward is to find ways to replicate these effective new systems when we go back to fully in-person.

REVIEW TECHNOLOGY DECISIONS
Website Filter Settings
Internet filtering has changed over time. We are now able to be more granular about how and what is blocked. Currently, the level of filtering is determined by User Group:

- Generic Users / Unauthenticated Users
- Elementary and Middle School Students
- High School Students and Staff

The Technology Leadership Team (TLT) asked RTCC to help review the group filters to assess the following:

- Should elementary and middle school students be considered as separate groups? Would we filter those grade bands any differently?
- Should items that are potentially unnecessary (but not harmful) be allowed for students (such as business or financial sites)?
- Are there other changes or updates that should be considered?

RTCC Questions/Feedback

- Kalisa: How does a game get categorized as an "education game"?
  - Tom: Categorization information is often crowd-sourced, so it can change over time.
  - Ellen shared a link for how to [request to have a specific website unblocked](#).
- Kalisa: Can advertisements be blocked?
  - Tom: There is a category for advertisements that can be blocked. However, in some cases, if you block the advertisements, you cannot use the resource at all.
- Ellen: TLT looked specifically at the financial and business categories (online banking, PayPal, Western Union, etc.). These are some of those potentially unnecessary (but not harmful) sites. Should we continue to allow access to our youngest learners? Or is this where we see differentiation between Elementary and Middle School filtering?
  - Keith: There are better sites for elementary to learn about finance.
  - Genevieve: It would take a lot of skill for an elementary aged child to access those financial sites. I don't imagine the kids would use those kinds of sites anyway.
  - Kalisa: I can't think of when a kid would need sites like these, but if they did for any reason, I would want them to be able to access them.
  - Genevieve agreed with Kalisa. She would rather have those options available in case the family of the student needs access to it.
- Bob: We should consider blocking items that fall under "general aggressive behavior" for High School students. This category is already blocked for younger students.
- Gioia: We should consider blocking items that fall under "Violence" for High School Students. This category is blocked for younger students.
- Genevieve: Students should have access to conversations about "intolerance/hate", but it would be best when facilitated by a teacher, rather than students navigating to webpages about it independently.
- Barbara clarified that the websites blocked under the category of "intolerance/hate" are promotional sites. Students would still have access to learning materials and discussions about the topics of intolerance and hate.
- Kalisa: If a student wants to access inappropriate material, they have other means to do so than our district-owned and monitored machines.
- Genevieve: I think as kids have their own devices, and time is less supervised, we want to be a partner with families. In some ways, limiting access can support families.

Ellen marked the categories mentioned above in red for further consideration by TLT. Tom reminds RTCC that items blocked for High School students are also blocked for staff, since they are in the same filter group. The council did not report any areas where they would filter differently for Elementary and Middle School students.

Equity and Inclusion Considerations
Ellen facilitated an activity via Jamboard to review a recent request the technology services department received to allow students to change their profile picture in Google. The council members gave their initial opinions regarding the

request, and then more details were added about intention behind the request. The council would then share their opinions upon considering the new information. The goal of the activity was to look at some of the complexities of a request that seems very straightforward, in order to understand the student-centered decision that was ultimately made.

Council Discussions:

The council reviewed the complexities around giving students this kind of access, and determined the benefits outweigh the challenges. There are a lot of kids who are going to use it the right way, and in those times when a student chooses to do something inappropriate, it creates an opportunity to start a conversation.

UPDATES AND INFORMATION

Interactive Panel Installation
There are three schools remaining for installation: Talley, Risdon, and Sartori. Gioia asked about staff training for the panels. Shari advised that getting in-person training from the education consultant (Xan Roberti) is best, but there are also online trainings.

To access these trainings or to schedule a time with Xan visit the Promethean at Renton School District google site.

In-person Technology Needs
For the return to in-person, the anticipated technology needs are as follows:

Elementary

- Students can bring their Chromebooks to/from school.
- Technology Services has ordered sleeves for protecting Chromebooks while in backpacks.

Secondary

- Concurrent teacher resources: the district is purchasing the initial resources for schools to provide their teachers, and then schools will have to fulfill any outstanding need. These resources include webcams and headsets w/microphones.
- Technology Services cannot accommodate two workstations per teacher. If a teacher took their classroom technology home, they need to bring it back when they return to classroom instruction.

Teacher Device Selection Process Update
The two models Technology Services will be testing are the ThinkPad X1 Carbon Gen 8 Laptop and the Dell XPS 13 Laptop. They have been unable to start testing due to a shipping delay. The technology team expects to get those devices out to the staff who will pilot them, after Spring Break.

MEETING ADJOURNED
Before closing the meeting, Ellen asked the RTCC members to share one positive word they will carry with them.

- Ellen: Sunshine
- Gioia: Sunshine & Fresh Air
- Genevieve: Evening Walk
- Barbara: Flowers
- Shari: Spring
- Kalisa: Dinner

- Rahman: Longer Days
- Bob: Pine
- Alisa: Family
- Kerrie: Warmth

Meeting adjourned 5:37pm.

ADDENDUM

Ellen Dorr, *Chief Technology Officer*
Ellen will be getting her second COVID-19 vaccination and taking the long weekend to recover.

Gioia Pitts, *Principal, Dimmitt Middle School*
Gioia plans on making sure the building is ready for the return of students. The staff is putting up signage and making sure everything is working and ready to go.

Dr. Bob Ettinger, *Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment*
Next week, Bob will be working, but his parents are also coming out to Seattle from New York.

Kalisa Amparo, 4th *Grade Teacher, Maplewood Heights Elementary*
Kalisa got her second COVID-19 vaccination already and she advises drinking lots of water. She and her daughter are flying out to Colorado to look at colleges.

Tom Howley, *Infrastructure Director*
Tom will be catching up on schoolwork for his certification program during Spring Break.

Kevin Takisaki, *Assistant Principal, Talley High School*
Kevin is driving to Spokane to hang out with his family and meet his new nephew.

Keith Peck, *Computer Science Teacher, Hazen High School*
Keith will be working with the Hazen robotics students for their first competition of the year.

Barbara Folmer, *District Website Coordinator*
This year, Spring Break coincides with her Grandson's birthday, and they will be having a sleepover.

Kerrie Thornton, *Administrative Assistant to CTO*
Kerrie is also getting her second COVID-19 vaccination and plans to rest.

Shari Mann, *Librarian at Tiffany Park Elementary*
Shari will be working during spring break – she has some things to catch up on.