Renton Technology Coordinating Council (RTCC)
Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2022

ATTENDING
Dr. Ellen Dorr, Rahman Abdul, Dr. Bob Ettinger, Barbara Folmer, Jason Franklin, Cathleen Gonzales, Emrie Hollander, Kelly Jones, Woody Sobey, Kerrie Thornton, Carlito Umali, and Melinda Van De Sompele. With special guests: Linda Hoste and Gwen Estes

AGENDA
- Welcome and Introduction
- Minutes Review
- Project Update
- Instructional Support & Inclusion/Accessibility
- Appreciation

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
Ellen welcomed the council and reminded them that the role of RTCC is to assist in the development of our district technology plan and to serve as a forum to review technology decisions to ensure that they maximize student performance and achievement. Ellen noted she and Bob will be presenting on the technology plan in the next couple weeks, and there is a section of their presentation where they talk about RTCC, the valuable feedback received from the council, and the importance of this partnership.

At the last meeting, the council identified priorities for the 2022-23 school year. Many of these priorities were centered around instructional support, inclusion, and accessibility. Ellen went over the agenda and highlighted that the focus for this meeting would be to dig more deeply into these topics with the help of some guests from the district:

- **Linda Hoste**, Director of Categorical Programs
- **Gwen Zuehlke,** Secondary Special Education Director

Ellen asked everyone to introduce themselves by sharing their name, role, and something they're excited about right now. See addendum for individual responses. Afterward, Ellen thanked the council for sharing and commented how important it is to connect, hear about how our students are thriving, and how we are taking care of ourselves as well.

MINUTES REVIEW
Ellen shared the October 2022 minutes and gave the council time to review them. She asked for any questions, clarifications, or corrections. There were none.

Core Values and Strategic Framework
Ellen shared the meeting slides and grounded the meeting with a reminder that our work is in service of students. Ellen shared an experience she had recently where she visited a class at Hazelwood Elementary with another member of the Technology Services (TS) team, Mike Cruz. The students in that class were doing a project on the book "Esperanza Rising" using Minecraft worlds, and encountered issues being able to join each other's worlds. They wrote persuasive letters regarding this issue and requested changes be made to the filtering and firewall to allow for this engagement. Ellen and Mike visited the classroom to listen to the students, answer their questions, and determine next steps. The students asked excellent questions and the experience was a good reminder about how many different pieces come together to support learning in classrooms.

Ellen noted that all departments in the district are working together in service of the District Core Values and Strategic Framework. She then outlined how TS aligns with these core values:

- **Service:** providing a strong foundation
- **Excellence**: improving systems and support
- **Equity:** right support for each and every learner

PROJECT UPDATE

TS has installed new Canon copiers across the district, which are equipped with a program called PaperCut. PaperCut tracks the printing and copying that happens on those machines. TS has been putting together PowerBI dashboards to share with schools/departments to give them information about how much copying they are doing, the associated costs, and provide options for other solutions, such as use of the Print Shop for larger jobs. Ellen invited Rahman and Kelly to share any further information about this. Rahman has been working on the technology side, and Kelly is the administrator at one of the schools that is piloting the use of these dashboards.

- **Rahman:** The only thing I was going to add about this copier deployment is that it is easier to utilize. You can use your badge to release your job, scan, print, etc. Once you set it up for the first time, you can use it on any copier in the district. It is very convenient.
- **Kelly:** I learned a lot during our first administering of the PSAT, which led to a lot of copying. It has been good to see this kind of data. We have seen a huge increase in the amount of paper our teachers are using, and as a result a big increase in budget spending. Part of that is because there has been a push to move away from technology and to get paper back into students' hands. The badge sign-in has been helpful because it gives us a good read on what our teachers are doing.
- **Jason:** The first thing that came to my mind is how you are deploying the dashboard? Were you able to make it so that principals could only see their schools?
  - **Ellen:** Yes.
  - **Jason:** I'm curious how you got that to work. It gives me some ideas on combining staffing information with building budget information. We have goals to start developing some APIs to be presented to the Board and Cabinet.
- **Ellen:** We are super excited about our team getting into PowerBI and building these visualizations. School teams may be familiar with Tableau, which is the program we use to look at student data visualization. PowerBI will be used for operation data visualization.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT & INCLUSION/ACCESSIBILITY

Ellen summarized the areas of focus that were discussed at the last meeting:

- accessibility support for multilingual learners and students receiving special education services
- increasing student engagement and support through technology
- differentiated and personalized learning experiences for students
- digital citizenship and teacher support
- filtering and monitoring considerations
- alignment of content, tools, and training between grade bands in consideration of post-secondary demands

Our goal is to take a comprehensive look at how we are supporting both students and staff. What we hope to look at tonight is:

- What does this work look like right now? What are we currently doing?
- Where might this group want to explore, be lead learners, or push our system a little more?

In preparation for the meeting, Ellen and Bob identified four broader categories that encompassed most of the priorities identified by the council. The bullets listed under each category are not exhaustive but are intended to be a starting point for the council to consider.

Instructional support for all students	Digital citizenship support for all students	Students receiving special education services	Multilingual Learners
• accessibility features within technology that any learner can access • universal design for learning • resources for digital tools	• resources in Curriculum Center 2.0 in Canvas	• assistive technology	• instructional model • translation applications

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP - Shared by Dr. Bob Ettinger, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Ellen invited Bob to share the resources available in the district for digital citizenship and media literacy. To create a common understanding, Bob and his team have defined digital citizenship and media literacy as:

- **Digital Citizenship:** being responsible, healthy, and ethical in a digital world
- **Media Literacy**: the ability to understand and evaluate different types of messages

Bob clarified that both digital citizenship and media literacy are much more than a long list of don'ts. It is about what we DO to empower learners to see opportunities instead of risks as they curate a positive digital footprint.

Bob invited the council to share reasons they think digital citizenship and media literacy are important in the world now. The council placed their responses in the chat.

- **Jason**: accountability
- **Emrie**: personal safety
- **Kerrie**: student agency
- **Melinda**: They need to understand that words matter.
- **Woody**: We are sharing more of our lives and learnings online and should do so in a responsible way.
- **Gwen**: appropriate usage
- **Jason**: interpretation
- **Emrie**: long lasting impact of earlier decisions
- **Ellen**: Students, like all of us, spend a lot of time online and they need to be able to navigate that world safely, responsibly, and with skills.
- **Linda**: responsible communication
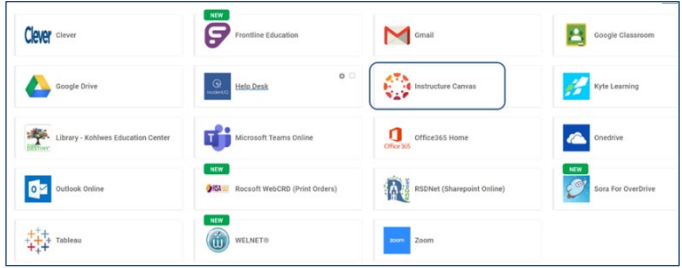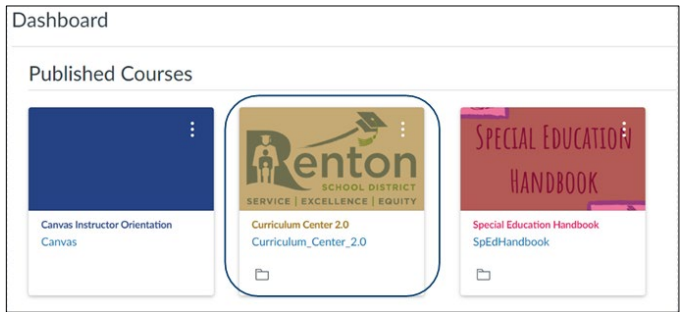- **Barbara**: Students need to know how to evaluate sources, recognize propaganda.
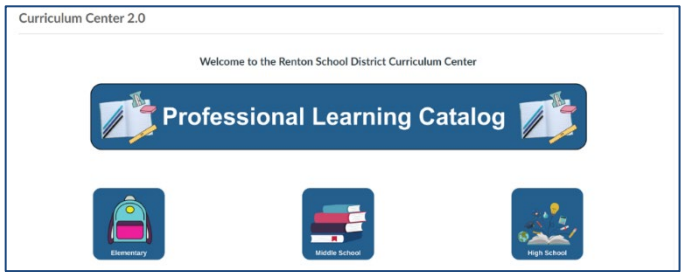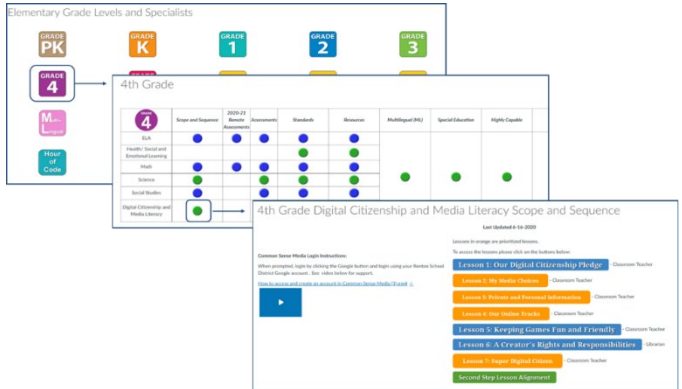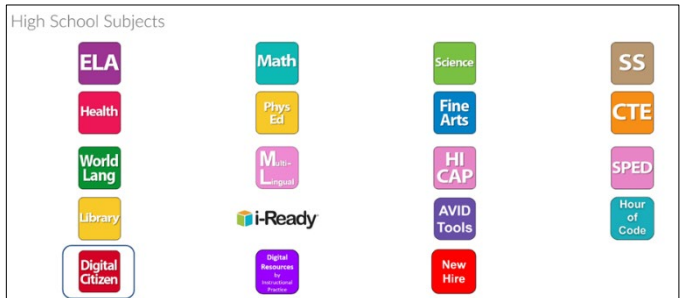
Bob read the comments aloud as they appeared in the chat and noted that all these things are life skills that students need. He shared a metaphor that a former Digital Learning Coach came up with regarding digital citizenship:

> *When kids fall on the playground, we don't take away the playground. Instead, we regularly reteach expectations and practice playground etiquette. The same should be true for digital citizenship. We need to practice regularly and consistently, especially if we want students to get practice with academically oriented use of digital spaces. Where do they get this type of positive, academic practice if we don't provide it?*

> *-Annie Tremonte, former RSD Digital Learning Coach*

Several years ago, a team that consisted of teachers, administrators, librarians, content facilitators, and digital learning coaches got together and developed materials for digital citizenship. They leveraged Common Sense Media for this

process, which is an award-winning K-12 curriculum. These materials can be found in Canvas in Curriculum Center 2.0. Bob demonstrated how to access the materials:

Steps	Illustration
Go to the [RSD Login Portal](#). Select **Instructure Canvas**.	
Select **Curriculum Center 2.0** from the list of options.	
Choose the grade band you are interested in from the options.	
For elementary schools, select the grade level followed by the button next to **Digital Citizenship & Media Literacy**.	
For secondary schools, select **Digital Citizen** from the list of available subjects.	

Bob gave the council time to review the resources in breakout rooms. Afterward, he asked if anything came up in rooms that people want to share.

- **Emrie:** Our group talked about how we strongly recommend that everyone teach this digital citizenship curriculum and would advocate for making it as close to a requirement as possible. Based on the number of devices in homes, the access that students have, and how students engage with their devices, it is important for all students to have this information from a safety standpoint.
  - o **Bob:** The key question continues to be: how do we get people using these resources? They are available, but not widely accessed.
- **Bob**: One question that came up in our room was regarding digital citizenship resources for families. There are resources for families on the district website: Digital Citizenship Resources for Families. On this webpage, families can find public facing Common Sense Media resources, among other things.
  - o **Woody:** Do we have page views on that to see how many people are reviewing that information?
  - o **Ellen:** Yes, we can get that!
- **Ellen:** One other thing we have done is set up template presentations for schools to share with families that teaches them about the different resources available, including the GoGuardian App. (To Emrie) I have sent these slides in a Principal Post, but I can also send them directly to you. Schools can make a copy of the slides and modify them for their school community needs.
- **Carlito:** In some Secondary schools, I think Advisory is a good place to review some of this information. Advisory can be a busy time, but this is important information for students to have, so it is a worthwhile suggestion to use that time for this.
- **Ellen:** I would also like to have this be something we discuss at a Principal or Assistant Principal Meeting so that people can brainstorm and discuss how they already support this learning or how they plan to. That is one way we help ensure that this learning continues or moves forward in buildings.

In consideration of this discussion and throughout the remainder of the meeting, Ellen asked the council to think about what our next steps could be. She let everyone know there would be a form to complete at the end of the meeting where council members will be able to indicate their highest interest and what they might want to take on in terms of those next steps.

ASSISTIVE TECH TEAM - Shared by Gwen Zuehlke, Secondary Special Education Director
Ellen introduced Gwen Zuehlke to talk about Special Education (SPED) services and the work of the Assistive Tech Team.

Gwen: We have an Assistive Tech Team that helps identify and provide technical support for SPED students. Assistive tech falls under IDEA (Individual with Disability Education Act) and is one of the requirements that has to be considered annually for a student's IEP (Individualized Education Plan). Assistive tech is both:

- **the service provided**: providing ongoing support to a student who has an assistive device
- **the technology provided**: the device or tool itself

The standing members of the Assistive Tech Team include members from TS, a Speech and Language Pathologists, an Occupational Therapist, and sometimes we have a TVI (Teacher of the Visually Impaired). We have a process by which a form is completed for a consultation. If a teacher or staff members suspects that a student needs access (or greater access) to technology, the team goes out and does observations to gather data. They have the student try various equipment based on the student's need and functioning level. The primary purpose is to identify what the student needs to participate in their instructional environment. For some of our higher functioning students, this might just be helping them to access a tool like Google Read & Write, which is available to all students, but students may not be aware of it.

For others, this might be a communication device with buttons that say "yes" or "no", so that a student has ability to communicate in the classroom. We have the whole continuum.

Gwen opened the floor for questions. There were none. Ellen thanked Gwen for sharing and for her partnership with this. One thing Ellen highlighted from Gwen's overview was that some of these tools, such as the Google Read & Write extension, can be made available to all students. So, that is something to think about as we move forward.

MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS – Shared by Linda Hoste, Director of Categorical Programs
Ellen introduced Linda to talk to the council about our multilingual learners, the instructional model for these students, and some of the resources being used (such as apps, translating tools, etc.).

Linda: This topic is opening a door for researchers. I recently came across a 2019 study that found students who were trained on the use of Google Translate performed worse than other groups when they had to write a composition on their own. The summary was that presumably the students had become overly reliant on Google's help. Of course, that is only one study of many coming out, but it is interesting to see what people are finding as they look more closely at these tools and their role in language development.

I think a very important message is that online tools should never be a replacement for quality instruction. We cannot deny these tools; they are helpful as extra support for out of classroom enrichment or even personal use, but not in place of instruction. These tools certainly have their limitations, and I think we have to look at them in terms of how they contribute to language development and whether or not a tool is appropriate for a student based on their level.

There are many tools in the district that are multilingual friendly, like MyOn and Newsela, which can be helpful for Intermediate and advanced level students. However, beginners and newcomers need more robust supports. We also have to think about what online tools we use in our daily routines. For example, when students are doing research projects, they will use Wikipedia. There is a simple English version of Wikipedia with more visual elements to help give students context. Students may use the dictate feature in programs like OneNote, or even in their email. There are digital storytelling tools that I think can be very helpful for multilingual learners, so that they can express themselves creatively. I have seen some teachers use Book Creator to help students create story boards and narratives. Gwen mentioned Google Read-and-Write, and I have seen that used to support multilingual learners. I have also seen poor examples of Google Translate being used by teachers. For example, I was in a class where the teacher spent 20 minutes giving instructions to the students and then showed slides of the instructions in different languages. What happened is that the multilingual learners in the classroom disengaged during the instructional portion and simply waited for the slide that had the information in their primary language. While the students could complete the task, they were not engaged in the lesson. So, it is important to be thoughtful about the use of these tools within instruction to avoid them being a crutch for students.

Ellen opened the floor for questions about what Linda shared.

- **Ellen:** Every tool has the potential for poor use. How do we support strong use of these tools? How do we support teachers so that they are using the tools in an intentional and meaningful way?
- **Carlito:** Linda, what I am hearing you say is that we must let our multilingual students struggle a little bit within the language they are trying to develop. Instead of trying to translate for three different languages, we need to find different supports to help the student access the English language.
    - **Linda:** Yes, sometimes it is about immersion. This is especially true when there aren't a lot of support options for a student's primary language; even translation tools don't translate in every language. What we need is appropriate instruction and expectations for students based on their proficiency level. For example, you wouldn't ask a newcomer to write a 200-word essay in English.

- o **Rahman:** I speak different languages and have gone through the same struggle myself. Google Translate is a good tool for vocabulary building, but for anything beyond that (conversation, translating longer sentences, paragraph composition, etc.) we have to rely on regular instruction. There may be some languages, like Spanish or French, where the translation is very good. However, for languages like Arabic or Persian, translating full paragraphs can really take you in the wrong direction.
  - o **Linda:** You are absolutely right! When students rely on these tools too much, we spend a lot of time trying to correct things the students have learned the wrong way.
- **Kelly:** Is there a way to create a one-page document to help teachers with some of these resources? For a lot of teachers, they are just trying to figure this out on their own. They want to be able to connect with students and help them access the learning, but they may not be aware of all the resources available to them or what is appropriate for different proficiency levels. The last thing they want to do is rely on a tool that ends up causing issues for students later.
  - o **Linda:** Thanks for that, Kelly. One thing we would encourage is to allow the student to share their understanding in some way, even if in their native language. Even if we can't understand it, we can find ways to translate it. The important thing is we are identifying what they are understanding.
- **Ellen:** Thank you! Great discussion! It is important to consider these multi-faceted pieces and I appreciate that people are already starting to think about what kinds of resources for teachers would be helpful.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT FOR ALL LEARNERS

The next step is to think about all the students and the learning we want to see in classrooms. Considering everything we have talked about today, what do we want to explore, learn, and create next? She put the council into small breakout rooms to discuss:

- What makes sense to you as next steps for RTCC?
- What should we explore/research?

Ellen invited council members to share what they talked about in small groups.

- **Gwen:** We talked about gathering student voice; leveraging student clubs in Secondary Schools and getting ideas about what works in terms of accessibility and what tools they like to use, because students know what is out there and they are very creative in getting their needs met.
- **Melinda:** In consideration of what Linda was saying, our group talked about the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) strategies for English Language Learners and how they can come into play here. Instead of relying on technology such as Google Translate, we can lean more into these strategies which work really well. At my school, the SIOP coach and I (as a Technology Integration Specialist) are teaming up, so that we can find a combined approach that focuses more on the quality of instruction and how the tools can support it, rather than on the tools themselves.
  - o **Ellen:** Thank you, Melinda! SIOP strategies and UDL (Universal Design for Learning) strategies help a lot of students, not just multilingual students. I was talking to Kerrie about how I color code everything because when I was a middle school teacher I had students of all different needs, so I use that color coding as a visual cue to let people know which information belongs together / is similar. I love you calling out using those powerful instructional strategies and then considering tools that can be in support of them. The focus is on the quality of learning.
- **Kelly:** Our group also talked about leveraging student voice and about the disparity between resources available for the different languages our students speak (ex: more resources for Spanish speakers vs. Tagalog speakers). What can we do to further support students whose languages aren't as accessible through mainstream curricula?

Ellen shared her appreciation for the discussion and multiple perspectives on this topic. Ellen asked the council to complete a google form to identify what they may be interested in tackling next. What kind of work could we take on to support our learners? Ellen gave people some time to complete the form during the meeting before adjourning.

APPRECIATION

Ellen closed the meeting by making space for people to share any messages of gratitude. She opened the comments by expressing her own appreciation of the passion the council demonstrates in supporting our students and the work they have dedicated to it.

- **Kerrie:** Thank you to Gwen and Linda for providing a broader perspective.
- **Woody:** I appreciate seeing the work that is happening.
- **Kelly:** I love how responsive this council is.
- **Melinda:** Hearing other people's ideas really helps me to think, so I am very grateful for that.
- **Ellen:** Thank you for dedicating your time and ideas. I am looking forward to the work we will do next. We will craft our next meeting based on what we have discussed tonight.

NEXT STEPS

Upcoming meetings:

- Jan. 24, 2023
- April 4, 2023
- June 6, 2023

MEETING ADJOURNED

5:46pm

ADDENDUM

Dr. Ellen Dorr, *Chief of Technology & Strategic Initiatives*
I am excited that the snow outside my house will be gone this week.

Dr. Bob Ettinger, *Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment*
I am excited about many things, but I am authentically excited about sharing some digital citizenship resources today, because they are good and not enough people know about them.

Barbara Folmer, *District Website Coordinator*
I am excited that we recently received closure from the Office of Civil Rights (regarding ADA Compliance for the RSD website). It was a long process, but a positive one.

Jason Franklin, *Executive Director of Business Services*
I am excited about the work we are doing in Business Services. We are trying out some new things that will hopefully make things easier for our staff districtwide.

Cathleen Gonzales, *Customer Service Manager*
I am excited that my 6th grade grandson is playing basketball this year. He is very athletic. I am also looking forward to having time off over the holidays and spending time with family.

Emrie Hollander, *Assistant Principal, Honey Dew Elementary*
Something I am really excited about right now is that my daughter (who is a Freshman at Hazen) is playing Varsity Basketball this year. They are currently 2-0 and they have a game tonight!

Linda Hoste, *Director of Categorical Programs*

I am excited to be here! Thank you for inviting me. I am on a Mayor's Inclusion Taskforce Committee for the City of Renton and I am excited to be taking two students with me to the meeting on Thursday where they will get to meet with the Mayor and engage in city meetings. I am also excited about the England vs. France football game on Saturday.

Kelly Jones, *Assistant Principal, Hazen High School*
I am excited that after this meeting, I am going to go supervise our girls' wrestling meet. This is the first time we have had a girls-only wresting team, so I am excited to go do that.

Woody Sobey, *CTE STEM Facilitator*
Along with the England game, I am excited because my Dad and I went out for our first tandem paddle this weekend and did seven miles in the kayak. Last summer, I did a goofy kayaking event for a silly long distance and I have been trying to get my Dad to do it with me, so I am excited to see how that goes.

Kerrie Thornton, *Administrative Assistant*
I am excited because directly before this meeting, I got a callback for a musical I auditioned for.

Carlito Umali, *Assistant Principal, Talley High School*
We have a total of 42 new students coming in this trimester! It's been nice to get to know students. Today there was a student who stayed after school and we went upstairs to where the Science training was being held and got some sandwiches, and the student said: "this school's not that bad". It's little things like this that make me excited.

Melinda Van De Sompele, *Teacher and Technology Integration Specialist, Renton Park Elementary*
I am excited about the science unit we are doing right now on weather and climate. Despite being close to Winter Break, my 3rd graders were so engaged while making posters to connect their learning together. We put them up and did a gallery walk. It was very exciting for us today.

Gwen Zuehlke, *Secondary Special Education Director*
I am excited because my son comes home next Thursday from college! He hasn't been home since May, so I am excited to have him home for the holiday.