

Renton Technology Coordinating Council (RTCC)

Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2023

ATTENDING

Dr. Ellen Dorr, Shelby Scovel, Rahman Abdul, Dr. Bob Ettinger, Barbara Folmer, Jason Franklin, Amy Frey, Cathleen Gonzales, Jay Gray, Emrie Hollander, Kelly Jones, Tyann Nguyen, Keith Peck, Woody Sobey, Kerrie Thornton, Carlito Umali, and Melinda Van De Sompele. With special guest: Gavin Lees (Auburn School District)

AGENDA

- [Welcome and Introductions](#)
- [Review Minutes](#)
- [Project Updates](#)
- [Learning Feedback Review](#)
- [Creating Resource Review](#)
- [Appreciation](#)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ellen welcomed the council members and thanked them for their participation. She reminded the council that the role of RTCC is to serve as a forum to review technology decisions and ensure that they maximize student performance and achievement. Ellen went over the agenda and emphasized that the primary focus of the evening would be to review and share information from the Learning and Creating groups.

Ellen asked everyone to introduce themselves by sharing their name, role, and some interesting new learning they have done recently. She separated the council into breakout rooms so that people could have more robust discussion in smaller groups. When the council members returned from breakout rooms, Ellen opened the floor for sharing with the whole group.

Team Sharing

- **Bob:** I ended up in a breakout room with two Technology Integration Specialists (TIS) who shared a lot of learning they are doing. The work they are doing is neat! So, I would encourage those of you who work in school buildings to partner with your TIS. They have the capacity for a lot of leadership.
- **Ellen:** I had the privilege of meeting with two Career and Technical Education (CTE) students last week, one from Hazen and one from Renton High. They gave public comment at a board meeting a couple weeks ago regarding Technology needs for CTE. They did a lot of research and data collection, including student and teacher feedback, which they compiled to present. We met for an hour, and they talked me through the information they gathered, what their findings were, and asked for my thoughts on the information. It was very impressive, and I am excited to continue that conversation with my team and to expand the ways in which we hear from users and what they need. Keith, was there anything you wanted to share about this?
 - **Keith:** I was super proud of them and the work they put in to look at policies across school districts and to really consider how we are preparing them for their lives beyond high school. It was exciting to see them take the lead and go after it.
 - **Ellen:** It was amazing. They collected data about the 1:1 program of eighteen school districts in King County, which they laid out in a spreadsheet with hyperlinks. They were really prepared.

- **Woody:** I have never been a phenomenal note-taker. I take notes, but then I can't find them again later or use them efficiently. I recently started using Obsidian which helps me to interlink with other people's notes. I have tags to sort by, I can link between notes, and there is a graph view that shows all the interconnections so that I can group the notes and make sense of them. I have really been enjoying figuring out how to use and explore this tool.

Minutes

Ellen shared the [January 24, 2023 Minutes](#) and gave the council time to review them. She asked for questions, clarifications, or corrections. There were none.

Ellen thanked Kerrie for taking such detailed notes. She commented on how they are a great resource which she has been able to share with others. Ellen gave an example about a time when someone on a tech directors' thread had inquired about translating power point slides for multilingual (ML) students. With such detailed notes, she could easily direct the people on that thread to the RTCC minutes where representatives from the RSD ML department spoke about use of translation in presentations for ML learners. It is helpful to have the documentation to refer to.

Core Values and Strategic Framework

Ellen grounded the meeting with a reminder that our work is in service of students and to ensure they have the resources they need for learning. She noted that all departments in the district are working in alignment with the [District Core Values and Strategic Framework](#) and outlined how Technology Services (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 UPDATES

Ellen shared project updates from TS.

- **Zoom Rooms:** We will be installing Zoom Rooms in all schools, so that they can host hybrid zoom meetings (both in-person and virtual participants). Zoom rooms ensure people can engage and participate, even if they cannot attend a meeting in-person, which is helpful for things like inter-school partnerships, shared PLC meetings, IEP meetings with families, A-Net coaching with offsite instructors, and more.
- **Front Office Digital Signage:** We will be standardizing front office digital signage so that every school has a digital display to present school information.
- **Laptops for Paraeducators:** Paraeducators were indicated in the upcoming device refresh cycle and pending board approval we plan to provide each paraeducator with their own laptop and a shared docking station (vs. the previous model of shared desktops). With their own devices, paraeducators can more flexibly engage with resources and provide direct support.
- **Gym/Commons AV Pilot:** At the last meeting, we talked about how we were starting the gym/commons modernization pilot at Maplewood Heights. The electrical component will be put in over spring break, but we are waiting on hardware, so the project is delayed.
- **Zoom Phones:** We are exploring Zoom Phones as a replacement for our current Mitel/ShorTel phones. They would operate in a similar way with a desk handset, but also integrate through computers and optionally through cell phones.

Ellen opened the floor for questions, clarifications, or comments. There were none.

LEARNING AND CREATING

Ellen shared her screen to re-orient the council to the priorities established at the beginning of the school year.

- accessibility support for ML learners and students receiving special education (SPED) 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

For the last couple meetings, we have focused on the first listed priority: “accessibility support for ML learners and students receiving special education (SPED) services.” In January, the council began brainstorming around two objectives identified through discussion and from the feedback survey: the need to gather feedback and experience from students (learning) and resources for instruction (creating). For each of these objectives, the council members self-selected into one of two groups:

- **Learning:** For council members interested in conducting empathy interviews with ML students.
- **Creating:** For council members interested in identifying how to research and organize resources by learning need, starting with ML learning levels.

Since the last meeting, the council members worked independently on the action items established in their group. Ellen gave the groups an opportunity to meet for 10 minutes to review what they have pulled together so far and to prepare to share their progress with the full council. Members who were not present at the January meeting were invited to join whichever group they were most interested in.

Learning and Feedback Review

- **Melinda:** One of the things I shared in our group is that a lot of our ML learners are frustrated. There is a lot of technology out there and it can be overwhelming. Some of them are doing so much to try to understand, but it is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) strategies that they are looking for. So, it might be helpful to streamline the technology that is used so that it is standard across the board, easy to recognize, and easy to access when needed to support their learning.
- **Kelly:** There didn’t seem to be any unknown applications or programs. The kids mentioned things like Google Translate, using the internet to look things up, and YouTube videos. The students also talked about how it is the little things teachers can do that make the most difference, like having pictures, vocabulary lists, and subtitles on videos (or giving students the opportunity to put subtitles on in their home language). The kids are working very hard, and they want to get their education but don’t want to inconvenience the teacher.
- **Ellen:** One thing that was re-emphasized for me by the student feedback was how much the instructional strategies matter. Any time someone is asking for a translation tool, it must be grounded in how the tool will support the learning, not just the tool itself.
- **Carlito:** A theme I was noticing is that there is not a lot of collaboration in terms of technology. It is something we could work on.
- **Tyann:** Opposite of what Melinda said, my 2nd graders *don’t* seem to have a lot of technology options. They told me they save their classwork for homework so they can use a parent’s phone to figure out what words mean on Google Translate. It sounded like they don’t have any technology assistance for translation in the classroom other than their teacher’s best effort. One of the students I interviewed speaks Cambodian. She says her teacher tries really hard to translate for her, but a lot of the time is unable to, whereas the other ML student in class speaks Spanish, so his experience is very different.

- **Rahman:** Most of these tools are input driven. You need a good skillset in your native language to use them. If you are a 1st or 2nd grader, you are still developing your native language and if you cannot type or use voice assistance, it will be hard to get a good output on the translation side. That is something to keep in mind.
- **Ellen:** I appreciate the work of this team - connecting with students and learning about their experience directly from them. It is important for us to continually get their feedback and input, because even if what they say is not surprising, it is a good reminder.

Creative Resource Review, shared by Kerrie Thornton

It was helpful to hear the feedback from the empathy interviews, because it informs the work we are doing in our group. Part of the challenge we face in creating resources for ML learners is not knowing all the places where needs aren't being met and not having a perfect solution for the ones we do know. While we cannot control what the instruction looks like, we can narrow down what technology resources are available to support students/families/teachers and collaborate with the ML department to determine the best use-case for those tools. What we have to show you are two hubs of information: one external facing for students/families and one internal facing for staff. When fully fleshed out, they will serve that purpose.

Student-Facing Website:

MULTILINGUAL TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

TRANSLATE THIS PAGE



WELCOME!

The Renton School District is committed to equity and access to information for all students and families. While translation tools are not a substitute for quality language learning instruction, the tools below will help assist students and families get the information they need to be successful and engage in their school communities.



[Speech-to-Text Resources](#)



[Text-to-Speech Resources](#)



[Speech-to-Speech Resources](#)



[Independent Practice and Play](#)

Staff and Teachers can access these resources by visiting the [Multilingual Technology Resources for Teachers](#) page in RSDnet or by clicking the button below.

TEACHER ACCESS

The very first things students/families see on this page is a video that demonstrates how to translate the website. The video has minimal words and clear visuals, so that it can be understood even if the viewer does not speak English. The goal is to ensure that students/families can access the information on the resource page and everywhere else on the RSD website, since anything composed directly in our web platform can be translated into any language. How good those translations are is unclear. Barbara, do you know?

- **Barbara:** I have talked to Audita about that, and the translation tool is helpful, but it doesn't replace a live translator when it is important that they understand all the details.
- **Kerrie:** And for things like that, we can also make videos that use live translation and there are subtitles available through YouTube.

The tools are broken down by feature: text to text, text to speech, speech to text, speech to speech, and independent practice resources. Each subgroup has its own page with tools they can use and will have videos on how to use them. From this page, there is also a "Teacher Access" button, which links to the RSDnet resource page for staff.

Staff-Facing Website

Multilingual Technology Resources for Teachers



Important Note

We are committed to access for all of our students. The tools listed on this page are designed to support teachers with linguistic communication and special use cases. **These tools are not a substitute for quality instruction.**

Translation tools can be effective for small interactions, but they are NOT always accurate and may not communicate your objective correctly.

There are many great strategies for working with ML students that will help them to engage meaningfully in the classroom and improve their language acquisition.

Talk with your school's **SIOP Lead** about these strategies and visit **Curriculum Center 2.0** to find ML resources that work for your classroom.



The Tools

Resource Name	Capabilities	Use Cases	Access and Information
Google Translate	Text to Text Speech to Text Text to Speech Text to Text		Apple Store Play Store Website
Microsoft Language	Text to Text Speech to Text Text to Speech Text to Text		Apple Store Play Store
PowerPoint Translation	Text to Text Text to Text		Office 365 Video - Flipped Classroom Tutorial - Subtitles in PowerPoint
YouTube Translation	Text to Text Text to Text		All YouTube Videos with English Subtitles Video - HOW TO - Change the Subtitles on a YouTube Video
Website Translation	Website Content Translation		Chrome Extension Video - HOW TO - Change the Language on the RSD Website

For students and families, we want them to know the tools available and how to use them in whatever way they need it. For staff, we want them to be mindful about when and how to use the tools. So, the staff page opens with an “Important Note” reminding them that the tools listed should not be used in place of instruction. It highlights access to ML learning resources and the names/contact information for their SIOP leads. After that, it lists the tools, what features are

available, and for which languages. It will also include use-cases for the tools and resources on how to use them. This is where we would partner with the ML department to gather best use-case information and possibly some instruction examples.

Creator Group Additions

- **Kerrie:** During our conversation today, our group had some ideas for additions. Keith suggested we add a feedback option on the student-facing website so that users can help us identify what works and what does not.
- **Bob:** I want to give some gratitude to Kerrie for building this shell for resources. As she pointed out, it is just the technical side of things; it can never and should never replace the instruction, but it is helpful to have clear resources. There are a million things we could add, but sometimes more is not better, so it is important to balance having quality resources, but keeping it streamlined.
- **Ellen:** Something I am hearing overall is the connection to instruction. As we have these resources, they can be shared at a TIS meeting so that people are thinking about them in the context of instruction.

Full Group Discussion

After each group shared, Ellen posed two questions to the council to consider.

- What stands out to you?
- What implications does this have for RTCC?
- What are possible next steps?
- What else?

She opened breakout rooms so that people had an opportunity to reflect on the questions in small groups. Afterward, she invited people to share what they discussed.

- **Amy:** I was in a group with Keith and Carlito and one of the last things we talk about was some possible next steps. It is great to have a starting place for both teachers who don't know what resources are available and ML students who don't have much experience with technology. However, we also talked about some differentiation in terms of assembling resources and training so that as people become more savvy with these tools, there are more advanced options to consider. We feel like this is a good start but there is a potential for differentiation in future professional development.
- **Emrie:** Along the same lines, we talked about how knowing and understanding some of these tools would make a huge difference. For example, if teachers knew they could easily put subtitles on a YouTube video, that would

be huge for them! Creating quick and easy resources like “Did You Know?” videos could be the kind of lift they need. Bob was talking about that hub where the resources are, but I also think we need to operationalize that to make it really practical for teachers.

- **Bob:** Emrie shared that there is a lot going on for teachers right now, and we certainly don’t want to add more to their plates. We aren’t suggesting that teachers need or should use these tools, but we want to make sure they have the resources available to them if they need them.
- **Ellen:** This is one of my favorite things about having great resources. It’s not that we are giving PDs and telling people they need to use these things, it is having the information readily available when someone is asking for it. One of the ways we can do that is to familiarize more people to these resources so that they can be a connector for others. I like the idea of partnering with the ML department and SIOP leads to get their feedback and contributions to these resources, so that it becomes something they naturally refer to and can direct people to.
- **Bob:** The only other thing that came up in our groups, is how we can bring the work of the Learning and Creating groups together. For example, we have this feedback from students and what they have identified as helpful resources, so maybe we can add student quotes to the resource pages. It would be a unique way of bringing student voice into systems.
 - **Ellen:** I like that!

NEXT STEPS

Before closing, Ellen shared details for the final meeting of the year. The meeting will be on June 6th and held in-person. Ellen asked the council members to bring a learning artifact to share. It would be ideal if the learning artifact was related to technology. She also noted that it would be great to see the development of the ML resource pages at that meeting.

APPRECIATION

Ellen closed the meeting by inviting people to share words of gratitude and appreciation.

- **Ellen:** I want to thank Kerrie for doing some great work building these new resources. I appreciate your diligence toward that, your technical writing skills, and your illustration skills. I love the little character you created.
- **Kelly:** Thank you to Ellen for the little push/reminder to do our empathy interviews. There is so much going on that it is easy for these kinds of things to fall off my radar. I am so glad I did these. Every time I do these kinds of check-ins, I really enjoy it and I take a lot away from it. It is such a powerful reminder of how important it is to talk to the kids and hear their stories. It is amazing how honest they are willing to be.
- **Carlito:** I appreciated seeing the elementary school responses to the interviews and comparing them to the feedback I received from my seniors. It is cool to see the level of response from the younger students and how the survival skills they are gaining can be recognized in their counterparts who are only 8 weeks from graduating. It is neat to see the whole trajectory.
- **Keith:** I am thankful to my student who is trying out a radial keyboard. They have limited mobility and this specialized keyboard has all the keys in a circle with the most common used on the inside and the lesser used on the outside. They like it so far and I am grateful they were willing to just try it out and see how it goes for them.
- **Ellen:** Thank you to Gavin for joining us. I think learning together is powerful. Thank you for connecting with us.
- **Gavin:** Right back at you! Thank you for having me. It has been great, and I have learned a lot.
- **Ellen:** As a final gratitude, I am thankful for it still being light out right now and for the days getting longer.

Meeting Adjourned

5:42pm