

Renton Technology Coordinating Council (RTCC)

Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2023

ATTENDING

Dr. Ellen Dorr, Dr. Bob Ettinger, Barbara Folmer, Amy Frey, Cathleen Gonzales, Jay Gray, Keith Peck, Woody Sobey, and Kerrie Thornton

AGENDA

- [Welcome and Introductions](#)
- [Minutes Review](#)
- [Project Updates](#)
- [Course for the year](#)
- [Appreciation](#)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ellen welcomed the council members and thanked them for their attendance. Ellen reminded the council that the role of RTCC is to serve as a forum to review technology decisions to ensure they maximize student performance and achievement. In addition, she commented on how the council helps us to examine the effectiveness of what we are doing and where improvements can be made. She noted two examples of how our partnership helps to inform technology decisions.

- **Receiving Feedback from Classrooms:** Keith's CTE students presented the research they did last year regarding the specific needs of the CTE program, the limitations of the current student-issued devices for those needs, and their recommendations for alternatives.
- **Diverse Voice Informing Decisions:** At the Future Ready Leadership Forum, Ellen shared how RTCC reviews the website filtering policy because those kinds of decisions require a greater scope and diversity of voice to weigh in and re-examine what things are working, what effects they have on the classroom environment, and what could be adjusted.

Ellen went over the agenda and asked everyone to introduce themselves by sharing their name, role, and any discovery/learning/experience from start of year. See [addendum](#) for individual responses.

Minutes Review

The minutes were provided to the council in advance for review. Ellen gave the council a few minutes to look over them in case they didn't have an opportunity prior to the meeting. She asked for questions, clarifications, or additions.

- **Woody:** On page 7, there is a blank space where I had used jargon Kerrie didn't recognize. She did follow up, but it looks like it wasn't updated. The section is: "So, we developed a new Robotics website with custom built *blank space* boards and tried to build curriculum around it for these new teachers. " The missing words are: "Arduino Leonardo."

Core Values and Strategic Framework

Ellen grounded the meeting with a reminder that the work of the technology department is in service of students, with an emphasis on supporting the goals of the [Strategic Framework](#) and working in alignment with the district core values. She outlined that alignment as follows:

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

PROJECT UPDATES

Zoom Phones

During the summer, Technology Services (TS) completed the migration from Mitel Phones to Zoom Phones. Ellen shared a story about how she spoke with a principal who mentioned they really like the Zoom Phones because they can take a call no matter where they are. She also noted how she and the principal were able to merge a call with a third person, which she had not done before. She asked the council to consider the Zoom Phone roll-out and identify what went well and what could have been better. She gave the members time to discuss in table groups before opening the floor to full group discussion.

Team Discussion – Positives

- **Amy:** In our building, the actual switch of the phones was well done. It was fast and efficient. We also had a clear time frame of when it was going to happen.
- **Cathy:** Everything was well prepared ahead of time. There were only a few cases where we could not figure out where to send the phones.
 - **Ellen:** I'll also note that the interns were helpful with this because they labeled all the devices with users and locations. It was also dependent on how well Office Managers had been using the system to update their phone lists, since the distribution was based on those entries.
- **Ellen:** We have good learning resources put together. We prioritized what the highest needs were for learning to get people started.
- **Keith:** We got a notice at the end of the school year that the phones would be changing. So, unless someone wasn't paying attention, there were no surprises.
 - **Amy:** That information was also labeled clearly, so it was easy to find. The communication was very good.
- **Kerrie:** It is good that people could use the new phones, even if they didn't set anything up.
 - **Ellen:** Although, there were a couple of things that were challenging about that, like not being required to press "9" to call out and finding the district directory.
- **Jay:** The system was operatable when we expected it to be.

Team Discussion – Challenges

- **Kerrie:** The desk phone and Zoom app are two types of phones that can be used simultaneously but also work independently. They are both controlled in one location (on the Zoom web portal). That is a little bit confusing.
 - **Ellen:** It is challenging because the Zoom Phones are a multi-faceted mobile system that manages the functionality of the desk phone, but also provides options for a mobile device and a computer. The previous phone system was just phones. So, there is some disconnect.
- **Amy:** The timing for teachers was difficult. When they get back in August, everything is happening so quickly. There is so much going on, that dealing with new technology can be overwhelming.
 - **Ellen:** Some districts did the transition mid-year, which would also be challenging. There are also restrictions in terms of the technical transition because our options were to cut over all at once, or you wait 30 days between each roll-out.

- **Amy:** I don't know a better way to do it. It's just always a challenge at the start of the year. Setting up the phone is low priority compared to other demands. There are some staff that have it all done and are really taking advantage of the phone system functionality. Others are just able to make and receive a phone call.
- **Keith:** Admittedly, I haven't done a lot with the phone. I don't use it that much, so I haven't dug into any of the materials. I can make and receive a phone call.
- **Bob:** I am a laggard with my phone. I can barely make a phone call. There are a lot of powerful things available through the phone, but I haven't taken the time to think them through. It is interesting to consider that even people who have a lot of technical ability can still have hang ups about new technology.
- **Ellen:** There will continue to be opportunities for people to do more learning as they are ready. In addition, our team members are working with individual schools to ensure things are set up the way they need them to be. There is also an interesting interplay between determining what people would like to do and what the system is capable of to make that happen.
- **Keith:** One suggestion would be to pair up with Technology Integration Specialists (TIS) for the three top things that are asked about phones, and then have them do small trainings during a professional development day.
 - **Ellen:** I like the idea of hearing from schools about what the outstanding needs are and addressing those directly.
- **Amy:** It is nice that the phone system is so customizable. Our office staff are early adapters because they use the phones so often. For those who don't, it is nice they can choose to not have the phone ring to their computer and can set up their phone in a way that meets their needs.

Other Projects

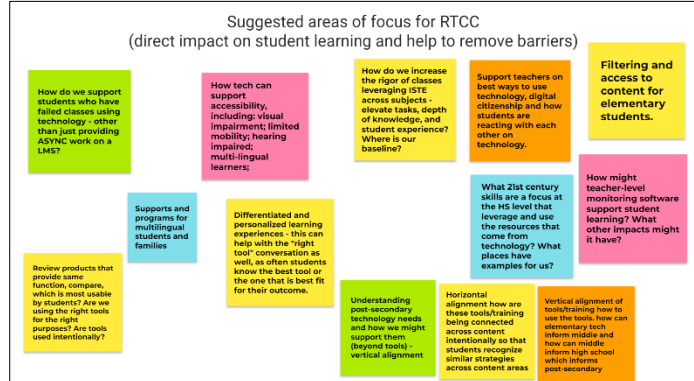
Ellen updated the council on the other projects TS is working on:

- **Gym/Commons AV Modernization:** This summer, TS finalized the pilot at Maplewood Heights Elementary (MHE). It was important to do a pilot to determine what worked and what did not. After review, upgrades were made to the original plan, and we are happy with the results. The set up includes a clear, sturdy flat panel, audio equipment that can support both the gym and commons spaces, and a new projector in the commons. The Physical Education (PE) teacher at MHE is going to start doing professional development sessions and give us more feedback. This Friday, we are meeting with the vendor to start Phase 1 of the districtwide implementation, starting with elementary schools.
- **Zoom Rooms:** This project is in process. We are navigating issues at some locations, such as: identifying preferred location for installation, access to data ports and power sources, and locking the audio bar. We are managing those on a case-by-case basis.
- **Front Office Digital Signage:** This project includes adding a panel at the entrance of a school building that will display messaging to students and families. Right now, we are coordinating around the vestibule work that is happening.
- **Up Next - Classroom Audio:** This year, we will be in the research and design phase for classroom audio enhancement.

Ellen opened the floor for any questions regarding project updates. There were none.

COURSE FOR THE YEAR

Ellen reviewed the work of RTCC during 2022-2023 school year, highlighting our focus on impact for students and removing barriers. She presented the Jamboard we initially used to gather ideas for what to focus on, from which we were able to identify our priorities.

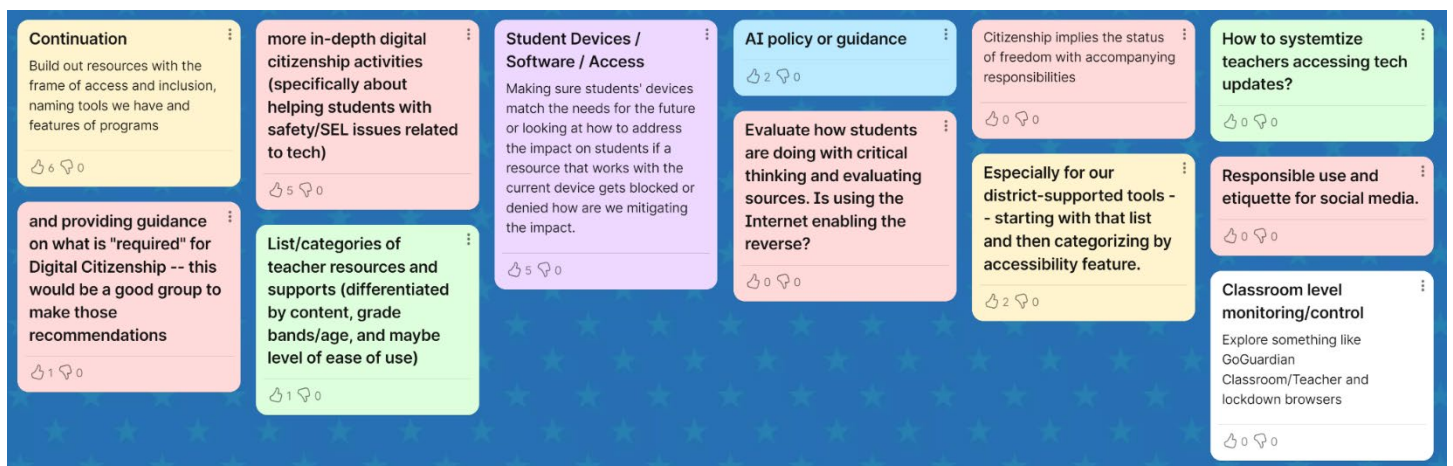
Jamboard	RTCC Priorities 2022-23
Suggested areas of focus for RTCC (direct impact on student learning and help to remove barriers) 	• Accessibility support for ML Learners and students receiving special education services. • Increasing student engagement and support through technology • Differentiated 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

We spent much of the year working on the first priority: “Accessibility support for ML Learners and students receiving special education services.” As a part of this effort, the council members split into two groups to complete two actions.

- **Learning:** Each team member held empathy interviews with multilingual (ML) students to learn more about their experience in classrooms. This information helped inform what kind of resources would be helpful to students.
- **Creating:** This team worked on building the resources for ML students and instructional support for teachers of ML students.
 - Ellen noted that she and Bob recently had a meeting with the Special Education (SpED) department. In the meeting, they talked about expanding the content of the ML resource pages to focus more generally on inclusion and accessibility: identifying tools (or tool capability) that staff members may not know about, to meet the needs of students regardless of whether they are ML or SpED.

Having considered this previous work, Ellen asked what the council would like to focus on this year. Do we want to expand on the work we did last year? Is there something new we should consider? Ellen opened a Padlet and invited people to note their thoughts. She demonstrated how individuals could add a thumbs-up to indicate they are interested in exploring a specific topic.

Padlet



The Padlet board contains the following sticky notes:

- Continuation:** Build out resources with the frame of access and inclusion, naming tools we have and features of programs. (6 thumbs up)
- more in-depth digital citizenship activities (specifically about helping students with safety/SEL issues related to tech):** (5 thumbs up)
- Student Devices / Software / Access:** Making sure students' devices match the needs for the future or looking at how to address the impact on students if a resource that works with the current device gets blocked or denied how are we mitigating the impact. (5 thumbs up)
- AI policy or guidance:** (2 thumbs up)
- Evaluate how students are doing with critical thinking and evaluating sources. Is using the Internet enabling the reverse?** (0 thumbs up)
- Citizenship implies the status of freedom with accompanying responsibilities:** (0 thumbs up)
- Especially for our district-supported tools - starting with that list and then categorizing by accessibility feature.** (2 thumbs up)
- How to systemize teachers accessing tech updates?** (0 thumbs up)
- Responsible use and etiquette for social media.** (0 thumbs up)
- Classroom level monitoring/control:** Explore something like GoGuardian Classroom/Teacher and lockdown browsers. (0 thumbs up)
- and providing guidance on what is "required" for Digital Citizenship -- this would be a good group to make those recommendations:** (1 thumbs up)
- List/categories of teacher resources and supports (differentiated by content, grade bands/age, and maybe level of ease of use):** (1 thumbs up)

Discussion

- **Ellen:** Who asked about “How to systemize teachers accessing TS updates”? I’m not sure what that means.

- **Keith:** I did! You have all these resources that are great, but as a teacher, I don't go to those spaces to access the resources. For example, I was aware of the ML resources because they were shown here at RTCC, but then I couldn't find them when I needed them.
- **Ellen:** So, it's not just updates, it's resources and information.
- **Keith:** Yes! You already have the information out there. The question is: how are teachers connecting to these resources? How are we building it into the system to make it a habit for them to review those resources?'
- **Amy:** Also, it would be great if it could be categorized to make things easy to find, because there is just so much information.
- **Ellen:** It is true. We do have it organized in multiple ways. I do love that when people are looking for information, I can provide it to them because of how robust our resources are, but it would be super helpful if we could all navigate the resources equally well.
- **Ellen:** There are a couple of things I have been hearing about, that don't appear yet on the Padlet: classroom level monitoring and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Is there interest in this?
 - **Keith:** When you say: "classroom level monitoring," do you mean like being able to go on your computer and see what students are doing?
 - **Ellen:** Yes.
 - **Keith:** I would up-vote that.
- **Ellen:** What about AI? One of our middle schools is doing some professional development around AI. They want to learn more about it and what policies we have in place for that. We don't have any policies yet.
 - **Bob:** I connect this with Digital Citizenship. How to responsibly use AI is another component of Digital Citizenship that didn't exist when we rolled out our guidance.
 - **Ellen:** Yes, and one of the things I talked to an administrator about, is that we don't have a special AI section of our electronic resources and responsible use policy, because AI is just another form of technology rather than a fully separate thing that needs its own definitions. Other districts are putting out an AI statements or philosophy about its use, which we could consider. I just wasn't sure what the level of interest was for digging into this.
 - **Keith:** I think it is something we need to keep on our radar. It may be good to clarify our policy around AI before it gets more advanced and has more options.
- **Ellen:** Based on our conversation and the Padlet, here are the trends I am seeing:
 - Making resources more accessible.
 - Responsible use policy and digital citizenship.
 - As a side note, Ellen asked if anyone had heard any pushback regarding the use of the word "citizenship." She is leading a teacher-training class this fall and the students noted some misunderstanding about the use of the word "citizenship," which implies having to do with legal status. Since it was brought to her attention, she thought it would be useful to ask the group.
 - **Keith:** I looked up "citizenship." Citizenship implies that status of freedom with accompanying responsibilities. When you use citizenship that way, it makes sense. You have the freedom to use all these tools, but there is some responsibility implied with that access.
 - Partnering with TIS and considering how to leverage them more.
 - **Bob:** This is something we are working on with TIS currently. They spend the first part of the year exploring resources and implementing their learning in the classroom. Then, their next step is to engage in leadership at their buildings. However, despite careful planning there are still misunderstandings. For example, I heard from one TIS that there are rumors at their school that teachers are required to teach 30 minutes of digital citizenship every two weeks, which resulted in

some pushback. While there is Board Policy requiring this subject matter be taught, it does not mean it has to be every lesson taught in a specific way. It may be helpful for RTCC to be recommending body on behalf of TIS, to assist them with engaging in leadership at their schools.

Ellen will send the Padlet to the people who did not attend the meeting to get further feedback regarding this year's priorities. She will later send a reminder to everyone to review it again before the next meeting. Ellen thanked the council for their participation in this work; together we make more thoughtful recommendations due to the diverse lenses with which we review these topics.

APPRECIATION

Ellen opened the floor for council members to extend their appreciation for something or someone.

- **Ellen:** Kerrie, I appreciate all the work you did working on the Zoom Phones and working with Office Managers individually to help them use the system well.
- **Ellen:** Thank you to school people for making it here in person. We plan to have in-person meetings for the first and last meeting of the year. I will do a poll to see what people prefer for the ones in-between.
 - **Amy:** I really like being in-person. Sometimes, when you go out of your building, you can focus more on the task at hand.
 - **Keith:** The hard thing for me is that I am still in charge of after school clubs.
- **Amy:** Bob, you mentioned DESMOS earlier, and I want to say: it is fantastic! I think your department and facilitators have done a good job creating ongoing supports for the math teachers. The curriculum was rolled out nicely.
- **Bob:** I would like to thank Ellen for her great facilitation.
- **Keith:** I appreciate Ellen for inviting me to the Customer Service Director interview panel.
- **Ellen:** Thank you to Jay and his team for the additional time and work resolving the interruption this summer and getting us back on our feet (and for all the military jargon I learned in the process).
- **Cathy:** I want to thank Kerrie for her hard work training the new staff.
 - **Keith:** She also takes really good notes.
- **Ellen:** I just really appreciate all of you being willing to be a part of this. It helps us do a better job as a district. Recently, on the Tech Director's Listserv someone asked if anyone is doing a Tech Advisory Committee, and two different districts responded that the individual should check out the RTCC page on the Renton website to see our minutes and how we conduct our meetings, who attends, etc. It is really cool.

MEETING ADJOURNED

5:34pm

ADDENDUM

Dr. Ellen Dorr, *Chief of Technology & Strategic Initiatives*

Our summers are usually quite busy in Technology Services, but this year even more so! So, my favorite thing about the start of the school year is that even though it was busy, we were still able to get things started smoothly.

Dr. Bob Ettinger, *Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment*

One of my favorite things is our new 6-9 math curriculum: Desmos. It is really cool to watch students and teachers engage with these powerful digital manipulatives to better understand math concepts.

Barbara Folmer, *District Website Coordinator*

The most exciting thing for me is meeting the people who sign up for my classes who are eager to update their websites or SharePoint pages.

Amy Frey, Principal, McKnight Middle School

This is my first year as principal and first year at McKnight, so I have been meeting a lot of people and learning about the staff and families. It has been really great, so that is my favorite learning.

Cathleen Gonzales, Customer Service Manager

I have been learning a lot of new things since Rahman left the district, so that is my favorite learning, but opening a new school is always fun and exciting.

Jay Gray, Infrastructure Manager

My favorite discovery was finding out just how creative an educator could be without their most valuable resource available (context: due to the service interruption in August, the staff was unable to access the internet).

Keith Peck, CTE Facilitator and Computer Science Teacher, Hazen High School

My favorite learning experience from this year is something I can't talk about yet, but it has to do with WS. Also, we finally got an analog computer for students to start playing with, so that is exciting too.

Woody Sobey, CTE STEM Facilitator

My favorite experience so far is working with the new IB Environmental Science Teacher at Renton High who recently had a bunch of Computer Science students transfer into their class. They are working on building and testing data loggers to collect environmental data for their final project.

Kerrie Thornton, Administrative Assistant

I have been doing a lot of coverage at the start of the year, and I think my favorite thing is learning about all the things my former co-workers used to do and just how amazing there were/are. Now, we have new team members getting settled in, and it is nice to feel their excitement and watch them grow quickly.