

Renton Technology Coordinating Council (RTCC)

Meeting Minutes

October 8, 2024

ATTENDING

Dr. Ellen Dorr, Susan Talley, Alex Castro-Wilson, Dr. Bob Ettinger, Kristine Farwell, Jay Gray, Emrie Hollander, Kelly Jones, Woody Sobey, Kerrie Thornton, and Carlito Umali

AGENDA

- [Welcome and Introductions](#)
- [Project Updates](#)
- [Start of Year Feedback](#)
- [New Platform Feedback](#)
- [Focus for 2024-2025](#)
- [Celebrations](#)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ellen welcomed the council members and thanked them for their attendance. She 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.

Ellen advised the council that slides were sent in advance and encouraged them to access those slides as they include hyperlinks that the council would need later in the meeting. She went over the agenda and invited everyone to connect by answering the question: “What projects/opportunities are you most excited to engage in at the start of the 2024-25 School Year?”

See [addendum](#) for individual responses.

Core Values and Strategic Framework

Ellen grounded the meeting with a reminder that our work is in service of students: to ensure they have the resources they need for learning.

She shared how the work of the Technology Services department is in alignment with the [District Core Values and Strategic Framework](#).

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

Minutes Review

Ellen gave the council time to review the [June 4, 2024 Minutes](#). As they reviewed the minutes, she asked them to consider if there is anything that resonated or stood out to them from the previous meeting. She also welcomed any questions, corrections, or clarifications. There were none.

Ellen commented that she appreciates the work of this team and the transparency that results from having a record of the work we do together.

PROJECT UPDATES

- **Gym/Commons Punch List Review:** We have run into issues with restarts of the panels. We are putting pressure on the vendor to find a solution for the challenges we are encountering before we begin the next phase at secondary schools. Considering this information, we hope to begin installs at middle schools in the spring and high schools in the summer.
 - **Kristine:** The stability of the system is definitely something we want to lock down because of the increased use at the high school level. We are working with the vendor to ensure we have the best possible solution in place before expansion.
- **New Technology Services High-Level [Project Tracker](#):** Ellen gave navigation details for the council to access the new project tracker, which provides high-level details about the major projects supported by the Tech Levy. She reviewed the different parts of the tracker including: status updates, project description, learning resources, and additional details. She used the Promethean Panel project as an example, since it is one of the projects we receive a lot of questions about, specifically regarding the placement of the panel in the room and the allowable adjustments. In the “Additional Details” column of the tracker, there is a document called “Promethean Panel Installation Guidelines,” that provides more information about the standards for panel placement, the reasoning behind the placement standards, mount types and panel size based on space and use, and what changes can/will take place over time. She hopes this will be a helpful reference for people moving forward.

She asked people to consider if there is anything we should add that would be useful.

Project Updates - Questions/Discussion

- **Alex:** I noticed in the minutes that we are doing a Chromebook refresh. Is this something that would appear on the tracker?
- **Ellen:** We kept the device refreshes out of the project tracker, because this tracker was more for the larger projects that were noticeable new changes, vs. refresh cycles that are regular and ongoing. However, we can potentially build out a refresh schedule. We have laptops on a refresh cycle based on type and warranty of the device. For student Chromebooks, we refresh in 6th and 9th every year and alternating years at the elementary level. Was there something specific you were looking for?
 - **Alex:** I was wondering about the teacher laptop refresh because there are challenges with the current device, such as the battery hold.
 - **Ellen:** There is a trick for that. If you go to the power settings on your laptop, you can put your device in Power Saving mode. It won't change your experience using the device, but it holds charge longer. Anything else?
 - **Alex:** The mouse pad doesn't work well either.
 - **Ellen:** True. The track pad does not work well after regular use, especially if you don't use a separate mouse regularly. We have found that whatever device we get, there will always be some issues with them.
- **Ellen:** Is there anything else you have heard people ask about that should appear on the tracker? Installation height has been one of our most frequent questions, but is there anything else? Or if you think of something later, please let me know.
- **Alex:** Why is the Classroom Audio Project on hold? I don't understand what “capacity” refers to in this case.
- **Ellen:** Great question! The first is management capacity. Since we are still working on the Gym Display project, we are unable to manage a separate large-scale project. The second reason is that we were holding space in the tech levy due to budget constraints in case things need to shift.

START OF YEAR FEEDBACK

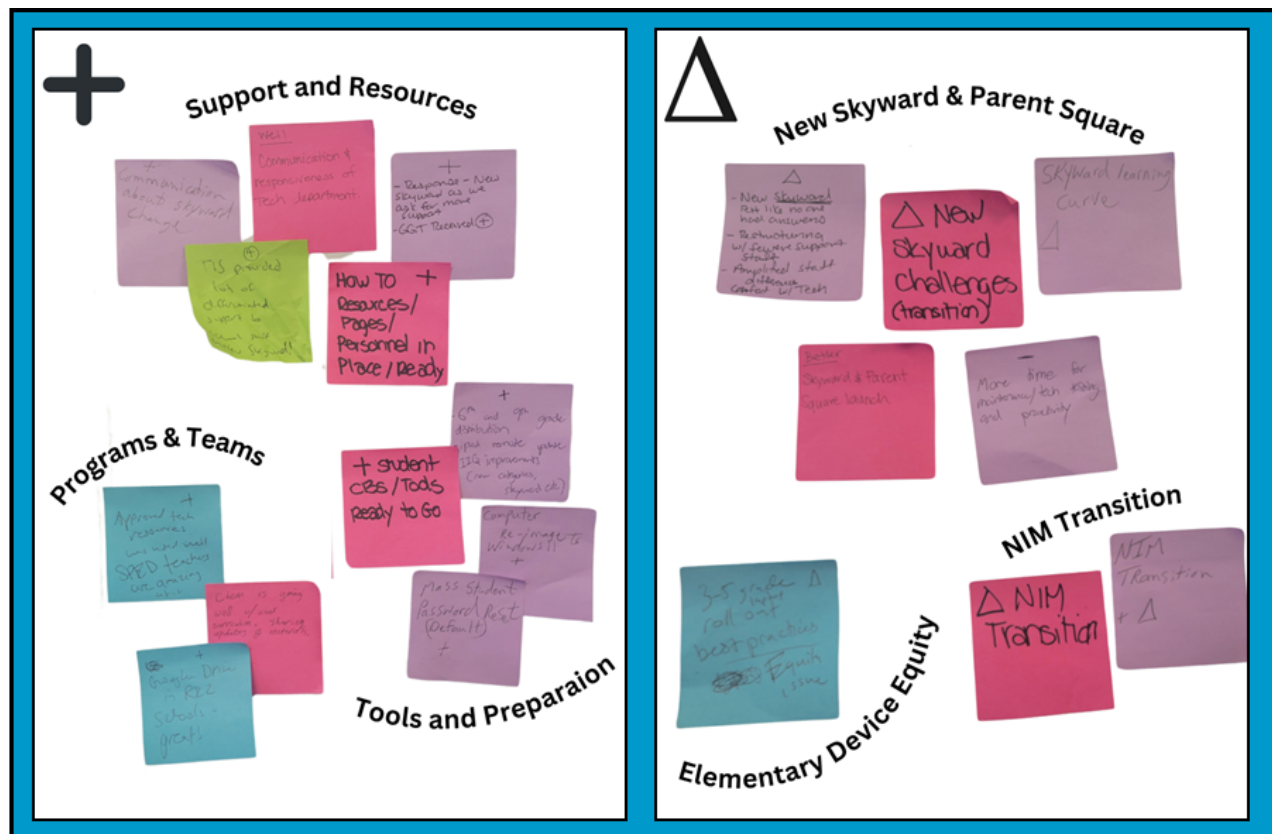
Ellen asked the council to reflect on the start of the year. What went well? What could have gone better? She asked the members to write their thoughts on post-it notes indicating plus or delta. She invited the council to share in table groups, then opened the floor for a full team discussion.

Plus	Delta
● Emrie: Audio in our cafeteria has really impacted student experience in a positive way, especially for our community events. We used it during family night, and it was great. It's also cool to see the way it is being used for instruction in our PE classes. ○ Ellen: Your school definitely seems to have fewer issues than others. ○ Kristine: It's really nice to hear about good experiences with the AV setup. ● Jay: We wrote down having resources and personnel in place. ○ Kerrie: Prior to the big fall transitions, resources were prepared and published, and staff were designated and prepped for support. Even if those resources weren't quickly accessed or utilized, it was good to have something to point people to when they needed it. ● Jay: Another plus is no outages this year. ● Alex: For me, the pluses have been the communication and responsiveness from our tech department. With the new rollouts, there have been a lot of emotions for teachers trying to navigate the new system. We directed people to the resources, which alleviated some of that stress, especially as people began to share what they learned with others. A big plus for me as a Technology Integration Specialist (TIS) supporting the transition, has been the "common issue list," where we could identify a problem and then get information on how to fix it. That has been really helpful at the school level. I never felt I was left in the dark. ○ Ellen: That is helpful to hear, because I know I was giving pretty consistent updates as things were getting configured. I also learned that some TIS were recreating this problem-solving document at the school level to address building specific issues, which makes sense because the kinds of issues at different levels and how to address them	● Kelly: The transition to Skyward amplified our teachers' varying comfortability with technology. It was difficult for the staff members who already struggle with technology changes; there were a lot of big feelings. For the staff who are more confident, they took the time to go in and figure things out. We really got to see that dichotomy at play. But it worked out because as people figured things out, they were helping others. We got there. However, compounded with changing our Classified Staff structure, it felt like challenge upon challenge, especially with the redistribution of responsibilities causing some permissions issues. On the positive side, the district was really responsive to our requests and updating our permissions as we restructured. ○ Ellen: We are debriefing the teacher-facing aspect of Skyward with TIS as well, but it's challenging as a district because of so many things happening in Skyward and the limited number of people who can make those changes. It would certainly be easier if we could just have someone to show people how to use it, but with so much variety in access and use, that learning has to be done on a smaller level where the needs are more consistent, which is why we went with the TIS model for learning.

will vary.

- **Carlito:** I recently learned about the [RSD Reviewed Resources](#) and how teachers are using them to identify rewards, extensions, and interventions to help students better engage in learning. The SpED team specifically leverages this resource to access differentiated learning tools for students, so they can engage in classroom learning in a way that works for them.
 - **Bob:** There is also a [Digital Tool Support Resources](#) page, where you can learn how to use those tools and resources. Any time a vendor shares a cool new way a resource can be used, I document it there. I don't think this page gets accessed often, but it should! There is a lot of useful information there.

Ellen requested that people drop off their post-its on the poster board at the end of the meeting to capture all the topics discussed. She shared her gratitude for everyone's patience as we navigated integrations and got things set up. Since Ellen has been triaging all the New Skyward help desk tickets in incidentIQ (help desk system), she was able to report there were over 600 tickets submitted regarding New Skyward, and the district is at a 94-95% resolution rate.



NEW PLATFORM FEEDBACK

Ellen welcomed any feedback regarding GoGuardian Teacher. She shared the [GoGuardian Teacher Resources](#) and talked about the professional development sessions that were held in early October for elementary and secondary teachers, led by teacher leaders (TIS Katie Colon and Rachel Ramirez-Cook). Ellen highlighted Katie's Canva deck which provided excellent framing around the use of GoGuardian Teacher and included ideas for student intervention via the software that is supportive of the student-teacher relationship.

New Platform - Questions/Discussion

- **Emrie:** We had the pilot last year at Honey Dew. The teachers participating really dug into it independently, and I found it has served to foster teacher leadership. For example, I had a teacher who reached out to me with a GoGuardian Teacher issue while I was in an AP meeting, and I forwarded their question to our pilot teachers. Two of them readily volunteered to assist. Also, my Office Manager has adopted a goal this year of helping people help themselves.
- **Ellen:** That is great! One of the things I share with people from the GoGuardian Teacher resources, is a section called "How-To Quicklinks." These were things identified in the pilot to help people use the tool, particularly the troubleshooting section. The other thing I share is the GoGuardian Chat Feature. There was a teacher at Hazen who ran into an issue where students were accessing the sites that she had blocked in her "scene" (the digital environment that students are working in). They reached out to GoGuardian chat, and the customer service representative was able to identify that the scene hadn't been activated yet. Multiple people mentioned the chat feature was a helpful resource.
- **Emrie:** Can you take me back through and show me how to get to these resources.
 - **Ellen:** Yes, go to RSDnet > Departments > Technology Services > Student Technology Information.
 - **Bob:** You can also get there on the aforementioned Digital Tool Support Resources page.
- **Alex:** We are just diving into it now. Teachers were given a preview and I have sent some of the resources as well, but there are still a lot of questions. I did offer a time frame to my teachers, and it generated a lot of interest, including some K-1 teachers who can't use the software yet (because it only works on Chromebooks). I am working with my administrator to possibly offer training during a green day, or a staff meeting, or maybe some time after school.
- **Kelly:** One of the things we are working on is creating shareable "scenes." We found that staff don't know what all the sites are that would need to be blocked. For example, there were some teachers that didn't know what "Discord" was, so we are generating a list of sites so that teachers know what to look for.
 - **Ellen:** The other thing you can do that Katie talked about in her training, is using the "Categories" feature, which gives you a list of recommended sites based on category. Teachers wouldn't need to necessarily know what "Discord" is, but instead could look up "Social Media and Chatting," and find a list of the most common tools for those things. In terms of shared scenes, it could be really useful to create scenes based on a subject matter. For example, you could create a scene for a science lab that is prepared with access to everything the students will need for that lab.
- **Ellen:** I think the only challenging aspect of the TIS model for training GoGuardian Teacher, is that some of the TIS are kindergarten teachers and don't use GoGuardian Teacher (since kindergarten students use iPads, and GoGuardian Teacher only works on Chromebooks). However, what they do have the skillset for is troubleshooting alongside a teacher who does have access to it. Anything else on GoGuardian Teacher?
- **Kelly:** GoGuardian Teacher is really great! Teachers are feeling really positive about it.
 - **Bob:** How do kids like it?
 - **Kelly:** There hasn't been a lot of negative response, which I think is good. They know that it helps them.

- **Ellen:** That was one thing that was helpful in re-reading the minutes. There were multiple students whose response in the survey indicated that they don't love this kind of monitoring, but they understand why it is in place and how it helps them stay on track.

FOCUS FOR 2024-25

Each year RTCC establishes areas of focus that they would collectively like to tackle over the course of the year. Ellen invited the council to share their suggestions on the [Padlet for 2024-25](#), and up-vote or comment on any that resonate with them.

Padlet Review

- **Kelly:** I added the one regarding Xello. I heard a rumor that it is going away. If that is true, then it would be a good opportunity to figure out what we can do to make that transition smooth. Maybe we can get early access to whatever the new product will be.
 - **Ellen:** The one thing that I noticed with Skyward is that sometimes we can get early access, but without the configurations in place it doesn't actually set us up for success because it doesn't function as it should. However, where we can ease those transitions, we will.
- **Ellen:** The cell phone policy has the most likes. I see that there are multiple comments regarding the safety considerations.
- **Alex:** I put in the one about equity at elementary schools. Some elementary schools are not allowing 4th & 5th grade students to take their devices home, and some of them do. However, the standard in the district is that all students in grades 4-12 have access to their devices at home. Maybe we can look at that. What is the rationale for not allowing students in grades 4-5 to take their devices home? What is the concern or worry?
- **Ellen:** Also, where are we gathering the information? I think it is really important to find out from students/families what they need or want. When we were deciding if we should have students take their devices home over summer, it was a super easy decision for high schools. I met with high school principals and explained that if we were to collect devices annually, we would need to pull them back before the end of the year. Once they knew that, the decision was easy. It made more sense for high school students to have access to their devices through the end of the year and take them home during summer. For middle schools, there was more uncertainty around it. As a result, we surveyed students, families, and staff. The results were varied, but the equity comments from students and families were super powerful. One student noted how even though they didn't need their Chromebook over summer (because they already have a home device), their friend who doesn't have a computer at home should be able to take their Chromebook home. From that survey, we found that the staff was the most resistant. We dug into the reasons why and how we could support them with it. We have also had special requests for younger students to take their devices home on a case-by-case basis. So, we could also consider what kind of additional practices or policies could be in place for that.
- **Susan:** We have GoGuardian at home, right? So, there is visibility into what students do on their computers?
 - **Alex:** Yes, we have GoGuardian Parent where families can set their own restrictions and view what their students are working on. However, we don't use GoGuardian Teacher during afterschool hours.
- **Ellen:** I will also add, to support the take-home devices, there is a Google Slide deck prebuilt for teachers to share with students on how to care for their device at home. You can find this slide deck at the bottom of the [Student Technology Information](#) page, along with other helpful resources like the Family Night Slides which explains the 1:1 model and helps to set up expectations around student devices at home and at school.
- **Alex:** Kerrie also made a great one-pager for device protection. I love it! It is so helpful.
 - **Kerrie:** That's awesome. I'm glad to hear it.
 - **Kristine:** We also printed copies of that document and handed it out to 6th and 9th graders with their devices.

Ellen summarized that the top priorities appeared to be digital citizenship, cell phone policy, change management, and elementary Chromebooks. She asked for any additional thoughts or considerations for this discussion.

There were no additions, but Ellen offered that if people thought of things between meetings, they could reach out to her.

CELEBRATIONS

Before closing the meeting, Ellen opened the floor to celebrations and appreciations. She started with her appreciation for people attending in person.

- **Emrie:** It didn't come up, but the Parent Square impact has been huge, in a positive way. I have a soft spot for a student who has some difficulty with teacher relationships. Today, I saw their teacher sent home positive feedback regarding that student and the work they are doing in class. It's a small thing but has a big impact. However, it does sound like there are challenges with Parent Square when you are both a parent and an employee.
 - **Ellen:** It did at first, but now if the staff member uses their regular email in Skyward Family Access (vs work email), it should work appropriately.
- **Ellen:** Thank you all for your patience during all the transitions this fall.
 - **Kelly:** The student number change was super painful.
- **Alex:** One appreciation I want to share is for the Assistive Technology Department, and the important work they do to ensure students can engage in their learning and classroom environment. I also appreciate their responsiveness to requests for trying out assistive technology tools for students; I have been able to get these tools within a week of my request. It just speaks volumes to how they are really trying to make sure students have what they need.
 - **Ellen:** They are such a strong team. We enjoy partnering with them.

MEETING ADJOURNED

5:45pm

ADDENDUM

Dr. Ellen Dorr, Chief of Technology & Strategic Initiatives

I am excited to roll out Windows for Business which will allow staff to login to their district devices using a pin, fingerprint, or facial recognition. It provides additional security and is helpful for people who don't love to type in their passwords.

Alex Castro, Special Education Teacher at Bryn Mawr Elementary, Technology Integration Specialist, and Building Technology Assistant

For me, it's looking at GoGuardian Teacher. Teachers are really interested in it, and ready to learn how they can support their students with it. So, as a TIS and working with other teacher leaders, we are trying to hone in on not only the tool, but how we support students in becoming good digital citizens.

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

I recently got the opportunity to dig into elementary literacy, which I don't have a lot of expertise in. I have learned a lot about phonemes, phonics, and comprehension. It is super important work, so that was exciting.

Kristine Farwell, Customer Service Director

The biggest theme that comes to mind for me is efficiency. We have already started to work on projects to ensure we are using our resources and time as efficiently as possible. One example is over the summer we figured out how to update and reset our iPads remotely and in bulk, which freed up our intern time since they didn't have to do it manually. So, I am looking forward to continuing in that effort to be as efficient as possible with time and funds. Right now, we are

working on tracking our device repairs to ensure we are only spending money on the repairs that give us the best value for the district.

Jay Gray, Infrastructure Director

We have already started continuous improvement in our department, and I am excited to build out our continuity of service and engaging my team in that collaborative effort.

Kelly Jones, Assistant Principal, Hazen High School

Between New Skyward, GoGuardian Teacher, Parent Square, we are trying to provide progressive opportunities throughout the year to help teachers use those tools well. We plan to leverage our green day trainings, teacher leaders, and first users to support some of that work.

Woody Sobey, CTE STEM Facilitator

This year we are rolling out the new chemistry curriculum. This curriculum is digital first and has allowed the four different high schools to be much better aligned in their instruction. They are even occasionally collaborating between buildings, which is a big step for us.

Susan Talley, Board of Directors

I am looking forward to using my face to log into my computer.

Kerrie Thornton, Information and Communications Specialist

This is my first year working with Web Editors, and I am genuinely excited about getting them engaged with their websites.

Carlito Umali, Principal, Lakeridge Elementary

I'm excited for the Team Read program to start, especially because the students from Team Read are Talley High School students where I was an administrator last year.