

Renton Technology Coordinating Council (RTCC)

Meeting Minutes

May 27, 2025

ATTENDING

Dr. Ellen Dorr, Susan Talley, Alex Castro-Wilson, Bob Ettinger, Mawiyah Fields, Jay Gray, Kelly Jones, Kerrie Thornton, Carlito Umali, and guest Reid Saaris

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Cell Phone Policy
 - Implementation/Exploration
- Celebrations & Appreciations

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ellen welcomed the council members, thanked them for their attendance and for being a part of the important work we have done this school year. She advised that in tonight's culminating meeting, the council would be digging into the overall guidance and level preferences regarding cell phone restrictions in schools.

To open the meeting, she asked everyone to connect by answering the question: 'What's something you're really proud of from this school year—big or small?' 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 noted that all departments in the district are working in alignment with the [District Core Values and Strategic Framework](#) and outlined how that alignment looks for Technology Services.

- **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 [April 14, 2025 meeting minutes](#), and asked for questions, corrections, clarifications, or additions. There were none.

CELL PHONE POLICY

Ellen introduced the cell phone policy discussion by reviewing the success criteria. She then identified the goals for tonight's meeting.

Success Criteria	Goals for Today's Meeting
● Focus on student learning ● Balance limiting distractions and meeting students' needs ● Support safety and security needs	1. Finalize Draft of guidance ● You will see there are multiple iterations informed by review from other groups. Alex and Kelly both participated in this work with their

• Easy to understand and implement • Little to no budget impact	teams; Alex with the Technology Integration Specialists (TIS) and Kelly with the Secondary Administrators. 2. Indicate preferences on type of restriction • No Formal Policy: This policy type is not included in the options as there has not been a high level of interest, but you will have the opportunity to write it in if that is your preference. • Full Day • Schedule-based*: There is an asterisk next to “schedule-based” because we are proposing two potential options ○ AM/PM Restriction with lunch-only access ○ Class period restriction
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Ellen reviewed the council’s process to date regarding exploration of cell phone policy including:

- Research and reading
- Defining the problem and scope of solution
- Gathering and reviewing input and feedback

Ellen reminded the council of the notice that came out of the [Office of the Superintendent](#) (OSPI), advising districts to develop a cell phone policy prior to fall 2025. She commented how neighboring districts are also engaging in similar work in response to this charge and referenced a KUOW report announcing one school district's implementation of cell phone guidance outlining full day restriction at the elementary level and schedule-based restriction at secondary level. She referenced the key considerations recommended by OSPI:

- **Instructional Use:**
 - Define and teach the appropriate use of cell phones and devices for instructional use.
 - Provide equitable access to technology and consider using school-owned laptops instead of personal devices to ensure all students can participate.
- **Learning Environment:**
 - Provide behavior expectations for cell phones and devices to students and families.
 - Define use and non-use areas within the school and classroom.
- **Student Mental & Physical Health:**
 - Provide information on the mental and physical health effects of high levels of cell phone and social media use to students and families.
 - Teach about digital literacy, the effects of cyberbullying, and mis- and disinformation.
- **Accommodations:**
 - Review and ensure that accommodations for students with disabilities that have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), or Section 504 are met.
- **Safety & Emergency Use:**
 - Define parameters for emergencies, including how to contact a student while in school.
 - Teach about the safe use of cell phones and smart devices during emergencies.

Prior to the meeting Ellen tasked the council with reviewing resources to prepare for discussion. The council was asked to review the [RTCC Lit Summary](#) prepared by guest Reid Saaris, and then select two additional articles from the list of resources below.

- [New York's cellphone ban: Exemptions, enforcement, and costs explained](#)
- [Facebook and texting made me do it: Media-induced task-switching while studying](#)
- [Schools Say No to Cellphones in Class. But Is It a Smart Move?](#)
- [Cellphone Bans in School Are Back. How Far Will They Go?](#)
- [Students can't get off their phones. Schools have had enough.](#)

She asked the council to reflect on the readings in table groups and discuss their reactions and thoughts about the resources they read. Once the council had an opportunity to discuss, Ellen opened the floor for table groups to share key takeaways.

- **Carlito:** Secondary schools feel the major negative impact of cell phones, but any technology associated with an attempt to ban technology is expensive. Another key takeaway is that the policy has to be enforced by everyone, or it doesn't work. Implementing a successful policy requires a culture shift for all.
 - **Ellen:** Yes, and Kelly's table had a discussion correlating that culture shift to Hazen's "Be on Time" initiative. (See addendum for details regarding "Be on Time.")
- **Kelly:** Yes, and it was challenging. We had to get everyone on board and on the same page about it. However, the primary difference is that the process was relatively public. We asked teachers to be at their door during passing and to close and lock their door once the bell rang. All I had to do was look down the hallway to see who was not compliant. We had planned it ahead of time and put supports in place: teachers helping teachers to enforce it, following up with department chairs, and establishing a general awareness among staff that the administrative team was paying attention and participating in the implementation. The difficulty with implementing a cell phone policy and ensuring it is being enforced consistently, is that the work is happening inside the classroom where we cannot see it. There are teachers who will manage it well (as demonstrated with "Be on Time"), and others who will really struggle.
 - **Ellen:** That showed up in the staff data as well - the concern about how we will be able to implement and enforce a policy consistently and evenly across classrooms.

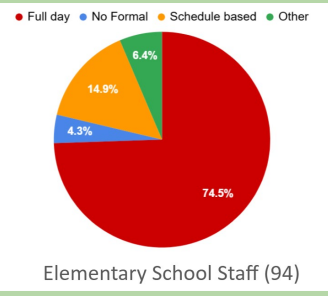
Ellen recognized the complexity of this work and shared her appreciation for the council's engagement with it. She moved on to discuss a presentation she delivered at the May 21st Board Meeting about the progress of this work to date. This presentation included details regarding the development of the guidance draft initially created at RTCC on April 15th, and the survey data broken down by grade level.

Draft Iterations

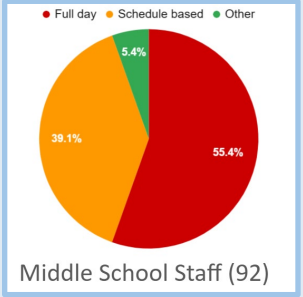
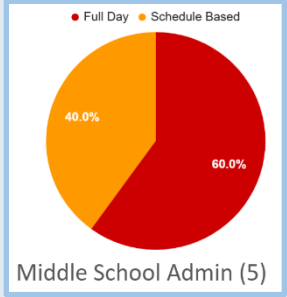
Ellen and Bob took the initial draft guidance from RTCC to the TIS meeting on April 22nd, split the teacher leaders up into grade bands, and had them review the pertinent section of the guidance (elementary teachers worked on elementary guidance, middle school teachers worked on middle school guidance, etc.). They shared feedback, noted challenges, offered suggestions for what might work, and raised additional considerations for us to keep in mind.

Ellen and Bob did a similar exercise with secondary administrators at the Principal Meeting (4/29) and the Assistant Principal Meeting (5/1), looking specifically at the secondary draft guidance.

Survey Data by Grade Band

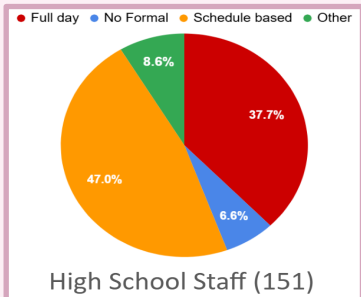
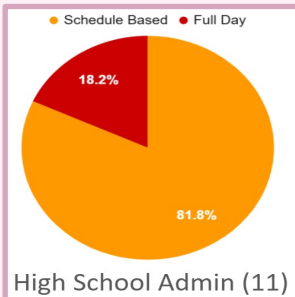
Graph	Staff Preferences by %	Comments/Discussion
 Elementary School Staff (94)	Full Day: 74.5% Schedule-Based: 14.9% No Formal Policy: 4.3% Other: 6.4%	Most staff identified a preference for a full day restriction

Middle School

Staff Preference	Administrator Preference	Comments/Discussion
 Middle School Staff (92) Full Day: 55.4% Schedule-Based: 39.1% Other: 5.4%	 Middle School Admin (5) Full Day: 60% Schedule-Based: 40%	You will notice we only had five administrators participating, which is a smaller sample size. However, the highest preference was full day restriction for both groups. Mawiayah: I just wanted to note that middle school participants likely voted for full day restrictions primarily because we have already experienced the bell-to-bell approach, and it hasn't worked well. A full day restriction would provide a different experience with clearer expectations.

TIS Analysis			Comments/Discussion
Type of Restriction	Strengths/Positives	Challenges/Limitations	The TIS considered both full day and class period cell phone restriction at the middle school level and developed a pros and cons list. To Mawiayah’s point about potentially clearer expectations, there was some thought around a full day restriction having less of a “gray area,” but enforcement may still be a challenge.
Full Day Restriction	• Less gray area - easier to enforce? • More student interaction - they are forced to interact and play and be kids • Less drama (fights/bullying) • Less opportunity to meet in the bathroom, etc. during class	• Enforcement • Pushback from parents • Ways of using phones that are on task are not taught	
Class Period Restriction	• They have some opportunities to check messages or communicate with parents • Opportunities to teach students how to use the phone when appropriate	• Students are more likely to get involved in drama between classes and at lunch • They may feel the urge to use that phone even during class (hard to put away again?)	

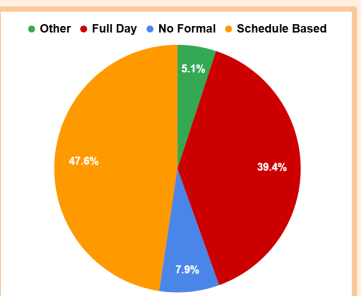
High School

Staff Preference	Administrator Preference	Comments/Discussion
 High School Staff (151) Full Day: 37.7% Schedule-Based: 47% No Formal Policy: 6.6% Other: 8.6%	 High School Admin (11) Full Day: 18.2% Schedule-Based: 81.8%	At high school, the highest preference was a schedule-based approach.

TIS Analysis			Comments/Discussion
Type of Restriction	Strengths/Positives	Challenges/Limitations	The TIS considered both full day and class period cell phone restriction and developed a pros and cons list. From their perspective, there aren't a lot of strengths/positives for full-day restriction at the high school level. For class period restriction, one of the positives was the opportunity to prepare students for the real world by creating some autonomy and teaching responsible use.
Full Day Restriction	No distractions?	- Not realistic at the high school level (enforcement) - What would students do with them at lunch? What if they go off campus? Tap to pay, etc. - Not teaching skills they need in the future	
Class Period Restriction	- Autonomy to students and teachers - Create more positive community - Helps with more engagement (actual engagement not performative engagement) - Allows more teaching of responsible use	- Lack of consistency (enforcement) - Curriculum or lessons may require QR codes, etc.	

As a reference, Ellen advised the council to look back at the Administrator Survey (which was provided in advance) to look at some of the reasoning Administrators gave for their selections.

Family Responses

Graph	Family Preference by %	Comments/Discussion
	Full Day: 39.4% Schedule-Based: 47.6% No Formal Policy: 7.9% Other: 5.1%	Ellen noted that the family responses were not disaggregated because families have students at multiple levels and to keep the survey simple and easy to complete, we did not ask families to verify each grade band.

After reviewing the information presented at the Board Meeting, Ellen shared three questions asked by the Board of Directors. She pulled up the guide elements recommended by the Department of Education (DOE) for policy guide creation and highlighted which element the Board's questions referred to.

DOE Guide Elements	Board Questions
Guide Elements: - Implementation - Storage - Exceptions - Enforcement - Consequences - Safety - Training - Responsible Use - Communication - Evaluation	Question 1: Are we making one guide for each level? - As we reviewed the various iterations, Bob and I observed that we could create one comprehensive guide that has layers for different levels. The draft we will look at tonight has been put together in that format (e.g., for every guide element there is standard guidance and potentially level specific guidance). Question 2: How are we going to evaluate the guidance? - Within the guidance, we have identified methods for evaluation such as surveys to school teams and families regarding implementation, observational data, and disciplinary data (e.g., quantity of tech violations entered). Question 3: What will the consequences be? How will we ensure that the consequences are not so severe that they negatively impact students and are sustainable in terms of management by administrators? - This is the kind of thing we want to be thinking about as we build out that portion of our draft.

Ellen demonstrated how the drafts had been worked on since the previous RTCC meeting, with different stakeholders (TIS and Administrators - as noted above) making suggested edits and comments to different sections.

DRAFTING: example feedback

Type of policy:	Restrictions - either full day or class time
Definition	During the school day or class time (TBD), student personal device ~~use is not permitted~~ (includes cell phone, smart watch, smart glasses, etc. ~~head phones/ear buds?~~ ~~use is not permitted~~)
Goal	- Ensure students are focused on learning and not distracted - Provide consistency during the school day - Balance focus to support learning and communication in addition to emergency needs from families
Implementation: What will daily implementation of the policy look like?	Admin help message out to community and large-group assemblies - Teachers remind students at the beginning of class - Posters in classroom - Communication of expectations in the classroom setting - Embedding the conversation with digital citizenship and responsible use (similar to use of Chromebooks)

4:46 PM Apr 22

What one family's idea of student safety (need to keep the phone on the student to find location) may be another's opposite feelings surrounding safety (fear of their student being recorded or a picture taken of them) can be hard to separate.

2:13 PM May 1

Is this a liability issue? What if a phone gets lost/stolen?

2:25 PM May 1

Could a 1-pager be created that has resources for parents/families to identify ways to monitor their student's cell phone usage.

She advised that the council would revise this draft in a similar way tonight, keeping in mind the following:

- The Board of Directors' questions listed above.
- The Common Sense Media device storage options, benefits, and challenges.
- The Common Sense Media questions to ask when considering cell phone restrictions:
 - For Admin - How easy is it to implement?
 - For Teachers - How easy is it to enforce?
 - For Students - How easy is it to follow?

Ellen asked the council to read the full guidance before making suggestions. She outlined how to read the draft, understand the color coding, and how to add suggestions.

The council was given time to review and make their recommendations.

- **Ellen:** I am wondering if people are noticing places where some of the comments are similar or the same idea with a different strategy? I heard a couple of methods for tracking violations - one Skyward approach and one spreadsheet approach. Can we discuss that as a group?
- **Mawiayah:** Reid was sharing some research about warnings vs. consequences. The general idea is that instead of giving a warning, you enforce the rule with an immediate consequence, which sends a clear message about expectations. One thing we would have to figure out is how to track incidents in a way that is manageable and that ensures everyone has access to the information. One place we thought of was Skyward for documenting referrals or infractions. Then everyone is able to see how many infractions there have been and respond accordingly. The difficulty with using a spreadsheet is that there is usually one or two owners, so if one of those people is out on leave there could be a problem, or not everyone has the right access to it. So, a central location like Skyward seems like a good option.
- **Carlito:** To address the question the Board has regarding evaluation - we also have tools like Tableau where we could track cell phone infraction data and visualize the change over time.
- **Kelly:** For "Be on Time," we did the spreadsheet option, and it has worked really well, just because it is a quick way to notate when there is an infraction. On the flipside, it requires 1-2 people to be responsible for processing that data. So, right now, our In School Suspension (ISS) staff person processes the detention part, and my job is to communicate out through ParentSquare.
 - **Ellen:** I think that would happen regardless of the system we are using – we would still need designated people to process the information and communicate it.
- **Kelly:** The spreadsheet has been a very easy way to capture data. Every kid and every period is on the spreadsheet, so the teacher can quickly put in a note if there is a violation. I understand the value of the "no warning" research, but I am concerned about larger schools attempting to manage that, because if it is not enforced 100% of the time - if someone fails to deliver the consequence - it will make the whole consequence invalid. That would be my biggest concern. Also, I have concerns about staff taking phones away from students because I have had phones go missing or students claim the staff member broke the device. It could create big issues, and these devices can be pretty expensive. And for some kids, that device is their primary tool for access.
 - **Ellen:** You had mentioned something about discipline entries in Skyward. What are your thoughts there?
 - **Kelly:** I am on the bargaining team in REA and we have talked about how we can consistently enter discipline data across the district. I know that our REA staff members want to do it, but the challenge is figuring out where in Skyward to enter that information and how to ensure it gets entered correctly and consistently by everyone. Do we want to capture every incident? Is it a discipline note? Is it an infraction? We will have to come up with a really clear process about this.
- **Reid:** Our group talked a little bit about that too - how to enter the data in a way that is visible to everyone. We also discussed identifying consequences that won't exclude or marginalize students. The most logical approach would be to keep the consequence tightly aligned with the issue. So, if the problem is the student is using their

phone, the consequence should be they can no longer use their phone (i.e., take the phone away). The second step would be to have the parent come in and pick up the phone - so the parent is also aware of the problem. This would be in place of detentions and suspensions. It is less punitive and more specific to the issue.

- **Mawiayah:** I do understand the cost, liability, and ramifications piece. I was in a school where we collected cell phones, and it was relatively safe. The devices were collected in the classroom and then taken to the main office. It was expensive at the beginning when we implemented it, but the maintenance costs were low. I do think we need a centralized location for tracking infractions. When we have a system like Skyward, if we can track infractions in a way that doesn't marginalize students, that will be useful to us.
- **Ellen:** I was wondering in which areas of implementation do we need to be consistent across the district vs. letting school teams decide what works best for their school community in terms of operationalizing the guidance? One principal mentioned it would be helpful to have district guidance to point to as a reference, to help with pushback at the school level. So, part of building districtwide guidance is to assist schools with their management efforts.

Ellen looked over the draft to identify areas that required additional information. She asked the council if anyone had thoughts or information about a comment listed in the "Evaluation" section of the document that said: "after event debriefs or feedback from families."

- **Mawiayah:** To me that means, having a standard communication for reaching out to parents if there is a continued issue and a parent meeting is required. Then also, a common language around developing a parent contract.
- **Ellen:** That sounds like the "cell phone contract/family meeting" listed under "Consequences."
- **Alex:** I am having a hard time connecting with "after event debriefs or feedback from families," because it is in the evaluation section.
- **Ellen:** That is confusing me too. I also considered that it might be in case of a security event.
- **Susan:** No. I think we should take it off.

Ellen asked the council if there were other things that required attention. She commented that even if certain sections did not come to full resolution, they would become discussion points when the draft is brought to Cabinet and informed by the conversations we had tonight - which she and Bob will outline and reference. She asked for any additional thoughts before the council completes the preference survey.

- **Kelly:** When it comes to things like cell phone pockets or boxes - who is responsible for that expense?
 - **Ellen:** If we decide to use pockets or boxes as part of the district wide policy, it would likely be a district expense.
- **Mawiayah:** One other thing I wanted to mention is regarding multilingual (ML) students, and the assumption that they will need to access cell phones for translations. If we can utilize the Chromebooks for tools that students need, we should try to do that.
 - **Ellen:** Alex had another thought about that too, which was potentially using portable translators.

Ellen sent out the restriction preference form for the council to complete. She then gave them time to fill it out and submit prior to the close of the meeting.

Next Steps

- Incorporate/resolve comments on guidance
- Cabinet (or DILT) will review and finalize guidance recommendations
- Consider updates to Policy and Procedure 3245 - Students and Telecommunication Devices
- Publish and communicate guidance

Ellen advised that she would keep RTCC informed about the process.

CELEBRATIONS

Before closing the meeting, Ellen opened the floor to celebrations and appreciations. She started by extending her gratitude to the five RTCC members who will not be returning in the fall. She commented that some of the folks not returning would be transitioning to new jobs and that some had completed their 3-year term. She expressed her gratitude for their contributions to the council.

Ellen encouraged the council members to invite their colleagues to join RTCC.

- **Alex:** Could they renew their three years if they wanted to?
- **Ellen:** I certainly wouldn't stop anyone from re-applying if they are interested in doing another three years.

MEETING ADJOURNED

5:49 PM

ADDENDUM

Ellen: I am proud of the team that helped us move into New Skyward. There were a lot of people involved. I had established some success markers to indicate a successful transition:

1. People can log into Skyward.
2. Teachers can do attendance on the first day.
3. The first payroll is complete.
4. The first grading period is complete.

Those goals were met with a lot of effort by our Student Information Systems (SIS) team and our Technology Integration Specialists (TIS), who are still sharing tips with each other to support their schools. Even though these kinds of transitions are bumpy, and it takes a while for people to get used to a new system, I appreciate the efforts of the whole team in making it happen.

Kelly: At Hazen, we have had an issue with students lingering in the hallways, being late to class, and being truant. In response, we started a program called "Be on Time," which was essentially a tardy sweep where classroom doors were closed and locked at the start of the class period, and anyone remaining in the hallway would be identified as tardy. This year, we partnered with all of our staff to revise and improve the program. Right before spring break, we did a big school reset where any time students were late, they would get a special pass. For the first two weeks, students who got these passes would get a lunch detention. After Spring Break, we held the sweeps at random, and if a student was late to that class, they would get detention. What was amazing is that it didn't only improve the culture of arriving to class on time, but it also improved general student compliance to school rules in and outside the classroom. We are seeing a greater focus on learning in class, and a 60% decline in tardiness.

Carlito: Our 4th and 5th grade students brought Chromebooks home this year! I don't know why it took us so long. And guess what? They are all coming back. So, that is a big culture shift for us. We also only had three smart alerts this year.

Alex: One success for me was the addition of "GoGuardian for Teacher" access. Since this was the first year and I was a pilot teacher, a lot of teachers reached out to me asking for help or additional training. I was able to provide guidance or leverage the help landing page that technology services created, especially if I wasn't there to help. It has been nice to see a shift in mindset – going away from the old approach where student device use is heavily monitored to relying on kids to sustain themselves as digital learners and use the GoGuardian visibility as opportunities for teachable moments – guiding students to better responsible use. I am excited to dive in deeper next year.

Susan: I am just glad I made it to the end of the school year. Just a couple more weeks!

Reid: This year, I got to work on the Governor's Transition Committee, and we put forward a bill on social media. The bill would have essentially put safety belts on social media, like prohibiting addictive feeds, and bar notifications in the middle of the night or during the school day. It passed the senate with 75% of the vote, but then it got stopped before going to the House. Although it didn't go through, it was still a great effort.

Kerrie: This year was my first year working with Web Editors - helping to inform their work, providing training, and giving them a little push to use their websites more. Since January, we have seen a 56% increase in active News Posts on websites, a 26% increase in use of Homepage photo sliders showcasing school communities, and an 11% increase in use of school calendars, which really helps inform families what is happening at the schools.

Bob: I am proud of lots of things this year. One thing that comes to mind is that we have been more strategic in supporting our elementary school-based instructional facilitators. I have been pulling them together once a month to dig into content and support structures. As our team shrinks at the central office, that is what our service is going to need to look like: partnering directly with schools and reaching out to folks in leadership roles in buildings to continue to support.

Jay: There is a lot I could speak to, but the one I am going to highlight is a login process called Windows Hello for Business, which allows you to login using a pin or facial recognition. It is not rolled out fully, but the feedback on those who have tried it out has been really positive. So, I feel really good about that.

Mawiayah: Something that I am really proud of is being on this committee. I just got back from vacation – my flight came in at 2pm – and I came straight here because I didn't want to miss the last meeting. I am in my first-year doctoral program, and part of this work counts towards my early internship hours, so I really want to see this through to the end. The second thing I am proud of is how well we have been able to bring in family/community partnership at Nelsen and finding ways to ensure that our students have the support and resources they need.