

Renton Technology Coordinating Council (RTCC)

Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2026

ATTENDING

Dr. Ellen Dorr, Alex Castro-Wilson, Mike Cruz, Dr. Bob Ettinger, Kristine Farwell, Mawiyah Fields, Jennifer Hefford-Anderson, Lindsay Jensen, Lizz Quinlan, Woody Sobey, Susan Talley, and Kerrie Thornton

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Cell Phone Guidance Review
 - Survey Updates
 - Superintendent Student Meetings
- New Staff Device Demo Testing
- Celebrations

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ellen welcomed the council and thanked them for their attendance. She gave a shout out to Board Director, Lindsay Jensen, who was attending RTCC for the first time. Ellen shared that the role of RTCC is to serve as a forum to review technology decisions, consider how they align with the district core values, support the strategic framework, and ensure they maximize student performance and achievement.

Ellen went over the agenda and asked everyone to introduce themselves by sharing their name, role, and one tool that has saved them time in the last few months.

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.

Ellen 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 (TS).

- **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 [December 9, 2025 Meeting Minutes](#), and asked for questions, corrections, clarifications, or additions. There were none.

Susan: These are really good notes.

CELL PHONE GUIDANCE REVIEW

Ellen began by going over the progress of the cell phone guidance feedback surveys since our last meeting and shared additional details regarding how we plan to administer the surveys.

- **December 9, 2025:** RTCC reviewed the feedback surveys and offered suggestions for revision.
- **December 18, 2025:** The suggestions were reviewed and changes applied.
- **January 26, 2026:** The District Instructional Leadership Team (DILT) reviewed the surveys.
- **February 23-27, 2026:** The surveys will be sent out to students, staff, and families.
 - The student survey will be sent to secondary administrators to share with students.
 - Community Relations will send the staff and family surveys.
 - The administrator survey will be sent directly to administrators.
- **March 31, 2026:** RTCC will review the survey data to consider what changes we might need to make regarding the policy or its implementation.

Ellen commented that she anticipates there will be a lot of feedback regarding the quality of the pouches, which may lead us to pivot from our current pouch selection. Dr. Pattenaupe recently received a sample pouch that may be a better fit for our needs, so that is something to consider.

Superintendent Student Meetings

This winter, Dr. Pattenaupe has been visiting schools to speak with students about their experience. During his recent school visits, he gathered some feedback regarding the cell phone guidance.

Overall feedback:

- Students would not like preemptive/full day use of the pouch.
- Pouches are getting damaged/destroyed.

At high school specifically:

- Enforcement varies by classroom (some teachers say they don't like it so they're not doing it, some say you can use your phone once you finish work, and some are enforcing lack of access to the phone for the full class period).

Ellen noted that based on this feedback, we added a section to the surveys (staff, student, and administrator) regarding consistent implementation across classrooms to get a clearer picture of what was discussed in the informal student meetings.

Susan: What happens at schools if you see some teachers are just letting students use their cell phones?

- **Jennifer:** That doesn't really happen at elementary school.
- **Mawiaayah:** What would happen is we would follow up with the teacher. If it is something we notice during observations, we have a line item for that and will address it with them directly.

Ellen commented that the survey results should help us to see which schools report more consistent cell phone practices than others. A council member asked if we are going to be able to disaggregate the data more easily than the first survey we sent regarding cell phone guidance. Ellen confirmed that the surveys are formatted to collect data by level (elementary, middle, and high school), and that families will have the opportunity to complete separate information for each level that is appropriate for them. As a result, we expect to be able to disaggregate the data more effectively. She noted the one thing we were not able to do was gather details if a parent had two students at the same grade level, but different schools (i.e., attending Renton High and Talley).

Ellen noted that the feedback surveys include questions repeated from the original survey, giving us the opportunity to make a direct comparison between perspectives before and after the cell phone guidance implementation. It will be interesting to see how those results compare.

NEW STAFF DEVICE DEMO TESTING

Device Refresh Plan

Ellen began by sharing a table of the different devices that are up for refresh in 2026.

Year	Program User	Specifics	Device Type	Quantity	Delivery timeline	Order timeline
2026	1:1	6th and 9th	Chromebooks	2,500	Spring/ Summer	January
2026	1:1	K-1	iPads	TBD - 2,500?	June	March
2026	Staff	Certificated staff and leadership	laptops	1,450	May/June (target)	March
2026	CTE	all middle schools	TBD- was previously laptops	160	July	May
2026	CTE	THS	laptops and desktops	70	July	May

The first one she spoke about was the 6th and 9th grade student Chromebook refresh. She noted that there were some purchase restraints for this refresh, and asked Kristine to speak more on that topic.

Kristine shared that the TS team began engaging vendors in September and November, as it was necessary to start the device refresh process early due to significant chip shortages affecting supply. She explained that the primary challenge with newer Chromebooks (with updated chips) is that the devices likely won't be available until late summer or fall. To ensure students have the devices they need for learning, a board memo was submitted for approval to purchase Chromebooks from the existing supply that are both familiar to the team and not impacted by the chip shortage. While the purchasing process is still underway, we expect that the Chromebooks for the 6th and 9th grade refresh have been secured, which is very exciting.

- **Ellen:** We worked with Business Services on this purchase, since typically there are restrictions for purchasing in advance. However, we learned that we could move forward due to the flexibility of the Technology Levy, ensuring that we are able to get those devices. We spoke with one of our vendor partners, and they commented that our call was one of the only positive ones they would get to make that day, since they had had to tell everyone else that there just aren't any devices available. So, we are grateful that we were able to get ahead of that.

Ellen moved on to discuss the K-1 iPad refresh and noted that the quantity was listed as "TBD." She explained that she had sent a survey to find out what people actually need in classrooms to determine the quantity for purchase. Did they need a device for every student, or was there a model in which they could have a set number of shared iPads? Based on the response received so far, it does seem that the general consensus is that teachers would prefer to have 1:1 iPads, especially for testing. So, that is likely the approach TS will take in this refresh.

In terms of the CTE devices, there is a smaller quantity required, so less to dig into. TS will continue to refresh lab space devices as planned. However, TS is reconsidering some of the more expensive laptops in middle schools. Those have a tendency to wander off, so an adjustment may need to be made.

Lastly, Ellen highlighted the certificated staff and leadership device refresh, which the council would dig into today. She noted that TS would like to order devices by March so that the laptops arrive in May/June. She invited Kristine to share the feedback plan for assessing staff devices.

Feedback Plan

Kristine explained that the demo devices were secured early so that the TS team could gather as much feedback as possible before making a selection. Tonight, the council will have the opportunity to look at those devices and try them out.

The first type of assessment Kristine focused on was device priorities. She explained that with a limited number of demo devices and limited opportunities for stakeholders to test them, it was important to understand user priorities in order to weigh the assessment categories more efficiently.

Kristine went on to describe other types of assessments for staff devices.

- **Short Assessments:** A short duration of device use (up to 45 minutes) where users can get the feel of the device and make some initial observations. These will be completed by members of TS, RTCC, and other users.
- **Longer Assessments:** A longer duration of 1-2 days where users can see how the device performs with daily work and how it aligns with what the spec sheets say. These will be completed by members of TS, as well as school teams.

Collected Priority Feedback

Kristine shared a slide with the device priorities identified by Building Technology Assistants (BTAs) who are teachers working in schools that help support technology at their location. The top priorities identified (rating scale 1-5) were:

- Reliability with 4.86 rating
- Good Battery Life with 4.77 rating

Other high priorities included keyboard and port layout/usability, durability, and screen size. Lower on the priority list was hinge convertibility (the 360-degree flip feature), which adds additional cost. As the team gains greater clarity around pricing, this information will help identify potential cost-saving opportunities and allow resources to be directed toward higher-priority features.

Ellen explained that reliability of devices is harder to assess using demo devices, since these factors are time-based and require more extensive use of the device. One way the team has approached getting some of that information is through research and reading reviews about the devices. She noted that the devices selected for review all have the capabilities for what people need on a regular basis, and the features that tend to be the most expensive are also the things that break most frequently:

- Rotating Hinge
- Stylus
- Touch Screen

Ellen asked Alex if there was anything he wanted to share from the BTA meeting. Alex commented that the biggest thing people talked about was making sure the power button was not on the side of the laptop (like current devices), which makes it easy to accidentally turn off your device.

- **Kristine:** The good news is none of the models selected has the power button on the side.

Kristine went on to share information about the battery life test completed on each demo device. The devices were charged fully, and then, starting at the same time, the team played YouTube videos on the devices. After a set number of hours, the technician running the test would track the battery life remaining for the device. All the batteries performed fairly well, lasting the full 8 hours of the first test. The devices were then put in sleep mode and restarted to test for a second day. The Lenovo and silver HP performed similarly. The other HP performed slightly better. All the

devices, however, managed the two-day test, and demonstrated the ability to run for a full workday (even if someone was playing videos the entire time).

Demo Devices and Testing

Ellen shared links for the device specs and gave the council two ways to provide feedback:

- Set priorities using the [Device Priorities Feedback](#) form.
- Try out a demo device and complete the [Demo Short Assessment Feedback](#) form.

Ellen gave the council 25 minutes to explore the demo devices and complete the feedback forms.

Discussion

Ellen brought the council back together for discussion, though she encouraged them to complete the forms on which they were working. She highlighted a comment: “Deeper reviews are more important. What is the impact of extended use? In particular, how durable is the track pad and the touch screen?” Ellen clarified that for some of this, we won’t get to know fully, but we will complete the longer assessments discussed earlier to give us a sense of how the devices function over time. She then asked the council what else they wanted TS to think about or consider.

- **Mawiyah:** How do we assess durability testing?
 - **Kristine:** We rely on the vendor to provide us with some of that information with their Mil-spec testing (a series of rigorous environmental tests designed to ensure durability in harsh conditions). We will also lean on our repair partner and technology staff, who have expertise on how these get broken the most.
- **Lindsay:** Do you take into account the data you have gathered regarding the current devices and the issues identified as you are considering similar devices or devices by the same manufacturer?
 - **Ellen:** The devices can really vary by model, even with the same manufacturer.
 - **Kristine:** Yes, it can vary by model, but we do try to leverage that data. We track all of our damage/repair information, and we use that information in conversations with vendors to inform our questions and how we review. For example, they can say the touchpad is durable and performed well in Mil-spec testing, but we can provide specific details regarding the issues we have had with touchpads and ask what they have done with the new model that would address that issue.

Selection Next Steps

- Additional priorities feedback
- Additional technical testing
- Short-term use by school team (Administrator, Office Manager, and a CTE teacher at HHS)
- Use matrix of the information gathered to make best selection

Ellen noted the vendor has informed us that while they don’t have the exact lead time on the devices, they expect it will take about 12 weeks for devices to be delivered after purchase. So, the goal is to select a device soon so that we can get the process started. She hopes to share the device selection by the next meeting on March 31st. She commented that device selection will also likely come down to pricing and availability.

CELEBRATIONS

Ellen opened the floor for any celebrations or appreciations people wished to share before closing the meeting.

- **Ellen:** Thank you to Alex for asking the questions regarding back-up Chromebooks for testing, and then also the Chrome app for the Promethean panels. These were items that we could clarify and act upon to help support school teams.

- **Alex:** Yesterday, we met with building representatives, and they were very grateful for that collaboration and finding solutions. A lot of them were very appreciative to have those tools, especially at the elementary level.
- **Kerrie:** Thank you to Woody for fixing my sister's childhood toy. It had a little audio player inside it that was broken. I figured Woody would have the skills to figure out how it worked, and what I would need to do to fix it. But he fixed it himself within an hour. She was really happy.
 - **Woody:** See Susan, I can be nice.
 - **Alex:** You should get that on a T-shirt.
- **Susan:** I just had a niece born.
- **Ellen:** I appreciate the parent lens on the staff devices as well.
- **Ellen:** Thank you to Director Jensen for coming to your first ever RTCC meeting!
- **Ellen:** Thank you to Kristine for all the organization and feedback ideas on the device refresh - making sure that we are being thoughtful about how we examine these and collecting data to inform people on how we landed on the decision.

MEETING ADJOURNED

5:37pm

ADDENDUM

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

The tools that have saved me time are really basic: calculators and calendars.

Mike Cruz, *Director of Technology Infrastructure*

The tool that has saved me time is the Shared Drive feature in Google Suite, because it is helping us consolidate a lot of our documentation and work.

Jennifer Hefford-Anderson, *District Roving Assistant Principal*

Online grocery shopping has been a big time-saving tool for me and my family, especially with three very busy kids.

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

I use ChatGPT somewhat regularly, and recently I had to make a really nuanced comparison of interim assessment benchmarks (math tests) and our math curriculum. It would have taken me hours. I uploaded three PDFs and ChatGPT did the work for me in 10 seconds. It took some tinkering, but it was successful and saved so much time.

Kristine Farwell, *Director of Technology Customer Services*

A tool that has saved me time, especially in the last couple of months, is the Google Calendar Bookings page. It allows people to see my availability and book time with me without a conflict using an easy tool we already have access to.

Lizz Quinlan, *Director of Player Experience and Kenndale Parent*

The last couple of months, I have been working in Google Sheets a lot and using ChatGPT as a rubber duck for my complicated formulas.

Woody Sobey, *Career & Technical Education Facilitator*

I just got a new phone two weeks ago. The case wasn't going to arrive for two weeks after I got my phone, so I used a 3D printer to make a temporary one. The new case has arrived now, but the 3D printed case works fine, so I am still using that one.

Kerrie Thornton, *Information & Communication Specialist*

I'm working on the budget right now, so for me, excel formulas are saving me a lot of time.

Mawiayah Fields, *Assistant Principal, Nelsen Middle School*

The tools that have saved me time are my pencil and pen. I'm sticking to the basics and getting back to old school writing.

Lindsey Jensen, *Board Director*

OneNote is a time-saving tool I use a lot to keep things organized and accessible.

Susan Talley, *Board Director*

I have to have things written down, so I put everything in Outlook calendar and my calendar book.