

RHS PTO Coffee with Dr. Ken Batchelor

February 18, 2026

9:00-10:30AM

Dr. Shen, PTO President opened the meeting with an introduction of the Radnor Township School District Superintendent, Dr. Ken Batchelor. Dr. Batchelor began with an overview of the capital plan renovations (e.g., Ithan Elementary School renovations will begin Spring 2026) followed by academic updates (e.g., college essay writing for college preparation) and a recognition of the success with the “no cell phone” policy.

Below is a brief summary of the answers Dr. Batchelor provided.

Questions and Answers

1. The use of AI is exploding; is there any plan to adapt current curriculum to the changing world?

Answer:

We are constantly evaluating our curriculum programs and software. See curriculum committee meetings for updates on progress and status. We also post on the technology department page on the District website <https://www.rtsd.org/people/departments/technology> how we are evaluating and adapting to AI.

2. What is the state of the handwriting requirement?

Answer:

Cursive handwriting is already required at the elementary school level as per the law. The question we need to ask is how often do we want to require it as students get older.

3. Are there conversations to look at the younger kids and teach them how to use technology and how to organize their computers?

Answer:

The school created an executive functioning curriculum at the middle school level. The school is continuing to evaluate that program and review what other steps we may want to take.

4. With regards to AI and technology, are current cohorts of students going to miss out on the future curriculum or the nuanced efforts on what sort of things will be useful (e.g., use technology, but do not abuse it).

Answer:

The school district will continue to explore this as research evolves in this space. The School District is continually reviewing our technology curriculum K-12 and has posted a great deal of information on our technology department page on our website.

5. What are your academic priorities as a superintendent, specifically at the high school level?

Answer:

We are focused on continuous improvement in our work looking at what works well and what doesn't work well. It is important to have structures in place. A constant challenge is in scheduling

and being able to run all the options and opportunities that make Radnor ideal in size (~1100-1200 students). Of note, there is a bubble in grade 6 of increased students (~309 students) and there is a possibility to redistrict at the elementary level in the future once we have built the new Ithan Elementary School.

6. Given the new requirement to take personal finance (0.5 credit) it becomes increasingly difficult to reach calculus before graduation if algebra advanced is not offered in grade 8. Might the school revisit putting algebra advanced back into the grade 8 offerings?

Answer:

There are onramps and offramps to math sequencing. Algebra is a gateway class. We are constantly looking at the progression of math and requirements for college preparation. We will look at this and revisit the possibility of adding algebra 1 advanced back into the curriculum.

7. How do we make sure the district is not resting on its' laurels as a high-performing school? Are the students benefiting from administrative changes being made.

Answer:

At every opportunity, we evaluate. We don't want to rest on our laurels. We are constantly looking at continuous improvement. An example of a weakness and how we addressed the concern was in structured literacy (how to read). We recalculated the time spent and approach to how to teach this topic and adjusted accordingly.

The art of teaching and how to use high impact instructional strategies are important to the district. Toward this end, the district has hired a consultant to help shape teaching through professional development that is centered on the craft of teaching.

Dr. Mac added that student voices are important and as the principal he offers a monthly opportunity for the students to raise concerns at the school (e.g., C lunch was imbalanced and was eliminated).

8. What is the best way for us to make the best impact that something is working well?

Answer:

The best way is to share with your principal. The PTO added that the PTO is always here to help and the PTO President meets with the principal monthly.

9. High school students have a lot of pressure, are there any resources for mental health and confusion about the school procedures?

Answer:

There is a mental health specialist in addition to the counselors that are available to students. These specialists are available and physically located at the high school. More information can be found here <https://www.rtsd.org/students-families/student-mental-health>

The high school also has something called Wellness Wednesday, like yoga and puppies on campus. Additional efforts like positive messages are in the works to be posted in the bathrooms.

10. The underlying causes of mental health stress are important to understand. What are we doing to let these students know it is ok to slow down? Being overloaded and overwhelmed is a norm and expected.

Answer:

We are looking at the Portrait of a Graduate through a committee of students, faculty, staff, and parents. This is one effort. In addition, we recognize that more is not better. For example, there are unintended consequences of adding more Advanced Placement (AP) classes as colleges consider the number of AP courses being offered in evaluating college applications. Therefore, if a school offers a lot of AP courses and students are not taking them then the student applicant is viewed differently than a school that only offers a handful of AP classes. i.e., if two students take the same number of AP classes and school 1 offers a lot of AP classes (29 here at Radnor) and school 2 offers only 5 AP classes, then the Radnor student will not be viewed as favorably because there are opportunities to take more.

11. What is being done so teachers have agency and autonomy in teaching?

Answer:

We have over 700 employees (K-12 teachers, support, admin, and bus drivers) who focus on students. The administration seeks to put the student at the forefront of its' mission and views public education as a means to change the world. This is why we are focusing on the craft of teaching as professional development.