

Renton Technology Coordinating Council (RTCC)

Meeting Minutes

January 24, 2023

ATTENDING

Dr. Ellen Dorr, Dr. Avanti Bergquist, Rahman Abdul, Dr. Bob Ettinger, Barbara Folmer, Amy Frey, Cathleen Gonzales, Jay Gray, Kelly Jones, Tyann Nguyen, Keith Peck, Woody Sobey, Kerrie Thornton, and Melinda Van De Sompele. With special guest: Norma Taylor

AGENDA

- [Welcome and Introductions](#)
- [Review Minutes](#)
- [Project Updates](#)
- [Next Step: Learning & Creating](#)
- [Appreciation](#)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ellen welcomed the council and thanked them for their participation. She emphasized how excited she is about the work the council has been doing this year; focusing on supporting student learning with consideration of students at the margins and digging into how we incorporate resources, tools, and strategies to support strong instruction.

Ellen asked everyone to introduce themselves by sharing their name, role, and something they are excited about in 2023. See [addendum](#) for individual responses.

Ellen gave a special welcome to returning RTCC member, Tyann Nguyen and to guest, Norma Taylor, Multilingual Facilitator.

Minutes Review

Ellen shared the [December 6, 2022 minutes](#) and gave the council time to review them. She asked for questions, clarifications, or corrections.

- **Woody:** Following up from our October meeting, I wanted to thank Rahman for the info about MS Planner! The College and Career Specialist team met today, and part of their time was spent receiving training in event planning using MS Planner. They have a lot of events that happen annually and several of them mentioned they don't have a good way of repeating that event year after year. With the planner, they can set the event up, run it, and then save the information for use again in the future.
- **Keith:** One of the things I wanted to add to the discussion from the last meeting is about tools for students who are differently abled. I have a student that has low vision in my networking and programming classes. Right now, the main tool they can use is the magnifier, so I was trying to look for some other tools that would be helpful. The UW has a great resource called "Access for All" that identifies tools to meet different needs. The other thing I thought about was having high school robotics and programming students create tools for elementary students who have different needs, such as AI that can track different motions and respond, or switch activated toys. I believe over at RHS they have modified car toys, where instead of pressing a gas pedal, there is a button on the steering wheel. So, there are some cool options available or upcoming to consider.
 - **Ellen:** I love the idea of this partnership: high school students creating things for other students.

- **Bob:** One additional connection is from a meeting I had with high school leaders about 9th grade success rates. One of the topics they were looking at was failure rates, because research shows that if students fail in one of their classes during their 9th grade year, they are less likely to arrive at a variety of success measures later. One of the groups with failing grades can be multilingual (ML) learners and a team from RHS was sharing how they worked with the CTE team to use translation features in PowerPoint to communicate information to ML students. I was able to share that RTCC is engaged in broadly similar work and want to reach out to RHS to learn more about some of the things they are doing and to share our work as well. It's a neat overlap in goals and processes.
 - **Ellen:** Thank you. We will dig into that tonight, because I do want to figure out how we collect some of that information and how we can hear directly from students.

PROJECT UPDATES

Before moving into action items from the last meeting, Ellen shared two project updates.

Gym/Commons Presentation Station Modernization Pilot Approved

Last year we worked on a research and design team for the modernization of AV systems in our gyms (and the attached commons if applicable). We put forward a request to the Board to pilot the project at Maplewood Heights (MHE) and it was approved. One of the PE teachers from the design team works at that school and the building will give us a sense of how well this set up will work in elementary schools. From this pilot we will be able to scale the project for other schools in the district.

HS Cisco Academy

Ellen invited Keith and Rahman to share an update regarding the Cisco Labs.

- **Rahman:** We have spent time making sure the Cisco labs are prepped and ready for instruction. Two of our team members (Amani Imran and Ashley Stanton) have been on site at the labs ensuring everything is in place and now we are at the point where we can start teaching and utilizing those tools.
- **Keith:** It is an exciting opportunity! We have had the class at HHS for a couple years now because that was the first school to get a network lab. It also opens up some neat opportunities for students. We have been working with "Computing for All" to set up a cybersecurity internship for Juniors and Seniors. If students take a programming class, cybersecurity, and networking, they qualify for an internship where they can get industry experience. Those are also dual credit classes, so they can get college credit as well.

Ellen noted the Cisco Lab update was shared at the TS department meeting today to give the team insight on what is happening in classrooms and how we support it. She commented on how excited the team is to have these labs and what our students will be able to do with them. She opened the floor for questions or additions.

- **Woody:** Keith mentioned that the classes are dual credit, and I wanted to add that Bellevue College is a strong partner in that, and that partnership has generated student interest in attending Bellevue College.
- **Ellen:** Keith, do we have a partnership with Bellingham as well?
- **Keith:** Yes! For Cybersecurity, there is a free "Cyber Range" that has purposely hackable and breakable systems and computers. Students can go in and explore how to both break into things and how to secure them. For those of you who don't know much about Infrastructure, there are typically two teams: red and blue. The red team tries to break into the system so that they can see where the weak points are. The blue team tries to secure it without jeopardizing the system. So, the "Cyber Range" offers real practical experience for students where they can explore in a safe way that won't harm district technology and gain the skills necessary to get jobs in this area (which is great because there is a real demand for it).

Ellen thanked Keith for sharing and for his partnership. She commented that through his positions as facilitator and classroom teacher, he helps us to stay informed on what is working well, where supports are needed, etc.

NEXT STEP: LEARNING & CREATING

Ellen shared her screen to re-orient the council to the discussions from the previous meeting. In October, the council identified priorities for the school year:

- **accessibility support for ML learners and students receiving special education (SPED) 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

In December, the council dug into the priority highlighted above: “accessibility support for ML learners and students receiving special education (SPED) services.” Representatives from the SPED and ML departments came to the meeting and shared ideas about what strong instruction looks like and how RTCC can support that instruction. At the end of that meeting, the council was asked to complete a survey to share what they would be interested in doing / committing to right now. Ellen gave the council time to review the responses from that survey and asked for any thoughts, questions, or trends they saw in the responses.

Thoughts/questions/trends:

- **Norma:** I appreciate all the support people want to provide to our ML learners and all learners. This is great!
- **Amy:** I like that people are interested in building out these resources but would want to emphasize providing targeted supports for teachers to help them implement some of this.
- **Keith:** This aligns with the TIS leadership work that we are doing. I think a flier or video can get lost, but in-person interaction makes a tool go a lot further.

Action

Ellen invited the council to start brainstorming around two big trends she recognized in the data and in our conversations: Learning and Creating. For each of these trends, she identified some next steps to explore. She opened two breakout rooms for members to self-select into:

- **Learning:** For council members interested in conducting empathy interviews with ML students.
- **Creating:** For council members interested in identifying how to research and organize resources by learning need, starting with ML learning levels.

Ellen gave the council 15 minutes to meet with their interest group and begin to do some of this work together. Then she invited each group to share what they discussed and what their next steps will be.

Learning: Amy, Ellen, Kelly, Melinda, Woody, and Tyann

- **Kelly:** First, we drafted the empathy interview questions. We started with the template Ellen provided, which were geared more toward in-home learning. We revised one and then drafted new ones. We decided that each person working in a school building will complete 5 empathy interviews with students across different grade levels, language levels, and students who have graduated the English Language Learning (ELL) program. The questions we chose are:
 - Have you used technology tools to help with your learning?

- What technology tools do you use to understand what your teacher is saying?
- What do you use to talk to/or collaborate with other students?
- What helps you and the teacher to collaborate/work together?
- Has your teacher given you tools to use in their class?
- Where does technology not help you or get in the way of learning?
- What improvements to technology (resources or support) would you like to see?
- **Tyann:** We tried to make the questions specific and use simplified language to make it more accessible to students at different grade levels.
- **Norma:** With enough advance notice, we can schedule an interpreter. We could have these questions translated, but we don't know if students are able to read, so it would be best to have someone there.
- **Ellen:** I should clarify, empathy interviews are not a survey. They are just a conversation. The questions are for your reference; the students should never see them. The other thing Kelly mentioned was students who have graduated the ELL program and can provide insight on what worked well, what did not, etc.

Creating: Barbara, Bob, Cathy, Jay, Keith, Kerrie, and Rahman

- **Bob:** We had a wide-ranging conversation trying to figure out how to narrow down which resources we have. The support for ML learners is so much bigger than any tech tools. We tried to narrow down some goals and gather ideas (see [List of Tech Resources to Support ML Students](#)). We also talked about how we would want to leverage what we learned from the empathy interviews to inform this work and consider gathering feedback from general education teachers about what supports they need.
 - **Keith** added some resources to the google document Bob shared and stated: These are more focused on students of all different abilities. I just received this resource, so I thought I would share it.
 - **Ellen:** Thank you for adding those in. We do want to think about accessibility for lots of students, so I appreciate having the other frames/lenses on that sheet.

Ellen thanked the groups for their work. She noted that the **Learning** group had identified that they could commit to completing 5 interviews prior to the next meeting in April. She asked the **Creating** group to consider what action/execution items might look like. She invited the council members to hold a subcommittee meeting if necessary.

Ellen reminded the council that the next meeting is on April 4th, and the council will review whatever information they gather at that time. Ellen advised that she will write a summary email with the Learning and Creating group resources included, and that she would check-in in the coming weeks to see how things are going.

- **Melinda:** Would we want to look at this at elementary school as well?
- **Ellen:** Yes, I think we could ask these questions to elementary students.
- **Melinda:** Okay, great! I think it would be best to work with my ELL teacher. I think students may be intimidated if I started asking them questions.

APPRECIATION

Ellen closed the meeting by sharing her gratitude for the energy, ideas, and commitment of the council. She emphasized her excitement for this work: learning from students how to better support them and digging into how we can help staff develop strong instructional practices along the way.

- **Tyann:** I am grateful that this is the goal this year because it is so relevant to what I am doing. I am excited to participate in this work and finding more ways to support ELL students.
- **Norma:** I am super excited about all of this work, and I am excited to share with the staff

- **Kerrie:** Thank you to Norma for coming to this meeting. Your input and insight were really valuable to our group.
- **Barbara:** Thank you Kerrie, for your diligent note taking and thank you to Bob for leading our group.
- **Bob:** Thank you everyone. I value the community! It was so cool the other day to be in a meeting with High School leaders and be able to share how we are doing work that is connected to the conversations they are having.
- **Amy:** I am so excited to be a part of this council because I think it is really good work that is going to have positive impacts on our students and staff.
- **Ellen:** I am also so grateful for everyone on this council and for the exciting work we are doing together.

ADDENDUM

Dr. Ellen Dorr, Chief of Technology & Strategic Initiatives

Next week we have a community forum meeting where we will share the new elementary boundary proposals for the east hill (due to Hilltop Heritage opening this fall). We have a great committee that has been coming up with ideas and we have put a lot of data together for consideration, so I am excited to share that with the community.

Dr. Avanti Bergquist, Board of Directors

I am excited about everything. There is a lot going on in the district!

Rahman Abdul, Executive Director of Technology Services

I am excited about modernizing our gym spaces this year. We are starting a pilot at Maplewood, and we will provide project updates in the future on how things are going.

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

I am really excited about the district-wide work we are doing around 3-8 math and 9th grade success. We are really digging into this work, and I think it is starting to shift practice and learning. So, I am really excited about that.

Barbara Folmer, District Website Coordinator

I am excited about the new school and helping to build out their website. I am especially looking forward to meeting whoever will be doing the website for the new school and setting them up with the appropriate training to get them off to a good start.

Amy Frey, Assistant Principal, Dimmitt Middle School

We have a lot of new activities for our students to be involved in after school. We have a partnership with CLC that is becoming very robust. In addition, we have some new ASB advisors who are planning fun after school activities. I am excited about the ways we can provide fun and enriching supports for our students.

Cathleen Gonzales, Customer Service Manager

I am excited about the new elementary school. It's a lot of work, but it is always cool to see a new school open. I am also excited about the new community center.

Jay Gray, Infrastructure Manager

I am excited to be in the year 2023.

Kelly Jones, Assistant Principal, Hazen High School

I am getting excited that when I leave work there is a little more sunlight. April and May are my favorite time of the year because you wake up in the morning and there is already some daylight, which is helpful with our schedules. Other than that, I am just working through my first year back at the high school level. This year, I am in charge of all the assessments, so there is a lot coming up for me in the spring. I am also the lead for graduation in partnership with our Office Manager, which I am really excited about.

Tyann Nguyen, LAP Paraeducator, Cascade Elementary School

Since I have started, I have helped students progress out of the LAP program and back into the large group. Whenever I see a student graduate out of my group, I am really proud. I feel like I am making a difference. It is so rewarding.

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

I am excited about the state robotics competition coming up on Saturday.

Woody Sobey, CTE STEM Facilitator

I am excited to use a new tool: desktop CNC milling machine. With this tool, we can mill custom circuit boards which will be great for robotics class. We can also mill aluminum, steel, and graphite blocks which we can use for casting metal in our art classes. I am excited to see how all that goes.

Kerrie Thornton, Administrative Assistant

I am also excited about the elementary boundaries community forum on January 31st.

Melinda Van De Sompele, Teacher, Renton Park Elementary / Technology Integration Specialist

I am excited about the work my students are doing. We have been learning about the rainforest and how deforestation is affecting wildlife. My students have been using technology to put together presentations about what we can do to save the rainforest and what to do in the future.

Norma Taylor, Multilingual Facilitator

This will be our 2nd annual WEDA assessment. It's exciting because this is not our first time doing it and we feel a lot better about it this time around.