Student Technology Think Tank
Committee Notes No. 5
October 5, 2015

Introduction:

Kurt Gazow, Executive Director of Technology, opened the meeting at 3:03 p.m. He welcomed everyone and also thanked them for taking the time to get together and share their reflections and learnings from last week's trip to Sammamish High School, Kent School District and Microsoft.

Kurt asked that the team break into their travel/van groups and spend time together reflecting on their impressions from the trip. He asked that one person from each group be designated to share that group's main thoughts/findings with the large group.

Paul Clement:
- Districts are going about it in different ways.
- Sammamish has had a unified effort.
- Kent Meridian takeaways: use of laptops created a barrier; use of laptops did not necessarily increase collaboration, was just another thing on the desk.
- Another difference was the actual devices.
- Digital spaces seem necessary.
- Our district is closer philosophically to Sammamish, but in reality we are closer to Kent Meridian.

Mike Copland:
- On the ride home, John Farquar created a One Note of their group's discussions. There was a lot of agreement in the vehicle.
- Success factors:
  - idea of going whole-school rather than grade levels;
  - starting with a high school;
  - to standardize on a collaboration tool makes sense (One Note as a common platform at Sammamish was powerful);
  - one school as a pilot, with teachers getting the devices in their hands before the kids to get a start on learning;
  - if OneNote will be the platform, we can start training on that now in preparation for devices coming into the system.
- Leading with the instructional picture, we are trying hard to do more coherent work in curriculum.
- We need to be thoughtful as we start taking a better look at technology for students.

Matt Whitten:
- Digital ink was key.
- A coherent agreement is needed on software.
- It makes the most sense to roll out to secondary first.
- Some concern that some kids are Apple users and it might be difficult for them to learn OneNote.

Brian Pahl:
- Solid emphasis on best instructional practice, and technology being a tool to support that.
- Mostly focused on yay or nay, mostly everyone in the van was yes on moving forward.
- Biggest concerns are about equity, professional development and teachers getting a jump start.
- Questions about what the rollout would look like.
- Some question about the first wave of teachers who are "on board," which may make the idea contagious.
- What models are possible?
- Teachers applying for a grant to be the first to roll out.

Tommy Lingbloom:
- There were big differences between the districts.
- Make sure professional development is started prior to the devices being given to the students.
- As far as implementation and pilot schools, what would be important to consider for a pilot school? Ideas are equity, cohesiveness of a staff.
- Consider a smaller rollout for middle school (maybe start with a high school).
- With feeder schools, how will a pilot affect a feeder pattern?
- With two schools opening soon (OHS and SHS), it would be good for them to open with the technology in place.

Brian Pahl then asked the student members of the group to share their takeaways, which were:

- The science class at Sammamish used a very cool OneNote that included instructions.
- Engineering was also interesting.
- Sammamish High School's teaching system was great – microphone for the teacher projected so everyone could hear; it was easy to see who understood and who didn't.
- Low tech classes at Kent Meridian were interesting.
- There was a big gap between Kent Meridian and Sammamish.
- Kent was using paper and pencil while their computers were on their desks, while Sammamish students were using their laptops for notes.
- Some classes were using OneNote and some weren't – students might get confused about what is/isn't online.
- Go big or go home.

John Getchell asked what "equity" means in this context of a 1:1 initiative. Tommy Lingbloom responded that it would mean not having to make alternate assignments for students who do not have access to devices. A Sammamish student had shared that the device goes home at night and can be used as a family device.

Kurt posed the question: "Is the group ready to endorse the 1:1+ vision as part of our next tech levy effort?" Mike asked if there is anyone in the room who feels it is not the right thing to do now or in the next couple of years. One member asked, as a homeowner, how much would this add for our community members? Mike answered that we don't have an answer, yet, but we will certainly need to see what the costs would be and take that into consideration. Simone added that it would depend on the depth and speed of the recommendation.

Kurt noted that there has been a lot of sharing about the positives, and wondered if there are still some questions that should be addressed. Matt Whitten asked whether it is a good idea to add more for our teachers, and wondered if we should put the brakes on other initiatives in order to go forward with this. Mike asked Brian to share how he is helping to integrate technology for the district. Brian thinks there is a lot of work to do, and the more of a head start that we can give the teachers, the better. He recommends that the district be prepared to pay teachers to learn the devices and software, and suggests that having an instructional coach in the building would be very helpful. Instructional coaching support is one leg of a stool, as is technical support, and in secondary schools the student help desk will help to lead and support their peers. Tommy noted that, using TPEP as an example, if administrators start using it (tech), the staff will likely follow. Steve Clarke believes the Sammamish problem-based learning was a driving factor for everyone being on board. How do we use the tools to go deeper in the classroom with students?

Jaylani Evans added that messaging is important. Jackie Brawley stated that when we make a recommendation to Dr. Baker, he will have approximately a month to process it and he may choose to further engage staff around the recommendation, perhaps with a survey or meeting; that will be up to him. James Everett added that our direction needs to be intentional and purposeful.

Mike asked the parents and community partners from the group to share their thoughts:
- Going forward, there has to be a team helping to guide the use of the tools.
- If you can't do it well, don't do it.
- It is amazing to look at Sammamish and see how well the students are doing, and if we can't do it close to that, I have reservations about moving forward.

Mike distributed a worksheet containing a question and asked for a yes or no, along with "why" yes or no. Individuals took a few minutes to complete the exercise.

Mike asked that the group spend time surfacing any disagreement and also any additional considerations that the group should hear and consider. Kurt would like to get back together with as many group members as are available Thursday afternoon to take a look at the findings. Some of what was shared included:

- Regarding the dedicated support technician: currently with 90 laptops, sometimes the LMS needs to search for things for her tech to do. Suggested having loaner devices.
- The tech person should be a thought partner with the instructional person.
- Even Sammamish said there were people who were slow to adopt.
- Would not want the socio-economic factor to be the driving factor for the location of the pilot school(s).
- What schools would give us the most information for the next phase of the rollout?
- Does not believe the feeder patterns are "true."
- You need to have building leadership and a majority of the staff who are on board and able to move forward through the messiness.
- Is there a possibility of a pilot concurrently across levels? Potentially year 1 would be a pilot high school, year 2 would implement the other high schools and a middle school, year 3 would be to implement the other middle schools and a pilot elementary school.
- Accountability – in a caring and supportive way, make sure the initiative is the initiative.
- Building leadership will need a different type of support in being a leader.

- What about home connectivity? We should at least look at the needs.
- Paid professional development would be good before the kids get the devices.
- Suggestion of a mandatory "boot camp," such as was done in Houston.
- Prioritize the high school implementation, but dependent on the amount of money invested.
- Would current grades 3-5 access in elementary move down to K-2 in future so the younger students do not get left behind?
- Keep in mind that 3rd graders are taking a high stakes exam which relies on technology.
- Kurt pointed out that Kent has found a benefit of decreasing the anxiety level of online testing and there is also less of an impact on testing schedules.

Students on the committee shared:

- The most important thing was the second question, it is more important for middle school and high school to get 1:1 technology first.
- No on the pilot school because it is unfair and might create conflict.
- Teachers need more practice than the students.
- Giving students as well as staff time to learn the programs – most HS students only have extensive experience with Word and Power Point.

Mike and Kurt will be here this Thursday (Oct. 8) at 3:00 with the beginning of a draft recommendation, which will be shared with those who can come. For those who are not able to come, it will be shared via email.

Mike and Kurt thanked the group for their time and investment in this work.