Information Technology Advisory Committee
Annual Report to School Board
May 2018 – August 2019

The Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) was formed in April 2018 to represent the voices of Seattle Public Schools teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community members regarding current and future technology policy issues facing the district. During our tenure, we have offered insight and guidance on a variety of topics, which include, but are not limited to, network infrastructure, data privacy, accessibility to technology for all students, and best practices in technology-integrated resources and learning models.

Although many topics were covered, several themes emerged that we would like to represent in this report. These include: transparency and oversight, the 2019-2023 Technology Plan (and the near-term computer refresh), the need to give teachers the resources and support they need, and advise and collaboration from a variety of voices, and using an equity lens.

The committee, which itself is comprised of students, community members, and staff, engaged with several departments within the district and outside organizations regarding education technology issues.

Transparency and Oversight

As a regular part of every meeting, the committee reviews the Department of Technology Services (DoTS) budget. The committee is charged with reviewing the finances and status of major DoTS projects at a high-level. This was accomplished by a high-level monthly budget review (not an audit), an overview of the annual 2018-19 budget, and an overview of the five-year budget history and forecast. There were always good questions that often led to discussions of the status of technology in the district. Members regularly noted the student device budget that was not being spent but for which a plan was being formulated.

On a quarterly basis, ITAC reviews the Technology Report that provides a three-month review of project status. The committee reviewed and provided feedback the following reports:

- Spring 2018
- Summer 2018
- Fall 2018
- Winter 2018-19
- Spring 2019

Additionally, the committee requested a current inventory and map of student devices which was provided for discussion and feedback. This proved to be an important document that drove both developing a plan and garnering support for it.

Due to committee concerns, Prevention and Intervention Manager Lisa Davidson attended a meeting to give an overview and answer questions about the Check Yourself Survey and data sharing practices.

When software had to be removed for district schools due to inaccessibility, Senior Assistant General Counsel Nazik Youssef shared information with the committee about ADA accessibly and the software and application onboarding process in compliance with the consent decree.

The Director of College and Career Readiness, Caleb Perkins, received feedback on Naviance and how to best communicate the data sharing implications of using Naviance to families and the public. The committee provided Dr. Perkins with suggestions for outreach to families.

Information Security Manager April Mardock reviewed the district's cybersecurity infrastructure to help the committee understand the framework of security. She explained that board policies and superintendent procedures manage data and that the district follows best practices and has system controls to secure data. With this information, the committee received an overview of several School Board policies and had the chance to review and provide feedback:

- Policy 2015 - Selection and Adoption of Instructional Materials
- Policy 2022 - Electronic Resources/Use of the internet
- Policy 6501 - Data Privacy

The work product of the Transparency and Oversight role of this committee can be shown by the board action reports that were moved forward after this committee's review. Starting in the fall, the committee received an overview of all proposed Board Action Reports and had the opportunity to review and provide feedback:

- SAP Renewal
- Purchase of Student and Staff Computers for new BEX IV Schools, BTA IV Projects, K-3 Class Size Reduction, Portables and Enrollment Growth Capacity Classrooms Opening Summer 2019
- Firewall Upgrade
- MAN/WAN Upgrade
- Student Computer Refresh to Support Teaching and Learning and Equitable Access
- PowerSchool Renewal

The committee supported several initiatives for board action with an official vote:

December 17, 2018:
- Committee members unanimously voted to move the Firewall and MAN/WAN Board Action Reports forward with comments to the board.

April 15, 2019:
- The committee voted unanimously to support the student device purchase Board Action Report with minor additions to move forward to the School Board.
- The committee voted unanimously to support a three-year contract with PowerSchool Board Action Report with minor additions move forward to the School Board.

Technology Plan

Additionally, the committee was integral in the technology planning for the BEX V levy by participating in project prioritization and review of the final project list. Following the approval of the BEX V projects, the Technology Plan was created for the next five years. The committee provided feedback as the Technology Plan was being drafted and supported the finalization of

the plan. The committee also reviewed the Principles of Effective Digital Learning and got an overview of Washington State's Education Technology Standards.

The Technology Plan 2019-2023 is a not simply an overview of work being done but also shows the connection to the new Strategic Plan. We look forward to district technology planning that continues to prioritize equitable access and reflects research-based best practices for implementing technologies that enhance teaching and learning. Finally, we recognize that our greatest asset is our teachers—essentially, the best technology comes with a heartbeat.

Support for Teachers

One theme that kept coming up throughout the year was support to our teachers, especially those in the highest need schools. We discussed the need for more professional development, the need for more time with Digital Learning Specialists, and adequate technical support. We discussed the need for equitable classroom technology, so all teachers have what they need to be effective.

Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction Executive Director Dr. Kyle Kinoshita presented the High School Technology Grant program to the committee. He reviewed the changes to graduation credit requirements, which created an opportunity to change instruction in high school to attain 21st century skills and college and career preparation. Providing grants to schools allowed schools to have ownership in their plan, bridging disadvantages of either purely district-determined vs. purely site-based professional development. This grant format also rewarded innovative uses for technology and provides a model for other schools.

Dr. Kinoshita also shared the "Principles for Effective Digital Learning" with the committee. This was part of the larger theme to provide educational technology to students and support for teachers. Committee members noted the lack of a sense of urgency related to digital literacy and emphasized the importance of baseline knowledge of students.

DoTS staff also heard from committee members about Start of School Processes and what could improve the experience. Mr. Krull shared plans with the committee to improve the Start of School experience, which included ordering technology earlier and Capital finishing the construction of portables and new classrooms earlier to allow the time needed to install wiring and technology. In response to feedback about extended wait times for services at schools, a moratorium on employee moves at JSCEE is being implemented to prioritize technology services at schools.

As the theme of the need for more classroom technology support to teachers continued to emerge in the committee, district staff made the decision to create the Education Technology positions, which will be in nearly all schools next year. The Education Technology (ET) leader is a building leadership position that seeks to improve teaching and learning through education technology and digital learning to support district-wide initiatives.

Equity

The committee is charged with acting as advisors on the state of information technology and education technology within the district. We consider equity with our input. To support equitable

access to technology and digital instructional practices, the committee often discussed topics that had a significant equity focus.

The key equity issue that came up all year was the inequitable distribution of laptops at our schools. Some schools were at well above the standard while others were far from even approaching the standard with six students have to share one laptop. We are proud that we helped foster a plan to bring equal access to our schools and using an equity lens to focus first on our schools with the most need.

The year's biggest initiative that the committee supported was the student computer refresh project. The high-school student device model and the one-to-one program considered the differing needs of students based on equity tiers. Likewise, meeting the Educational Technology Learning Standards considered access at each of our schools.

The committee continued to demonstrate the need for a current device inventory to move the student computer refresh initiative forward. As a result, DoTS produced a map and inventory of current mobile devices in schools, which showed vast inequities throughout the district. This data is helping to shape the rollout of devices as needed to prioritize students who are furthest from educational justice.

We discussed student email accounts, for example, and our student members talked about the inequities when a student does not have email. Likewise, we discussed the issues of home access to technology and the internet that lead to inequities. Exploring these topics will continue next year.

Chance Hunt from the City of Seattle provided an overview of the City of Seattle Technology Access Study and shared where there are inequities across the city. Digital Equity and home usage will be an area to address next year.