

MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Homewood-Flossmoor High School, 999 Kedzie Avenue, Flossmoor, Illinois
January 21, 2025

Mr. Pauling called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. The following Board members were present for all or part of the meeting:

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| Mr. Anderson | Mr. Riedel |
| Ms. Jackson | Ms. Turnquest |
| Mr. Legardy | Mr. Pauling |

Mrs. Hoereth was absent due to a work commitment. Student Board Representative Anaya Mootry was also in attendance.

The presence of a quorum was noted and the meeting declared duly convened. Superintendent Wakeley, Principal Alexander, Chief School Business Official Cook, Instruction & Professional Development Director Hester and Student Supports Director Rudan were also in attendance. Communications and Community Engagement Director Erdey and Interim Human Resources Directors Gay and Kilrea were absent.

Representatives of the HFEO, HFPA, League of Women Voters and Homewood-Flossmoor Chronicle were present, as well as, members of the public.

Comments. Mrs. Kimberly O'Lone, resident of Homewood, addressed the board regarding her concern over a dramatic increase in her real estate taxes of almost \$5000 reflected in her total tax bill of approximately \$18,000.00. She asked if the board had any suggestions on how to lower her tax bill. She shared her thoughts that as a result of the increased tax bills, community members are being forced to leave or are running delinquent in paying their taxes. Mr. Pauling responded that there has been a historic property tax increase in the south suburbs and many people in the community are struggling with their tax bills including board members. Dr. Wakeley added that the tax levy is based typically on CPI or 5%, whichever is less and in this case, CPI is less at 3.4%. Dr. Cook added that the increase in the tax bill reflects the assessment of her home and suggested that she appeal to the Cook County Assessor. Mr. Anderson also encouraged Mrs. O'Lone to contact Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi. Mr. Anderson added that his own tax bill actually has doubled. He noted that the Board of Education has given back almost \$30 million in relief to the tax payers over the past 30 years. Mr. Anderson extended an invitation for Mrs. O'Lone to discuss this topic further with him at any time.

Dr. Troy O'Quin, on behalf of himself and his wife Dr. Camille O'Quin, shared some thoughts on class rank. He stated that his family has had much discussion on this topic. He asked if the board could consider a way to preserve the class rank while also introducing diploma distinctions for this freshman class and he added that this would honor the freshman class that entered under the current use of class rank. He expressed that this change will be another challenge for this freshman class. Dr. O'Quin noted that this freshman class has faced many challenges throughout their academic journey and cited their resilience with Covid, social upheaval and other challenges that have occurred. He added that as a parent, he sees both sides of the issue playing out and his hope is the board will support a compromise that would still acknowledge those top ten students while bringing in this new diploma recognition. Mr. Pauling thanked Dr. O'Quin for his comments and stated that Class Rank is on the agenda tonight and there will be some discussion at that point.

Ms. Kristen Salkas, Homewood resident, spoke on behalf of the HF Community Run Club. She addressed the board as a follow up to an email that she previously sent to Mr. Pauling in which she requested more access to HF's indoor track for the Run Club. She added that they would be very appreciative if they could get additional hours that would include some evening hours. She also mentioned that they would be willing to pay for the use of the indoor track. The HF Community Run Club has over 200 members in the area and they run year-round. She noted currently the indoor track is only available for the Run Club's use during public hours, from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m., during the week. Mr. Pauling thanked Ms. Salkas for her comments and stated that he shared her email with Dr. Alexander and Dr. Wakeley. He added that they will be looking at a range of options for use of the facility for the community as well as the Run Club. Dr. Wakeley pointed out that the indoor facility is being used 7 days a week right now by various groups who reside in the community in addition to HF sports and activities that are held in the facility. Ms. Salkas stated that the Run Club is 80% in-district community members. Mr. Pauling stated that Dr. Wakeley and Dr. Alexander will follow up with Ms. Salkas to continue discussions on possible options. In addition

Comments (cont'd.) to Ms. Salkas, HF Community Run Club members Eric Zehnder, Dawn Coen and Bonnie Bell-Pease also addressed the board in support of Ms. Salkas' request for more access to the indoor track with the hope that some evening hours will also be available for the Club's use.

HF IB Diploma Programme student Caylum Ganshirt, remarked on the weighted grade changes that now weighs Honors, AP and IB the same. He expressed that he along with his fellow IB classmates do not feel that it is fair to weigh the Honors, AP and IB the same. Caylum also stated that they feel that the new earned honors system that allows a CP class to be weighed the same as an IB or AP course is also unfair. He added that CP courses do not require the same amount of workload or effort as an IB or AP course.

Dr. Wakeley gave a shout-out to the maintenance staff, the "unsung heroes," who have been working hard during this cold snap to keep HF's campus safe and well maintained. Currently they have been dealing with a water main break in these extreme winter conditions. He extended his appreciation to Jim Patterson, Brad Hamilton and the entire maintenance staff for all they do each and every day even when the students are not on campus. Dr. Wakeley congratulated Athletic Director Matt Lyke and Basketball Coach Jamere Dismukes for organizing and hosting the Martin Luther King Jr. Basketball three-day event this weekend; ending with an HF victory over Joliet.

Dr. Alexander expressed his appreciation to faculty and staff for coming back from winter break with zeal. He spoke on the meeting that was held with faculty to share data and to keep them encouraged to continue the work that they do with our students. He added that school spirit is high and noted 580 students were eligible to attend the second quarter incentive by meeting the required attendance, behavior and academic standards. Ten students will be honored tomorrow at the Student of the Quarter Breakfast as the Students of the Quarter for how they exemplify the Profile of a Viking. He is looking forward to Rising Viking Days that will take place next Monday and Tuesday. A group of students will travel with him to the district's feeder schools to highlight what HF offers in an effort to get the 8th grade students excited about being a future Viking.

Mr. Anderson gave his monthly reminder for everyone to get involved in speaking their mind for common sense gun legislation. He attended the MLK Basketball tournament this past weekend and was able to attend a couple of the girls' games. Mr. Anderson added he got to see a very talented group of athletes. Dr. King was celebrated yesterday and Mr. Anderson participated in the Day of Service in the community and was proud to be a part of a few things that were happening.

Committee Reports. Mr. Legardy reported that the Planning Committee met on January 17, 2025. The meeting was brief but productive. An update on Instructional Coaching, in alignment with the district's strategic plan, was given. It was noted that year over year utilization and summary utilization are very high. He noted the number of instructional coaches will be reduced from five to four with one coach choosing to return to the classroom full-time. He noted that position will not be filled at this time. Discussion of possible resources, including videos, to provide content to teachers also took place. Mr. Legardy added that there was also discussion on PRESS policy updates which are on this evening's agenda.

Consent Agenda. Mr. Pauling stated that our adopted rules of Parliamentary Procedures, Robert's Rules and Bylaws, provide for a consent agenda listing for approval of the Board by a single motion. Most of the items listed under the consent agenda have gone through board subcommittee review and recommendation. Documentation concerning these items has been provided to all board members and the public in advance to assure an extensive and thorough review. Items may be removed from the consent agenda at the request of any board member. Mr. Pauling asked if any board member requested any item on the consent agenda the be removed from the consent agenda for further discussion. No agenda items were requested to be removed. Mr. Legardy moved, seconded by Ms. Jackson, that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda that included:

- Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting Minutes, December 16, 2024
- Regular Board Meeting Minutes, December 17, 2024
- Approval of Instructional Resources for 2025-2026
- Approval of Recommended PRESS Policy Updates
- Approval of Expenditures, \$3,003,030.80
- Approval of Imprest Fund, \$50,914.57
- Ratification of December, 2024 Payroll, \$3,507,969.95
- Retirement, Jeanne Miller, English Department Lead, effective June 30, 2028
- Retirement, Jeffrey Treppa, Social Science Teacher, effective June 2028
- 2025-2026 Teacher Contract, Troy McAllister, PE/Health/Driver Education, 2nd MA/off schedule, \$116,160.77.
- 2025-2026 Head Varsity Football Coach,
- Extra Responsibility Contracts - Activity Assignments, \$47,826.42
- Extra Responsibility Contracts - Athletic Assignments for 2025-2026 Head Coaches

Roll Call: Ayes – Mr. Anderson, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Legardy, Mr. Riedel, Ms. Turnquest, Mr. Pauling. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Dr. Wakeley highlighted two of the individuals whose contracts were just approved. He stated that Troy McAllister has been named Head Football Coach and PE, Health and Driver Education teacher. His career highlights include: Coaching record of 113-48, Two Illinois State Championships, State Runner-Up Finish, 2018 Gatorade Coaching Excellence Award and 2020 Max Preps Illinois Top High School Football Coach. In addition, Nate Nesbit has been named the new Head Girls Volleyball Coach for the 2025-26 school year. Coach Nesbit brings proven experience, a record of success, and a commitment to athlete development to the Viking volleyball program. He was named Noble Network Coach of the Year three times (2018-2020) and lead a team to a #8 state ranking in 2020. Dr. Wakeley looks forward to Coaches McAllister and Nesbit coming in and leading our programs.

Old Business

Class Rank. Mr. Legardy moved, seconded by Mr. Anderson, that the Board of Education approve eliminating class rank starting with the freshman class of the 2027-2028 school year, to be replaced with cum laude diploma distinctions, as recommended by the Principal and the Superintendent. Dr. Wakeley stated that this topic has been discussed for almost two years. This change will result in the recognition of more students, approximately 170 who would receive diploma distinctions compared to the recognizing of 10-12 Viking Scholars at graduation. Mrs. Rudan added that regarding the elimination of class rank, a lot of research was conducted that included consultations with college admission counselors from a large variety of colleges. She noted class rank is no longer a significant factor for admission at the majority of colleges across the nation. Mrs. Rudan added that this change will give students the opportunity to take classes aligned with their interests and career goals without the “grade chase.” Dr. Alexander stated that he echoed the comments made by Dr. Wakeley and Mrs. Rudan. He added that the goal is to prepare students for success after high school by emphasizing learning over competition. Students can now take classes according to their interests, eliminating the pressure for students to focus narrowly on grades. The social/emotional benefits to students by eliminating class rank was voiced by several of the board members. Mr. Legardy noted that the board has been concerned about making this change specifically related to whether the students would be de-incentivized by moving from class rank to diploma distinctions. He shared that he reluctantly supports this change and remains skeptical, however, he will support this change because of the social/emotional benefits that have been discussed. He added, “we want kids to excel, we want kids to achieve and as a parent we need to know that.” Mr. Riedel remarked that students have a ton of opportunities at H-F and barriers need to be removed so they are personally incentivized. He added that it is important to understand that there is a real outcome to removing barriers, giving students the ability to explore the full catalogue of opportunities to get a leg up on what they want to do. Mr. Riedel shared that the defining factor in his decision is giving students the freedom to explore the pathways they may want to take. Mr. Pauling stated that they are very focused on putting our kids in the best competitive position with their peers at other schools. He added that he came to realize that class rank was not necessarily helping them because it means different things at different schools when competing for seats at those colleges. Mr. Pauling noted that it took two years to discuss this topic and the full board came around unanimously to support this change. Roll Call: Ayes – Ms. Jackson, Mr. Legardy, Mr. Riedel, Ms. Turnquest, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Pauling. Nays – None. Motion carried.

New Business

2025-2026 School Calendar. Mr. Legardy moved, seconded by Mr. Riedel, that the Board of Education adopt the 2025-2026 school calendar in accordance with Procedure 7110, Subsection A.3, from August 11, 2025 to May 28, 2026 for a total of 184 days, with Institutes on August 11, 2025, October 24, 2025, February 6, 2026, and May 1, 2026, and In-service Days on August 12, 2025 December 19, 2025 and May 29, 2026, as recommended by the Superintendent. Dr. Wakeley noted this calendar essentially corresponds with this year’s calendar and is aligned, with the best of everyone’s ability, with school districts 153 and 161. Roll Call: Ayes – Ms. Jackson, Mr. Legardy, Mr. Riedel, Ms. Turnquest, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Pauling. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Illinois Vision 2030. Mr. Legardy moved, seconded by Mr. Riedel, that the Board of Education adopt the Resolution in support of Illinois Vision 2030, as recommended by the Superintendent. Dr. Wakeley shared Vision 2030 is a plan for improving public education in Illinois. The Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) and other education organizations introduced the plan in November 2024. Vision 2030 provides a blueprint to enhance public education through future-focused learning with shared accountability and predictable funding. Roll Call:

Ayes – Mr. Legardy, Mr. Riedel, Ms. Turnquest, Mr. Anderson, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Pauling. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Adjournment. Mr. Legardy moved, seconded by Ms. Turnquest, that the Board of Education be adjourned at 8:05 p.m. Motion carried.

President

Vice-President/Secretary