

MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Homewood-Flossmoor High School, 999 Kedzie Avenue, Flossmoor, Illinois
February 18, 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:

Mr. Anderson	Mr. Riedel
Mrs. Hoereth	Ms. Turnquest
Ms. Jackson	Mr. Pauling
Mr. Legardy	

Mrs. Hoereth and Mr. Legardy attended via Zoom Video/Audio conference. Student Board Representative Gabe McKinney 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, Curriculum, Instruction & Professional Development Director Hester and Communications and Community Engagement Director Erdey were also in attendance. Interim Human Resources Directors Gay and Kilrea were absent. Information Services Director Richardson and Operations and Management Director Patterson were also in attendance.

Representatives of the HFEO, HFPA, League of Women Voters and Homewood-Flossmoor Chronicle were present, as well as, members of the public. Dr. Jennifer Norrell, Incoming Superintendent, was also in attendance.

Comments. Student Board Representative Gabe McKinney offered congratulations to the 4 members of the Speech Team who will be competing at state this weekend. He also encouraged everyone to stop by and attend The New Faces production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that will open on Thursday and run through Saturday.

Ms. Rosalinda Ledesma addressed the board regarding her concern regarding the weighted grade change that was recently approved by the board. She expressed that she is opposed to IB, AP and Honors now being weighted the same. She expressed that the work load and effort that is required in the IB Program is not comparable to AP and Honors. Ms. Ledesma also inquired if the new LGBTQ+ English course is a requirement and asked what other alternatives are available. In step with the district's Profile of a Viking regarding diversity and inclusion, she would like to see more representation of Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. She noted May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and she offered to help in any way needed. Ms. Ledesma inquired on the number of buses that are transporting students between campuses during the cold weather. She asked if it was possible to add more buses since there are a number of students who are walking building to building while other are getting transported. Mr. Pauling suggested that Dr. Hester follow up with Ms. Ledesma regarding the weighted grade change and new English course. Dr. Wakeley stated that currently ten buses are running between campuses throughout the day and he will see if there is a need to increase that number to ensure everyone has an opportunity to use the transportation if they choose.

Pastor Doyle Landry commented on HF's new football coach, Mr. Troy McAllister, and stated that he is an excellent hire. He stated that he knows Mr. McAllister's excellent reputation from Phillips High School and many black students without dads considered him their primary father. He added that many rewards will be reaped from the decision to hire him to coach at HF. Pastor Doyle noted that Mental Health Awareness month begins on May 1st and the rates of mental health issues among black men are increasing. He provided an article that appeared in the *WayMakerJournal.com* regarding a mother's story of coming to grips with her own son's struggles with mental illness and his numerous suicide attempts. In addition, the board had an opportunity to view the book *Sideshow: Living with Loss and Moving Forward with Faith* by Rickey Smiley with the beginning theme being mental health and the author's own personal struggle dealing with both his father and son's battle with drug addiction which resulted in both overdosing. Pastor Doyle would like to see the district work with the Village of Flossmoor and Homewood about events where people can learn about mental health in an effort to reduce the stigma. He closed by saying that we all must do better about the anxiety and depression that 14-18 year olds are feeling from pressures that adults put on them.

Dr. Wakeley thanked everyone for attending this evening's meeting despite the cold temperatures and for their support of the school community. He referred to the Mental Health Day that will be held this spring. He added the district will be partnering with Ms. Wallace founder of Live Free 999. It will be a day full of opportunities for our students to explore the mental health crisis. He added that they would welcome any opportunities to partner with

Comments (con't.) the Villages regarding this topic. Dr. Wakeley stated that he has been receiving questions regarding the possible changes to the US Department of Education and how that may affect HF. At this point he is unable to speak exactly to what changes will come and stated we are in a holding pattern. Dr. Wakeley pointed out that financially the district does not receive a great deal of federal funding so he does not anticipate that there will be a significant impact to the district. Dr. Wakeley noted that the federal government has given schools two weeks to dismantle DEI funded programs. He added that our students will continue to grow through the Profile of a Viking with Diversity and Inclusion as our due north and we will continue to move ahead with every ounce of energy we have always had.

Dr. Alexander noted that the recent Institute Day held on February 7th was outstanding. He acknowledged the math and science teams along with their department leads who showcased their success in implementing standards based learning.

Mrs. Erdey shared that the new website was successfully launched last month and she has received positive feedback from staff, students and families. She expressed her thanks to the staff committee involved in the implementation process. Through an online form, input has been received and they are able to continue making improvements and fix any problems. She also thanked Science Teacher Corrine Zimmerman and her students for representing HF at the District 161 STEAM Night. Engagement Coordinator Stephanie Wright shared that the record-breaking crowd enjoyed their interactive lessons that gave students a view of HF's Anatomy and Physiology courses.

Mr. Anderson remarked that his message remains the same as he referred to his passion for the 2nd Amendment and encouraged everyone to stay involved in what matters to them and remain vigilant. He touched on Mrs. O'Lone's comments from the last board meeting and how much it saddened him as he has heard from other community members that they may not be able to stay in the community because of high property taxes. Mr. Anderson added that he has been in Homewood for 30 years pouring his heart into this community and a lot of people he values and loves may not be able to stay here due to decisions legislators have made that provide no services to our community. He expressed his appreciation to the community members who organized the MLK Day and added it was a day of triumph and exultation, and he enjoyed the time together and the opportunity to serve. He hopes the event will continue into the future.

Mr. Riedel congratulated the Viking Jazz Program for being invited to perform at the Illinois Music Educator Conference in Peoria where they performed for Illinois state educators. The amazing musicians performed with HF Alumnus and Grammy Winner Christopher McBride at a sendoff concert the night before they departed for Peoria. He added Mr. McBride was amazing and the students were phenomenal. He encouraged everyone to take the opportunity to see the HF bands perform, especially the jazz band. He feels HF provides an amazing opportunity for our students as well as a wonderful opportunity for the community to take advantage of what our school is providing to our students.

Ms. Turnquest stated she recently had the pleasure along with Mr. Pauling to attend the Black Creativity Gala at the Museum of Science and Industry. She congratulated the HF students who were part of the Black Creativity Gala juried exhibition. She added all of the student work was outstanding. Ms. Turnquest noted Senior Javiyah Israel won Best of Show in the Black Creativity Exhibition for her painting, entitled *Unbothered*, and it was breathtaking. She noted the painting is available on HF's website. Mr. Pauling added how impressed he was with all the students' work that was on display at the event and HF was at the top of the evening. He spoke with the organizers of the Black Creativity Gala about inviting our students whose work is on display to allow them to attend the Gala in the future.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Anderson reported that the Finance Committee met on February 6, 2025 with a full agenda. He noted DLA Architects Ed Wright and Ryan Kelley attended the meeting and gave an update on the Science and Culinary projects. He stated Culinary is done and being fully used. Science is close to being done with an anticipated opening in March. Future capital projects were also discussed with an opportunity for the committee to share ideas on planning for projects and funding those projects. Several items are on tonight's agenda that include the copier agreement and the Property Tax Relief Grant (PTRG). He also reported that the traffic study is ongoing and results will be available this spring. Lastly, he shared that Mr. Schmidt gave an update on residency and reported on improved processes in that area. Residency has been a focus of this district and he is happy Mr. Schmidt provides a new set of eyes.

Ms. Jackson stated that the Personnel Committee also met on February 6th. She reported that Dr. Kilrea provided an HR update that included Verifent, an employment verification system that is being implemented and will streamline our employment verification process. Frontline Education's substitute teaching tool will be launched soon giving teachers the ability to enter their absences which will give substitute teachers the opportunity to plan in

advance Committee Reports (con't.) to fill the vacancy. Department Leads will now be able to monitor teacher absences with this tool. In addition, the district's HR and Business Office will be moving to Skyward. This is a huge lift coming out of the Treasurer's Office with an anticipated transition in October. The implementation of other new digitalized processes in the HR Department were also highlighted by Dr. Kilrea. The head of HR position is anticipated to be posted tomorrow based on the outcome of the board's vote on the organizational chart on tonight's agenda. The committee then moved into Closed Session.

Mr. Pauling took a moment to acknowledge audience members Ms. Lenita Gibson, Dr. Camille O'Quin, Mr. Aredell Roundtree and Dr. Tamekia Smith who are all running for the three open school board seats on April 1st. He expressed his appreciation to them for being here and wished them the best in their endeavors. Mr. Pauling stated he is happy to see so many who are ready to serve.

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:

- Regular Board Meeting Minutes, January 21, 2025
- Extended Field Trip – Science Department/Astro-Geo Class – Maquoketa Caves State Park
- Approval of Expenditures, \$3,367,221.06
- Approval of Imprest Fund, \$40,229.58
- Ratification of January, 2025, Payroll, \$2,985,792.70
- Retirement, Dr. Rachel Giddens, SPED Teacher and Testing Accommodations Coordinator, effective June 30, 2028
- Retirement, Sandra Lessentine, Math Teacher, effective June 2027
- Extra Responsibility Contracts, Athletic Assignments, \$404,235.03
- Extra Responsibility Contracts, Sixth Assignment Contracts, \$6,955.90

Roll Call: Ayes – Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Hoereth, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Legardy, Mr. Riedel, Ms. Turnquest, Mr. Pauling. Nays – None. Motion carried. Mr. Anderson commented that he was excited to see the Maquoketa Caves trip and shared that he also visited the Maquoketa Caves State Park when he was a student. Mr. Pauling congratulated Dr. Giddens and Ms. Lessentine on their upcoming retirements and reaching this important milestone in their careers.

Old Business

None

New Business

FY2025 Property Tax Relief Grant Resolution. Mr. Anderson moved, seconded by Mr. Riedel, hat the Board of Education approve the resolution to abate property taxes in the amount of \$1,903,313 for both the 2024 and 2025 tax years as part of the district's participation in the Fiscal Year 2025 Property Tax Relief Grant (PTRG) program, as recommended by the Finance Committee, the Chief School Business Official, and the Superintendent. Dr. Cook stated this resolution authorizes him to notify the Cook County Clerk's office to reduce taxes for the taxing body by more than \$1.9 million. This reduction will be combined with last year's \$1.9 plus million in property tax relief along with an additional \$1.4 million reduction in taxes that was approved in the fall, providing a total relief of over \$5.2 million. He noted the refund levy was also discussed at the February 6, 2025 Finance Committee meeting and will be brought to the board for approval at the March 18, 2025 board meeting. Roll Call: Ayes – Mrs. Hoereth, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Legardy, Mr. Riedel, Ms. Turnquest, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Pauling. Nays – None. Motion carried.

FY2025 A Building Replacement Roofing Project. Mr. Anderson moved, seconded by Ms. Jackson, that the Board of Education approve the bid for FY2025 A-Building Replacement Roofing Project to DCG of Melrose Park, Illinois, in the amount of \$1,108,197 as recommended by the Director of Operations & Management, the Chief School Business Official, and the Superintendent. Mr. Patterson stated this roof replacement is part of the district's

FY2025 A Building Replacement Roofing Project (con't.) long-range facility roof replacement plan. The district's roofing systems are 25 to 30 years old and out of warranty making tear offs and replacements necessary. This roof is the fourth out of 10 roofs scheduled for replacement and the work will begin in June with completion in August. Roll Call: Ayes – Ms. Jackson, Mr. Legardy, Mr. Riedel, Ms. Turnquest, Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Hoereth, Mr. Pauling. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Copier Lease Agreement. Mr. Anderson moved, seconded by Ms. Turnquest, at the Board of Education approve a 60-month copier agreement with ProvenIT at a monthly cost of \$17,580.80, as presented and discussed at the February 6, 2025, Finance Committee meeting, as recommended by the Finance Committee, the Chief School Business Official, and the Superintendent. Mr. Richardson explained that there are many outdated printers throughout the buildings and moving to centralizing printing will result in lower operating costs, improved print quality and enhanced protection against cyber threats. Roll Call: Ayes – Mr. Legardy, Mr. Riedel, Ms. Turnquest, Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Hoereth, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Pauling. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Organizational Chart.

Incoming Superintendent Dr. Jennifer Norrell presented updates to a previously provided organizational chart to the Board of Education. The updated organizational chart is reflective of the feedback she received after meeting with the district's leadership team. She explained that there are two primary amendments reflected on this draft. The realignment of hierarchy and supervisory pathways and the adjustment of several position titles. The realignment of hierarchy will provide a clearer delineation for primary duties between the high school leadership and district office leadership. This will support greater clarity among leaders in addressing state and federal mandates and local decisions. This path will improve accountability and allow for additional autonomy among the leadership as well. She emphasized the changes to the organizational chart are designed to attract and retain highly qualified candidates while ensuring the district remains at the forefront of operational efficiency and student success. She emphasized that only title changes are being proposed at no additional cost to the district. Salary changes are not being proposed. Dr. Norrell noted that the salaries are currently very solid and HF remains competitive in the market. Mr. Pauling thanked Drs. Norrell and Wakeley for their collaborative work on this. Ms. Jackson stated she appreciated Dr. Norrell's methodical thought process and the additional detail that was provided at the Personnel Committee. Ms. Jackson noted that during the Personnel Committee, Dr. Norrell's explanation of the "what" and the "how" of the positions really stood out along with the zero change to salaries. Dr. Norrell stated that with the board's approval of this organizational chart, the head of HR position will be posted tomorrow. Dr. Norrell stated that she believes there will be a rich pool of candidates for this position.

Ms. Jackson moved, seconded by Mr. Legardy, that the Board of Education approve the amended organizational chart for Homewood-Flossmoor Community High School District 233, as presented, as recommended by the Personnel Committee and the Superintendent. Roll Call: Ayes – Mr. Riedel, Ms. Turnquest, Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Hoereth, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Legardy, Mr. Pauling. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Possible Action to Approve Resolution Authorizing Tenured Teacher Notice to Remedy. Ms. Jackson moved, seconded by Mr. Legardy, that the Board of Education approve the resolution authorizing a Notice to Remedy for tenured teacher #2331917, as presented by the Administration. Roll Call: Ayes – Ms. Turnquest, Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Hoereth, Ms. Jackson, Mr. Legardy, Mr. Riedel, Mr. Pauling. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Adjournment. Mr. Riedel moved, seconded by Ms. Turnquest, that the Board of Education be adjourned at 7:56 p.m. Motion carried.

President

Vice-President/Secretary