

MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING  
Homewood-Flossmoor High School, 999 Kedzie, Flossmoor, IL  
August 28, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m.

In attendance for all or part of the meeting were:

Members

Dr. Jennifer Norrell, Superintendent  
Ms. Pam Jackson, Board Member  
Mr. Nathan Legardy, Board Chair  
Dr. Tamekia Smith, Board Member

Participants

Dr. Jennifer Norrell, Superintendent  
Dr. Lisa Dallacqua, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum,  
Instruction and Professional Development

Mr. Legardy attended the meeting via Zoom video conferencing.

Ms. Marilyn Thomas from the HF Chronicle and Ms. Destiny Watson from You Matter 2 were present as well as members of the public. Members of the Leadership Team including Dr. Clinton Alexander, Dr. Lawrence Cook, Mr. Asa Gordon, Ms. Jalitza Martinez, Mrs. Rudan and Mrs. Erdey were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes. The minutes from May 20, 2025 stand approved as presented.

Comments. No comments were received.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Strategic Plan – Year 2

Dr. Norrell pointed out the 3 Focus areas for Year 2 of the Strategic Plan noting that one of the most powerful pieces of the plan, the “True North,” is really about academic equity. She added that everything that they do is focused on preparing all students for success in college, career and life readiness. She highlighted the following Focus Areas for Year 2 of the district’s Strategic Plan: 1) Community, Family and Partner Engagement, 2) Fiscal Equity and Student Voice and 3) Professional Excellence. Dr. Norrell noted attention would be on Focus Areas 2 and 3 in particular, this school year. Area 2 focuses on expanding IB Programming to integrate with pathways and Area 3’s focus is on implementing high-level Collaborative Teams and Common Formative Assessments.

Foundation Districts High School Course Update

Dr. Norrell provided an update on students who participated in Algebra 1/Integrated Math 1 as eighth graders at Parker Junior High School who are required by law to be taught by a certified high school teacher and were not. The HF administration has worked with the Illinois State Board of Education, which will allow HF to give students an opportunity to take the proficiency exam in order to meet the graduation requirement. The exams will be required of approximately 130 HF students who took Algebra 1/ Integrated Math 1 as eighth graders at Parker Junior High School. Dr. Dallacqua reviewed the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) graduation requirements. She noted that Illinois School Code Section 27-22.10 specific for course credit for high school diploma when students are in grades 7 and 8.

Specifically students are able to take course if they are 7 or 8th graders as long as one is located in the high school or if middle school see (ii) can be taught at the middle school with a teacher who is endorsed at the high school level. Dr. Dallacqua noted that high school certification is important. She spoke on the next steps moving forward. They have finalized the Algebra exam with the Math Department Lead and room reservations have been finalized. Families of students needing to take the proficiency test were emailed last night with locations for the Algebra Proficiency Review Session on September 4 and Algebra Proficiency Test day on September 9. Families were also emailed resources in IXL for extra practice and expectations for communicating the exam results. In terms of communicating results, students will receive a "P" for Passing or "T" to try again. Dr. Norrell added that she has been notified by Parker's Superintendent that they have placed a properly certified high school teacher in those classes starting this year. Dr. Dallacqua also added that feedback from parents has been positive with mainly thank you's. Dr. Dallacqua has communicated with parents so that they can be assured that everything is being done at our end to ensure that their student has what is required to graduate. Dr. Norrell has been in communication with ISBE and they will prepare an official correspondence back to our district that is expected to arrive today. She emphasized that It does not matter what public school a student attends, they must be taught by a certified high school teacher. Dr. Norrell stated that the correspondence from ISBE, along with a letter including school code and our policy will be communicated with parents to ensure there is no confusion. Dr. Norrell will also share this communication being sent to parents with 161 leadership as well as their board so they are clear on the facts and to clarify any conflicting information. Dr. Dallacqua added that she along with the Math Department Lead have already met with the new high school certified teacher at Flossmoor District 161 so she is very clear on what we are doing here at HF and has the support that she needs. Ms. Jackson expressed that the efforts made regarding articulation are appreciated.

#### Summative Designation Scores Report (2024)

Dr. Dallacqua presented data for school year 2023-2024 regarding the Summative Designation Scores Report. She will report back with data when it becomes available for school year 2024-25. The district's current designation stands at "Commendable." There are five annual summative designations: Exemplary, Commendable, Targeted Support, Comprehensive Support and Intensive Support. Receiving a commendable designation indicates that overall performance is not in the top 10% of all schools. She explained the ESSA Framework and noted the Graduation Rate is the highest indicator with Graduation Rate at 50%. She also reviewed additional indicators that included Math Proficiency, ELA Proficiency, Science, ELPTP, Chronic Absenteeism, 9th Grade on Track and Climate Survey. Certain scores are given for each indicator to be considered proficient. Looking at the framework, Dr. Dallacqua explained that what is important to consider and understand is this is an equity-based framework. When adopted in 2017, sub-groups became a topic of conversation and are very important when a school is broken down by sub-groups when there are at least 20 students with data in at least five of eight indicators, one of which must be non-academic. This means for schools that have sub-group populations, those school-specific populations are given indicator score reports in addition to the overall school performance score. She pointed out that sub-group performance matters. In order to earn a commendable rating, there cannot be any subgroup performing at or below the lowest 5% of schools in the state. If this is the case, no matter how well the school performs overall, it will be designated as "targeted" for gaps in performance among subgroups. She spoke to her presentation and a slide titled "HF's House" indicating where HF is with each indicator and percentage points awarded. Our overall index score is 78.61 that puts HF in that commendable range. She provided a slide of HF's House broken down by sub-group, and explained that blank data means there were not enough students or it was not an applicable data point for those students. She pointed out that it is important to note the green box which shows effective weights that

were spoken about in the first few slides of her presentation. If there is not an indicator the weight shifts for other indicators. However, looking at low income students we do not have a composite graduation rate because we did not have more than 20 students or we did not report it. Without having 20+ students identified as economically disadvantaged in the graduating class of 2024, there is no graduation rate for this sub-group. Without a graduation rate, the indicator weights shift. The proficiency scores for ELA and Math become 28.13% of this sub-group's data story. Science proficiency becomes 18.75%. This also happens with our former EL sub-group, however, because their proficiency rates as raw scores are high, they are not as vulnerable a population. She spoke on what we can learn from this reporting; that data reporting with accuracy is incredibly important for our overall designation. Learning more about the chronic absenteeism rate and how we can mitigate attendance challenges will be critical in the upcoming months. In addition, having a laser focus on who the students are within sub-groups for the 2025-26 school year will help us better target what is needed. Dr. Dallacqua noted that it is all about being targeted and strategic on how we are looking at data, understanding data and providing the support. Mr. Legardy asked how long our existing data may not have been reported correctly. Dr. Dallacqua shared that it is difficult to determine and it could be a number of years that data may have not been reported correctly. She added that when HF's House was brought to the district's leadership team, they had not previously seen it. Dr. Norrell shared that potentially the data over the years could have been grabbed from the wrong place. Dr. Dallacqua also shared that other long-term areas they will be working on include ELA proficiency and educating our teachers with strategies they can use with English learners in the classroom. Dr. Dallacqua added that giving students access to more courses is really important. She noted AP should be for all students and not just gifted students. In addition, with the expansion of IB, they will be asking more of students to participate in rigorous course work and she pointed out, if this is done over time, proficiency scores will improve as well. Dr. Norrell noted that Dr. Dallacqua has set up a plan that every week they are focused on the same set of standards so that anyone who owns instructional time needs to help students get better at literacy. She created a handbook, all leads were trained, they also connected with Stevenson High School and organized site visits. Dr. Norrell added that they should be able to come to the committee in January to report whether we are or are not hitting the mark. Ms. Jackson suggested reaching out to the feeder districts so they align with our district's expectations. Ms. Jackson asked if the feeder districts have seen this house and believes this is the starting point. She expressed that it would be very beneficial if that happened and at some point, she would like to bring all of the feeder district boards together. Dr. Norrell stated she has spoken to the superintendents and they will convene their articulation group in September and the focus areas of the high school district will be shared. Dr. Norrell will share their articulation efforts with the committee in the spring. Mr. Legardy suggested that a board member attend future feeder school board meetings moving forward to ensure collective accountability. It was recommended as a Committee-of-the-Whole agenda item.

#### Catalyst for Educational Change (CEC) Proposal

Dr. Dallacqua informed the committee that they are proposing to work with Catalyst for Educational Change (CEC). She explained that CEC provides services for school districts in a variety of educational areas. This proposal contains contractual support through both a comprehensive needs assessment and professional learning series in the following areas: Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Needs Assessment: Data Review, Self-Assessment, Focus Groups, Report Writing and Delivery of Findings; Assessment Literacy Professional Development for Department Leads and Collaborative Team Leads; Rubric Design Professional Development for Department Leads and Collaborative Team Leads; and Asynchronous Assessment Literacy Course for All Staff. She explained their next step is taking MTSS to the next level and they are being really strategic with who needs the help and how it is being monitored.

There is a need to be able to collect data with agreed upon goals over an extended period of time. Those are the kind of things we are focusing on now so that we can refine our system for MTSS so we are meeting all the state requirements. The other focus is asking our collaborative teams to give common formative assessments all across disciplinary literacy with the next step being, how to write a common formative assessment. The focus groups and professional learning series will be conducted in person with our teachers and administrators over the course of the school year. The pacing of learning will reflect our place in the Collaborative Team Planning Calendar in order to provide timely support for teachers and administrators during the first year of Collaborative Team implementation. Dr. Norrell added that what we have done is to try and impact the professional learning and make it applicable to every teacher who owns instructional time. It will take every single period for those teachers to have an impact and they will be focused on those standards that ultimately will impact ACT performance. Dr. Norrell shared that she is very familiar with CEC and its success rate. She added that this will be paid through local funds. Ms. Jackson asked how the committee will be updated on the progress. Dr. Dallacqua responded they will be receiving teacher feedback through surveys that they will bring to the board along with what teachers are creating. Dr. Smith expressed that she would like to see what comes out from the surveys and feels it would be very beneficial to see the teachers' take away. Mr. Legardy asked Dr. Norrell when she will provide an update. Dr. Norrell stated this initiative will begin in November and they will report back at every meeting. The committee unanimously agreed to move forward with engaging CEC. This item will be on the September 16, 2025 agenda for board approval.

#### New Leaders Proposal

Dr. Norrell stated New Leaders is another organization that she is very familiar with and that has proven success. New Leaders provides services for school districts in the area of school leadership at both the building and district office level. This proposal contains contractual support through school leadership coaching and mentoring for administrators at both the district office and school-based level. New Leaders offers evidence-based leadership counsel, grounding their support in best practices for leveraging leadership to increase student achievement and to focus school leaders on data-driven results and sustained student outcomes. She added New Leaders is one of the only principal mentoring organizations creators and implementation experts that actually have national ranking through the Rand Organization. Rand has given them high standards and recognition for their work having direct impact. This work is Title II eligible but will be paid through local funds as a result of conversations with Dr. Cook. Dr. Norrell explained that some of the monies used for professional development is available since they have been pulled all professional development requests into curriculum for approval to ensure that professional development aligns with the strategic plan and every dollar that they spend is spent on strategic excellence. Ms. Jackson expressed her interest in knowing what outcomes organizations like this bring. Dr. Dallacqua responded that she is personally familiar with them in her previous district and they used CEC for their strategic process for the entire year and had a wonderful experience. Dr. Norrell stated a total of 8 new leaders, all in the first two to three years of their latest role will participate, in this training. The committee unanimously agreed to move forward with the New Leaders proposal. This item will be on the September 16, 2025 board agenda for approval.

#### Discover U Program Proposal (You Matter 2)

Dr. Norrell stated the Discover U Program is an opportunity for us to engage with our young people with another group of successful young people in our community and aligns with what we are doing in Focus Goal 2. There are some requirements from ISBE that require every student before they graduate to have 3 career indicators. The Discover U program is a pilot program that will run between now and December and the basis is connected with the students' future whether going to college and/or career. We are proposing one day a week and we will come back to the board with a request to continue this work if the

pilot is successful. Dr. Norrell reiterated that they are not asking for the full year but how to see how it connects as an after-school activity. You Matter 2 (YM2) proposes to run Discover U at Homewood-Flossmoor High School on Wednesdays after school. Students will take part in monthly, themed workshop series—such as Career Exploration, Communication Skills, and Job Readiness with each culminating in a micro-credential. YM2 handles registration, program delivery, data tracking, and evaluation, while the school provides space, a staff liaison, and promotional support. Students benefit from free access to Discover U and additional YM2 enrichment programs, with progress monitored through digital portfolios and regular reporting to the district. Discussion ensued and the committee unanimously agreed to Dr. Norrell’s request to get communication out to students sooner than waiting until after the September board meeting to garner if there is any interest. She added that students will participate on a first-come, first-serve basis. The pilot will begin in September and there is out-of-pocket cost for the student. The committee unanimously agreed with Dr. Norrell’s request to move forward now to garner student interest. Ms. Jackson shared that she was part of the internship and attended the Lunch and Learn at Rich Township. She added that she was really impressed with the program. Ms. Jackson stated that it was pretty intense and she was impressed with how critical not only the leadership was, but also the volunteers. She also remarked on the quality of presentations the students made. The committee unanimously agreed with moving forward with the YM2 proposal. This item will be on the September 16, 2025 board agenda for approval.

#### US News & World Report School Ranking

Dr. Norrell reviewed the current ranking of HF that fell pretty drastically putting HF behind other area schools. She added that they need to be responsive before this score comes out again next year. She noted that on the score card that there are 6 different areas of which HF is measured in terms of our ranking. Two of them are aligned to the district’s Strategic Plan Focus Area 3. The idea is to know how students are doing each month for math, reading and science proficiency. She noted that there were only 18 students in AP African American Studies and 98 percent passed the AP exam. Dr. Norrell expressed the need to provide more students to take the AP African American Studies course. Mr. Legardy suggested considering to make this course a graduation requirement. Dr. Norrell expressed that she wants more students to engage in AP content. Mr. Legardy suggested a policy adjustment to include an AP course as a graduation requirement. Dr. Norrell will present to the committee in November an MTSS analysis and they will share their proposal as they move toward an “IB for All school.”

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 1:08 p.m.