

MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
Homewood-Flossmoor High School, 999 Kedzie, Flossmoor, IL
November 11, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 10:37 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 was present as well as members of the Leadership Team including Dr. Clinton Alexander, Dr. Lawrence Cook, Mr. Asa Gordon, Ms. Jalitza Martinez, Mrs. Catherine Ross-Cook, Mrs. Jennifer Rudan and Mrs. Carla Erdey were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes. The minutes from August 28, 2025 stand approved as presented.

Comments. No public comments were received, however, Mr. Legardy expressed appreciation to Dr. Smith for stepping in and carrying the responsibility of running this meeting, and noted that he is looking forward to attending future meetings in person.

Old Business. None

New Business.

2025 Illinois School Report Card

Dr. Norrell stated that the information presented reflects FY25 data as it relates to year over year growth. She noted that the state has announced slight changes to the school designation system. The framework for evaluating school performance will look different moving forward and the state will reorganize on how they will be reporting out on some indicators.

Dr. Dallacqua provided an overview presentation on the individual indicators that comprise school's overall summative designation for the Illinois School Report Card. She spoke on the ESSA framework and reviewed each academic and non-academic indicator. She explained that ESSA is an equity-based accountability system and that the state continues to refine indicators in response to local needs. She noted that the framework has undergone several changes since 2018 in response to trends observed at the local level. The state continues to explore new indicators and emphasized the importance of updating the Board on the progress related to these changes. She reported that there are five summative designations and that HF received a "Commendable" rating, indicating the school is performing well but is not within the top 10 percent of high schools noting that the graduation rate, weighted at 50%, remains the largest factor in the overall score. Additional indicators include proficiency in Math, ELA, and Science; ACCESS scores (ELPTP); chronic absenteeism; 9th Grade On-Track; and the 5Essentials climate survey. She reviewed definitions for each indicator, including School Quality Indicators for English Learner Progress. She shared that future indicators for 2026 will include College

and Career Readiness and Fine Arts participation, with results expected in 2027. Regarding ESSA subgroups, Dr. Dallacqua explained that a subgroup is identified when a school has at least 20 students with data in five of eight indicators, including at least one non-academic measure. She reviewed subgroup categories and emphasized the importance of monitoring performance differences across demographics and programs. She reviewed the proficiency cut scores by grade and presented ACT results in ELA, Math, and Science for students in grades 9–11, noting that only 11th-grade scores are currently only reported. Growth data, now included for high schools, showed HF at 51.2%, above the state average of 50%. Science results were also reviewed. She highlighted additional measures, including Freshman On-Track, CTE graduation rate, and postsecondary enrollment. Achievement gaps were presented by demographic group and program participation, with emphasis on the importance of identifying reasons for disparities and determining strategies to close them. AP participation trends were also reviewed. While the number of students taking AP exams declined slightly from 2024 to 2025, the percentage earning scores of 3 or higher increased. She discussed access to rigorous coursework, noting discrepancies between overall enrollment and enrollment by demographic group. Dr. Dallacqua reported that HF's overall summative score increased from 78.61 to 85.43, moving the school closer to the "Exemplary" threshold. She noted strong gains in ELA and Math proficiency across most subgroups. Areas needing improvement include EL performance, Students with Disabilities, and chronic absenteeism. Discussion ensued on chronic absenteeism and its impact on the designation score. Dr. Dallacqua noted that absenteeism is only one factor among several in the designation process. The summative indicator report was reviewed, including proficiency levels and subgroup performance. Dr. Dallacqua highlighted gaps related to low-income students and chronic absenteeism and emphasized the importance of targeted interventions. Planned next steps include sharing the data with the Leadership Team and department leads, incorporating findings into school improvement planning, addressing chronic absenteeism, and continuing professional learning efforts.

Mr. Legardy commended Dr. Dallacqua for providing the most detailed data analysis he has seen during his tenure and emphasized the ongoing need to address achievement gaps. He asked about progress on standards-based learning. Dr. Norrell described ongoing work with union leadership to ensure alignment in expectations, instructional standards, and common procedures for staff.

Mr. Legardy voiced the importance of exposure to rigorous learning experiences, articulation with feeder districts, and communicating data clearly to the community. Mr. Legardy expressed interest in condensing the presentation for future discussions with feeder schools to promote alignment and shared expectations. He also reiterated his support for the direction of the work and emphasized the importance of continued focus on improvement. Dr. Norrell explained that this year is focused on organizing and strengthening internal operations. In terms of articulation with feeder schools, they have reviewed residency policies and their goals for this year. She noted that some delays have occurred due to new leadership transitions and the time needed to get everyone on the same page. Mr. Legardy acknowledged the work, stating that while he does not expect immediate results, he wanted to publicly recognize the progress being made.

Continuous Improvement

Dr. Norrell provided an update on the district's continuous improvement efforts. A diagnostic of student performance from the previous year, including first-year on-track metrics and overall academic performance, identified areas of strength and areas needing focus. She emphasized the importance of operationalizing collaborative teams and aligning leaders around continuous improvement as a structured, ongoing process. The district's strategic plan includes specific goals and targets, which have been shared publicly with parents, the community, and internal stakeholders. Dr. Norrell noted that the next phase involves creating leadership teams, including Dr. Alexander, Catherine Ross, and other internal stakeholders, to monitor progress on a monthly basis, ensuring that interventions and resources

are effective before annual performance results are available. The structure includes a district Leadership Team at the top, with representation from parents and board members, and Instructional Leadership Teams at the school level, led by instructional coaches collecting and analyzing classroom-level data. These teams focus on monitoring adult actions, student practices, and relevant data throughout the year, rather than relying solely on annual metrics. Dr. Norrell stressed that all staff must understand their specific performance metrics and how their daily work contributes to district-wide goals. She noted that operational alignment across departments, including special education and language programs, is critical to measuring progress. She concluded that at the next Planning Committee meeting in January will include a presentation of the district's continuous improvement plan. Committee members expressed appreciation for the update. Mr. Legardy noted that, building on earlier discussions, the district is cultivating a data-conscious culture; while the institution is already data-driven, developing this culture will take time and is essential to the district's ongoing turnaround efforts. Dr. Smith added that the report was very helpful in understanding the district's current status and its direction moving forward.

IB for All Update

Dr. Dallacqua provided an update on college and career pathways and the expansion of the IB program. She noted that last year, two pathways were approved in CTE, and five additional pathways have been submitted to the state, bringing the total to 14, including the recently added Welding pathway. Pathways continue to expand across departments, with IB courses now included in more than half of them that align with student interests. Several pathways offer dual credit, providing students with diverse academic options. She also reviewed the IB candidacy timeline, noting that a recent consultant visit and report submission have positioned the district to receive an update on IB candidacy within the next two weeks. The team is currently reviewing courses and seeking approval to proceed with course development. She highlighted the distinction between Career-Related Programs and the IB Diploma Programme, noting that the IB DP requires six courses, while Career-Related Programs require two junior/senior courses.

Dr. Dallaqua shared a video highlighting IB professional development. Staff members shared their reflections that emphasized increased confidence and excitement following training, with a focus on elevating student engagement and making classes exciting. A second group of staff members will complete training in December. They have received great feedback from teachers on their professional learning experience. Dr. Dallacqua added that it is very encouraging to see our teachers need to feel invested and excited about their work.

New Course Proposals and Course Updates

Dr. Dallacqua highlighted new course proposals, including IB and AP offerings, that were reviewed, along with a table of courses being renamed to align with pathways. She noted that honors courses with AP counterparts may be replaced to allow student enrollment in AP or IB courses. Dr. Dallacqua shared enthusiasm for the 19 pathways that will be available to students and noted updates to the Physics curriculum: Physics 1 will replace the Industrial and Astro Physics split, allowing STEM-focused students the opportunity to take Physics. She noted that teachers were asking to bring Physics back. Dr. Alexander stated that graduation requirements now require only three years of science and Physics is no longer a graduation requirement. Dr. Dallacqua concluded by saying that they have received very positive feedback from teachers regarding their professional learning experience and added that it is encouraging to see that staff feel engaged, invested, and excited about their work. This item will be on the November 18, 2025 board agenda for approval.

Toddle IB Unit Planning Proposal

Dr. Dallacqua presented a proposal to adopt Toddle, a learning management system as the district-wide platform for IB planning, collaboration, and evaluation. Toddle includes IB terminology, unit-planning

tools, teacher lesson archives, assessment records, professional learning documentation, and it simplifies the required five-year IB evaluation by allowing auditors direct access to needed materials. With nearly 70 educators involved in IB programming including DP, CP, and special education teachers, the system is viewed as essential for consistency, organization, and supporting current as well as new staff members. The annual cost for districtwide use is \$24,244, and the administration recommends adopting it as the district's IB planning and evaluation tool.

In response to questions, Ms. Martinez confirmed that the subscription would cover all current staff who require access. When asked about budgeting and additional costs, Dr. Norrell noted that professional development funds have been consolidated so that future professional development will focus on collaborative teams and IB, funded through the curriculum budget. She stated that aside from Toddle, there are no significant additional IB costs anticipated, and projected annual IB program fee increases are expected to be nominal.

Dr. Smith asked whether Toddle functions similarly to Canvas or Blackboard. Dr. Dallacqua explained that it is primarily a teacher-facing platform for evaluation, grading, lesson planning, and aligning instruction with IB language. Some components can be shared with students, and teachers may continue using both systems as needed. She added that the system was vetted with Ms. Day and Mr. Gordon and includes a comprehensive resource library.

Mr. Legardy noted that IB has historically been an expensive program, but what he is understanding is that the adoption of Toddle will allow its use across a significantly larger number of students, improving cost efficiency. Dr. Dallacqua also highlighted that the platform supports student digital portfolios, which are critical for college and career readiness and national submissions.

Dr. Norrell added that Toddle may be eligible for Title I funding and the overall shift in costs may result in the subscription being close to cost-neutral. This item will be on the November 18, 2025 board agenda for approval.

IB DP Expansion for All Students Proposal

Dr. Norrell noted that the district currently absorbs the cost for Diploma Programme (DP) testing for students attempting to earn the IB Diploma at the end of senior year. However, the district does not pay Advanced Placement (AP) testing fees for students, which creates an equity disparity, as many districts cover AP exam fees to ensure equal access. She added that based on prior experience, Title funds are eligible to be used for this purpose, and this could be explored going forward. In reviewing the proposed expansion of IB, Dr. Norrell explained that the cost the district would take on for students pursuing the IB Career-Related Programme (CP), who must successfully complete two IB courses to earn the certificate, is comparable to the current per-student cost for DP testing. When calculated at scale, covering testing for all IB students would be more cost-effective than the existing model of paying individually for a smaller number of DP test-takers. Dr. Norrell added that until an alternative funding source or grant is identified, she proposed that students and families would continue to pay for optional AP exams, as is currently the practice. The district would then redirect the DP testing dollars currently being spent, estimated at approximately \$140,000 based on about 40 students and associated fees, to offset the costs of the IB expansion. She reviewed the estimated costs to fully fund the IB CP Programme:

- IB subject fees are \$124 per course.
- For approximately 700 students taking 2 courses each, 1,400 subject registrations are required, totaling \$173,600.
- An annual IB authorization fee of \$1,630 is required to maintain both the IB CP and DP programmes.
- Total estimated cost: \$175,239, funded through local funds

She added that this approach may result in a near cost-neutral impact. Mr. Legardy noted that the district has historically funded DP testing for a much smaller group. Further conversation will continue, and administration will collaborate with the Finance Committee and Dr. Cook to determine whether the district should absorb these costs moving forward. The Committee expressed support for removing financial barriers for all students where possible, given the academic and college-readiness benefits. Dr. Norrell requested that the board fund the subject fees for the IB CP Programme and this item will be on the November 18, 2025 board agenda for approval.

Schedule Proposal for 2026-2027

Dr. Norrell reviewed the proposed daily bell schedule for FY27, which was developed in collaboration with Brian Dvorkin and Dana Noble and shared with the PSC Committee. The proposal was initially presented three months ago to provide context for the rationale behind the changes. Dr. Norrell stated that Mr. Noble and Mrs. Rudan shared past concerns, noting that the 11-minute passing periods between buildings have previously hindered schedule adjustments. Dr. Norrell explained that the new schedule would provide consistency for students, particularly those taking multiple classes. Currently, students have six classes with a zero hour, and approximately 60% have seven classes. Under the proposal, students would attend half of their classes on Mondays and Wednesdays, the other half on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and all classes on Fridays. The schedule is designed to support early college experiences and internships. Students could physically attend college courses and receive college credit, providing significant opportunities, especially for first-generation students. The schedule also accommodates internship hours and includes a seminar course to transport students to internship sites. Block periods will remain 90 minutes. Opposite of a student's lunch they would have an opportunity to go to some type of WYN (What You Need) time, allowing students and staff to address individualized needs. WYN time provides elective courses for students and opportunities for collaborative team work and professional development for staff. All 11th graders will be scheduled for Kaplan prep during their national assessment year, funded through grant dollars. Passing periods will be reduced from 11 to 10 minutes, with students only moving three times daily. Staff schedules are structured to allow deeper focus on teaching and learners. Dr. Norrell highlighted the benefits of the proposal, including enhanced dual enrollment opportunities, alignment with community college pathways, and enriched educational experiences for both students and teachers. Dr. Norrell noted that the proposal will be rolled out to all staff pending support to move forward from the Committee. The consensus of the Committee supported moving forward with the proposed new schedule.

Collaborative Teams Video Update – A brief video was shown that shared and highlighted the work staff have been doing in their collaborative teams. Positive feedback was received from Department Leads and team members sharing their personal thoughts on their journey and their focus: shifting from every student can learn to every student will learn.

Early College Proposal

Dr. Norrell presented a proposal for an early college pilot in response to student interest in early graduation. The plan would allow approximately 45 students to enroll in two college-level courses at Prairie State College (PSC) during the Spring 2026 semester, while also taking one course at HF. Students would be required to remain active HF students and participate in the pilot group. The pilot would be fully funded through Title I allocations, with an estimated cost of \$1,022. Early release would only apply to students who have met all HF graduation requirements. Parent meetings will follow to provide additional information. Discussion ensued and Ms. Jackson asked why only two college courses were included; Dr. Norrell explained that the budget currently allows for two courses. Mr. Legardy expressed concerns regarding the social impact of early release and participation in high school events. Dr. Norrell

clarified that students would not be eligible for athletics under IHSA rules but could participate in other extracurricular activities. Ms. Jackson expressed that, given the small number of students and their maturity, the pilot is manageable and offers significant opportunities. The committee supported moving forward with the pilot, acknowledging that the benefits outweigh potential concerns. Dr. Norrell will communicate further details to the Planning Committee in January. Dr. Norrell is requesting that the board approve the Early College Dual Enrollment program with Prairie State College for up to 45 December graduates and total cost not to exceed \$45,990, funded through Title 1 and Title IV funding. Dr. Smith requested feedback from the 45 students on whether participation in two PSC courses would influence their interest in continuing at a community college; Dr. Norrell agreed to gather this information. This item will be included on the November board agenda for approval.

Closing Comments

Ms. Jackson thanked the team for their hard work and the rapid pace of progress, noting that the outcomes achieved will have a significant impact. She expressed her enthusiasm and gratitude for everyone's efforts. Dr. Smith thanked Mrs. Erdey for creating the video. Mr. Legardy commented on the high quality of the video and reflected on the value of sharing content with the community, noting that today there are many opportunities to communicate the broader story of the district. He also recognized the notable progress made in just four months.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 1:12 p.m.