MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
Homewood-Flossmoor High School, 999 Kedzie, Flossmoor, IL
January 16, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m.

In attendance for all or part of the meeting were:

Members	Participants
Dr. Jennifer Norrell, Superintendent	Dr. Jennifer Norrell, Superintendent
Ms. Pam Jackson, Board Member	Dr. Lisa Dallacqua, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum,
Mr. Nathan Legardy, Board Chair	Instruction and Professional Development
Dr. Tamekia Smith, Board Member	Dr. Clinton Alexander, Principal
	Mr. Asa Gordon, Director of College and Career Pathways
	Mrs. Catherine Ross-Cook, Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Smith 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 Leadership Team including Dr. Lawrence Cook, Ms. Jalitza Martinez, Mrs. Jennifer Rudan and Mrs. Carla Erdey were also in attendance. Ms. Beth Larocca, community member and Dr. O'Quin, board member were also present.

Approval of Minutes. The minutes from November 11, 2025 stand approved as presented.

Comments. Mr. Legardy welcomed attendees and wished everyone a Happy New Year. Ms. Larocca referenced the November 11, 2025 meeting at which Dr. Dallacqua presented the 2025 Illinois School Report Card, noting HF's summative designation of "Commendable." Ms. Larocca asked what the threshold is to receive an "Exemplary" designation. Dr. Dallacqua responded that the designation varies by year and is based on student performance on the ACT, and therefore may change annually as testing results change. Regarding articulation with feeder schools related to residency, as mentioned at the previous meeting, Ms. Larocca asked whether the plan is to align all residency policies. Dr. Norrell responded that the administration is working with legal counsel on how to share data between HF and feeder districts. She added that, where legally permissible, the district should be able to at least share information with feeder districts regarding residency cases involving siblings.

Old Business. None

New Business.

Partner District Articulation Update
Dr. Norrell informed the committee that a joint board meeting with feeder districts is being arranged for April 30. She explained that the meeting would provide an opportunity to share the articulation work completed to date, promote accountability, and collaboratively establish direction and goals for the upcoming school year. She noted that the Boards of Education and district leaders from Homewood School District 153, Flossmoor School District 161, and Glenwood School District 167 would be invited to participate. Dr. Norrell shared that the primary focus this year with the feeder districts has been residency, with continued discussion planned this spring. She added that the administration also intends

to revisit literacy, including gaining a better understanding of students' preparedness for high school, as well as exploring alignment around assessments and universal screeners. She also referenced earlier progress made this year on course sequencing in world language and mathematics. Ms. Jackson expressed appreciation for the focus on literacy and asked whether it would be possible to develop a more comprehensive plan or set of goals for the year, including metrics to measure progress across districts. Dr. Norrell responded affirmatively, stating that the high school district could draft a proposed plan based on areas of shared interest and engagement, and that coordination would continue through the superintendents. Mr. Legardy suggested appointing two delegates from each board to articulate in advance of the April 30 joint board meeting and recommended that the superintendents from each district initiate a preliminary meeting. Dr. Norrell will arrange this meeting prior to April 30. Mr. Legardy requested that the delegates provide feedback following the meeting.

<u>You Matter 2 Update</u>

Ms. Destiny Watson, Founder/CEO of You Matter 2 provided an update on the pilot launch of the *You Matter 2 program*, noting that the goal was to assess student sign-up and attendance, both of which were successful. She shared that feedback from the first semester was reviewed in collaboration with Dr. Alexander to inform planning for the second semester. Dr. Alexander reported that students earned a total of 31 micro-credentials during the first semester. He noted that the work aligns with the district's pathway initiatives and that the program was intentionally designed to engage students who may not be college-bound by providing workforce-ready skills and credentials. He added that adjustments are being made for second semester, including adding an additional session day to provide flexibility for students and ensure adequate opportunities to earn credentials. Ms. Watson shared that the sessions were highly interactive and designed to feel different than a traditional after-school setting. Activities included interviews, résumé writing, career action plans, and job readiness skills. Attendance increased over the course of the sessions, with students returning and encouraging peers to participate. She explained that each micro-credential requires students to complete specific deliverables, such as recorded mock interviews. She also noted that the team met with counselors to expand outreach, particularly to students who may be unsure of postsecondary plans. Plans for spring include additional job-readiness sessions, a pilot for freshmen and sophomores focused on teamwork, self-regulation, and goal-setting, and the addition of a fifth session to allow more flexibility for students. Committee members thanked the presenters for the detailed data and outcomes. Ms. Jackson asked whether there was a target for student participation and students earning micro-credentials and inquired about next steps for students who earned credentials. Ms. Watson responded that while there was an initial attendance goal of 15 students per session, no formal credential target had been set. However, targets can be set for the next session. She added that the students' credentials are housed on a digital platform that students can use for résumés, job applications, and exploring related employment opportunities. Additional questions were asked regarding student interest in continuing the program, and it was noted that surveys and recruitment efforts indicate strong interest in future sessions. Dr. Norrell added that the administration has developed a robust plan to ensure students are able to earn a diploma through the pathway program. She emphasized the importance of providing options for students who may not be interested in a formal pathway, noting that these students must still demonstrate completion of three career-readiness activities during their junior and senior years in order to earn a diploma. She explained that programs such as *You Matter 2* provide an alternative option for those students and serve as a way to direct students who are not engaged in pathways toward meeting diploma requirements. Mr. Legardy thanked Ms. Watson for her essential work. A recommendation to approve the *You Matter 2 for the Discover U Program* proposal for second semester will be on the January 20, 2026 board agenda for approval.

Meta Glasses Discussion

Dr. Norrell reported that concerns have been raised regarding the use of Meta Glasses in the classroom. While initial concerns were not related to academic dishonesty due to the need for audible prompts, Dr. Norrell explained that after personally testing the technology over winter break, she discovered additional capabilities through the use of a neuro bracelet, including the ability to operate computer functions through hand movements without detection and to display computer content directly on the lens. She noted that the glasses also allow users to take photographs without others being aware. Dr. Norrell stated that she has consulted with legal counsel to review how other districts are addressing this issue. She expressed significant concern about student safety and privacy, particularly the potential for unauthorized photos that could be taken of students in areas such as locker rooms. She indicated that she plans to request the board to consider drafting a policy or mandate that would prohibit the use of such devices anywhere in the building. While acknowledging the possibility of pushback, she stated her belief that all parents would support such a measure to protect students' privacy. Dr. Norrell added that she is willing to engage with the HFPA to seek their support and emphasized that protecting students must remain the priority. The committee expressed full support for Dr. Norrell's position, noting that the technology could be highly detrimental, and Mr. Legardy stated for the record that the committee is 100% in favor of any efforts to ban these devices.

Homewood-Flossmoor SLT/ILT Presentation

Dr. Alexander and Mrs. Ross-Cook provided a presentation on the combined work of the School Leadership Team and Instructional Leadership Team. Dr. Alexander expressed enthusiasm for launching Calculated Excellence, noting alignment with the District's Vision, Mission, and "True North" focus on equity. He explained the work is driven by a continuous improvement cycle, with the District Leadership Team defining priorities and departments determining implementation. The roles of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), which monitors classroom instruction and student outcomes, and the School Leadership Team (SLT), which oversees progress toward school improvement goals were outlined. Under Priority 1: College, Career, and Life Readiness, Dr. Alexander presented two SMART goals: achieving a minimum 10% growth in student performance on focus standards by April 26, and reducing chronic absenteeism by 5–7 percentage points by the end of the 2025–26 school year. He also reviewed Priority 2: Professional Excellence, with goals to fully implement the Solution Team PLC model by January 2026 and collect instructional data from all classrooms. Ms. Jackson asked about the connection to teacher evaluations; Dr. Alexander clarified the work is separate. Mr. Legardy emphasized the need for a data dashboard, while Ms. Ross-Cook and Dr. Dallacqua noted the importance of leveraging existing systems. Dr. Norrell concluded that progress must be reflected in data, with updated data to be reviewed in March.

AASA Articles Summary: Where Academic Knowledge & Applied Learning Work Together

Dr. Dallacqua presented information from the January 2026 AASA Journal, which focused on career and technical learning and the connection between contemporary skills and student-centered instruction. It was noted that AASA is a national organization supporting educational leaders through professional development, policy work, and advocacy. She summarized three featured articles highlighting national examples of college and career pathways, including districts in multiple states and Illinois District 214. Common themes included the importance of integrating durable, transferable skills into coursework, intentionally aligning academics with career readiness, and redesigning high school structures so college and career readiness is embedded rather than treated as an add-on. Key takeaways included the need to consider scale and sustainability of pathways, leverage existing resources, build strong partnerships with

employers and higher education, and intentionally communicate and organize pathways work as part of the overall school program. District 214 was cited as an example of long-term implementation, with emphasis on learning from districts further along in their journey. Committee members expressed appreciation for the comparative perspective and discussion of cultural shift, communication, and partnership-building. Dr. Dallacqua noted that HF has many foundational elements in place and is in the early stages of organizing and branding this work, with continued outreach and education planned for staff, students, parents, and community partners.

MOS Certification

Dr. Dallacqua presented information on a proposed Certiport subscription through Microsoft Office that would provide students with early college credit and industry-recognized certification while in high school. The program is aligned with two Prairie State College courses: Computer Applications and Advanced Computer Applications, and would allow students who successfully complete the coursework to earn six hours of early college credit at no cost, in addition to Microsoft Office certification in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access. It was noted that the program is self-paced, could be scheduled opposite lunch if approved, and supports both employability and digital literacy skills applicable across all pathways. The program was identified as a strong foundational opportunity for freshmen and sophomores. Dr. Dallacqua shared that the total cost for all freshmen and sophomores is $17,259, which would be supported with funding through the CTEI Perkins grant and local funds. The cost reflects only the Certiport subscription and certification. Because HF has collaborated with Prairie State College, Prairie State does not charge for the articulated college credit. Mr. Legardy asked why the choice of Microsoft certification. Dr. Dallacqua explained that the curriculum aligns with Prairie State's offerings. She added because HF is a Google school, there is nothing stopping students from pursuing a Google certification. The committee expressed support and agreed to advance the proposal to the board for recommendation. This item will be on the January 20, 2026 board agenda for approval.

ACT Preparation with Kaplan

Dr. Dallacqua spoke on a proposed partnership with Kaplan, arranged by the Director of College and Career Readiness, Mr. Gordon, to provide ACT preparation services for all junior students. The program would include Kaplan instructors working in the building two days per week during first semester, concluding just prior to the ACT test date. The purpose of the partnership is to support students through targeted test-taking strategies, academic skill development, and increased familiarity with ACT content and format, with the goal of reducing test anxiety and improving student performance. It was explained that students would participate during the other half of their lunch block, ensuring 100% participation for juniors who are in attendance. In addition to in-person instruction, students would receive access to Kaplan's online platform, which includes practice exams, instructional videos, quizzes, and individualized tutorials aligned to student performance data. While in-person instruction would last approximately six months, students would retain access to the online platform for an additional year, allowing continued preparation into senior year. Dr. Dallacqua noted that the total cost of the contract for the entire junior class is $265,000. Funding would be available through Title I and local funds, with the majority of the cost expected to be covered by local funds (approximately $200,000). Clarifying questions were asked regarding funding proportions, instructional delivery, online resources, student monitoring and reporting features for tracking student engagement and sharing usage data with parents. Committee members discussed the value of the investment, the benefit of having trained Kaplan instructors on site rather than a platform-only model, and the importance of accountability to ensure student participation and return on investment. Dr. Norrell and Dr. Dallacqua agreed to provide additional information regarding comparative data, per-student cost, outcomes, and examples of other districts making similar

investments. The committee expressed strong interest and support for the proposal as a strategic investment in student achievement. This item will be on the January 20, 2026 board agenda for approval.

Anatomage Table & Subscription

Dr. Dallacqua shared a short demo video regarding the Anatomage Table. She explained that HF continues to expand authentic, career-connected learning experiences that align academic coursework with postsecondary pathways. The Anatomage Table is an advanced, interactive anatomy visualization system used by high schools, colleges, universities, and medical training programs to study human anatomy and physiology through life-size, three-dimensional digital models. Implementing Anatomage Tables will allow students to engage in realistic, hands-on learning experiences that mirror professional practices in the health sciences, biomedical, and allied health fields. These tables provide a safe, ethical, and technologically advanced alternative to traditional anatomy labs while enhancing instructional rigor and relevance across multiple science courses. The use of Anatomage Tables will support students enrolled in a variety of science courses, including biology, anatomy and physiology, biomedical science, and health-related career pathway coursework. Students will analyze human systems, explore clinical case studies, and apply scientific concepts to real-world medical scenarios. This technology strengthens students' understanding of complex anatomical structures while building critical thinking, problem-solving, and technical skills aligned to health science careers. Exposure to industry-standard tools also supports informed career exploration and prepares students for postsecondary programs in healthcare, medicine, nursing, athletic training, and related fields. The total cost of the Anatomage tables and subscription is $115,490. The subscription will be fully funded through the CTEI Perkins grant, Title I & local funds and will be available in the fall of 2026. It was noted approximately 540 students at a minimum will have an opportunity to use the Anatomage Tables. The committee unanimously approved moving this recommendation forward to the board on January 20th for approval.

IB For All Update

Dr. Dallacqua provided an update on the International Baccalaureate (IB) verification process and timeline. It was reported that the consultancy report was available to view on November 14 following the first visit in late October. The evaluation addressed three standards areas: (1) educational philosophy aligned with IB philosophy, (2) school leadership and implementation of the IB program, and (3) collaborative planning and reflection supporting IB implementation. Evidence submissions included 15 items in Section A, 46 in Section B, and 42 in Section C. Following review of feedback, the school was authorized to complete the application in the IB portal, which was submitted prior to Thanksgiving. On December 8, the school received four "matters to be addressed," all related to minor adjustments to course outlines for proposed new courses. These were addressed and resubmitted on December 9. As a result, IB confirmed the final verification visit for March 4 and 5. The two-day visit will include meetings with IB teachers by subject area, coordinators, students, families, internship partners, administration, and invited board and planning committee members. Dr. Dallacqua enthusiastically encouraged board members to attend lunch that will be provided during the two day visit. Dr. Dallacqua further reported that, if the March visit is successful, full verification is anticipated by April or May, and no later than June, in preparation for fall implementation. Dr. Dallacqua also shared that the verification team has been confirmed, including experienced former IB educators, and that a detailed two-day agenda has already been reviewed with the team. The IB regional manager will also attend the visit. In preparation, approximately 45 teachers will attend IB training across multiple subject areas, with several sessions hosted on site. Curriculum writing is ongoing, with weekly subject-area meetings. Dr. Dallacqua also reported progress on the implementation of the Toddle platform, including upcoming training for administrators and IB teachers, and noted that the platform will centralize curriculum, IB standards, and core program components. Committee members and Dr. Norrell commended the extensive work of staff

and leadership, noting the significant effort required to reach this stage and expressing strong support for the direction of the program. Several members highlighted the transformative impact of the initiative, acknowledged staff efforts despite the challenges of change, and expressed appreciation for the collaborative work that has brought the district to this point.

Workplace Learning Experiences Discussion

A video that highlighted student experiences and the benefits of early exposure to career pathways in making informed postsecondary decisions was shown. Mr. Gordon distributed the recommended technical and essential employability competencies packet to committee members. The presentation emphasized that workplace experiences both internal and external are a cornerstone of the College and Career Pathways endorsement and provided an overview of how these experiences will be implemented at HF. Mr. Gordon noted that work-based learning involves sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real or simulated workplace settings, aligned to curriculum and instruction. Students receive instruction in employability competencies (10 cross-sector competencies) and technical competencies aligned with their chosen career pathway. In addition, students participate in varied hands-on experiences, either internally at HF or externally with partners. Each student develops a plan with goals tied to employability and technical competencies and supervisors provide feedback via Google Forms each semester to assess student growth. Mr. Gordon noted state legislation requires 60 total hours, which may be divided across experiences. Internal experiences can be tracked through class attendance, while external experiences involve scheduling considerations for travel and student availability. Mr. Legardy expressed appreciation for progress in expanding work-based learning opportunities with meaningful career experiences.

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m.