

Homewood-Flossmoor School Improvement Plan Narrative

Introduction

School improvement at Homewood-Flossmoor High School is an ongoing process engaged in by administrators and staff members with input from students, parents, and the wider school community. Three major bodies within H-F develop, implement, and monitor school improvement initiatives: 1) Management Team, which consists of administrators and is led by the Superintendent; 2) the Department Chair Group, which is made up of the Department Chairs, the Associate and Assistant Principals, and the Director of Technology, and is led by the Principal and the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development; and 3) the School Improvement Committee, which is comprised of staff members from all of H-F's academic departments and is chaired and co-chaired by teachers.

Vision of the H-F School Improvement Plan (SIP) Committee

The SIP Committee exists as a forum for collaboration among representatives from each of Homewood-Flossmoor High School's academic departments. SIP Committee members represent not only H-F's other certified, administrative, and support staff, but also students, parents, and members of the wider school community as well. The SIP committee, whose strength stems from the varied talents and experiences of all Homewood-Flossmoor High School stakeholders, works collaboratively and deliberately to forward the school's prevailing vision of "the greatest expectations in academics, civil responsibility, and personal growth within a diverse community" for all students.

Mission of the H-F School Improvement Plan (SIP) Committee

The SIP Committee of Homewood-Flossmoor High School recommends, develops, supports, and evaluates initiatives that address the school's goal of ensuring high achievement for all students. Working towards continuous school improvement by meeting individual progress targets, the SIP Committee aims to improve the overall climate and culture of Homewood-Flossmoor High School and achieve the school's common mission: to "improve the quality of each student's life through the educational experience at Homewood-Flossmoor High School H-F."

As a result of the work of the School Improvement Committee, stakeholders of Homewood-Flossmoor High School will

1. Understand and commit to the strategic plan and board goals;
2. Develop a shared understanding of what aids and impedes the school's academic success relating to the strategic plan and the board goals;
3. Examine critical issues and identify priorities for attention relating to the strategic plan and the board goals;
4. Plan strategies and activities to advance the identified priorities, consistent with the strategic plan and the board goals;
5. Provide a mechanism for implementing these strategies and activities; and
6. Monitor the success of the strategies and activities implemented.

School Improvement Goal of Homewood-Flossmoor High School

All students will expand their learning in rigorous, content rich courses while maximizing Homewood-Flossmoor High School's overall SAT composite score.

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SIP Initiatives Instituted in 2017-2018

- *Academic Supports*
 - Acellus Academy
 - The Acellus Academy online learning program has been adopted for use in Delta, Credit Recovery, and Special Ed. Acellus offers a wide variety of courses at various levels, including Advanced Placement. The units for each course contain direct instruction videos followed by a series of leveled practice questions and problems to ensure students have mastered the key concepts. Students further demonstrate their mastery by applying concepts to the other key points during the study of the course content.
 - Achieve 3000 in Biology
 - Biology teachers employ Achieve 3000 readings to introduce and reinforce concepts topics essential to each unit of the course. (See “SIP Initiatives Instituted in 2016-2017” below for a more detailed description of Achieve 3000.)
 - Albert iO
 - AP teachers in all content areas are incorporating Albert iO, an online platform that provides standards-aligned AP practice in the form of the following: banks of AP-style multiple choice test questions for every AP course offered by H-F (with the exception of AP Studio Art, which does not have a multiple choice exam); free response prompts, along with AP-style rubrics and sample responses; and timed and untimed full-length practice exams.
 - AP Advancement
 - The progress of students who were recruited to take AP through the EOS process is being monitored.
 - Recruiting more first-time AP students has continued for 2018-2019. All 10th and 11th graders were administered a survey to gauge their college and career aspirations, interests, and mindsets. Survey results were combined with other data points, in particular, grades and standardized test scores, as well as teacher recommendations to identify first-time AP candidates.
 - Gateway Course Offerings Expansion
 - The roster of 3-day prep courses that run the last week of July and first week of August was expanded in the summer of 2017 to include AP courses with the largest enrollments of first-time AP students. Other Gateway course offerings include introductions to college prep and honors math and science courses.
 - iXL
 - English and math teachers have incorporated into their instruction iXL, a web-based tool that provides grammar/mechanics exercises and math practice problems. Students receive immediate feedback on their progress,

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and teachers can track their students' growth, as well as pinpoint their trouble spots.

- Lexile Level Set Testing for All
 - At the beginning of the school year, all H-F students take a Lexile level set test through Achieve 3000. Lexile student test results are sent to all parents. Additionally, teachers are able to access their students' Lexile scores, which allows them to better differentiate instruction. All students are then post-tested in May. Those results are shared with parents and teachers, as well. The test result data is used to track the reading comprehension growth of individual students, cohorts of students, and the student population as a whole.
- Virtual Course Offering
 - With the assistance Illinois Virtual School, H-F has developed its first online course for general education students: U. S. Government & Politics at the college prep and honors level. The semester-long virtual course is being offered for the first time in the summer of 2018. Students may also take the virtual course during the school year.
- World Language Advancement
 - Transfer students and incoming freshmen who have taken Spanish but are not yet proficient enough to enroll in Spanish 2 may take an accelerated Spanish 1 Honors course. This summer school course aims to prepare them for success in Spanish 2 Honors during the school year.
- *Socioemotional Supports*
 - Restorative Justice Staff Training
 - All staff received training in restorative justice during the March 2018 Institute Day. According to Restorative Practices International, Ltd., restorative justice brings wrongdoers and those affected by the wrongdoing together to discuss the incident, make amends, and provide the opportunity for all parties to participate in a resolution with the aim of restoring the offenders and victims to wholeness.
 - Principal's Student Advisory Council
 - Approximately sixty students meet monthly with the principal to voice their opinions, express their concerns, give feedback on school initiatives, and discuss issues pertinent to their lives and experiences.
 - "Viking Values" Character Education Program
 - H-F Viking Values – "perseverance," "empathy," "awareness," "compassion," and "effort" – create the acronym "PEACE." Viking Values is published in the student planner. Each value gets a school-wide focus for several weeks during the school year. The value in focus is launched through Word of the Week. Viking Values is further publicized through VTV skits and interviews, Viking Values posters around the building, Viking Values murals, and Viking

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Values t-shirts. Staff members and students are encouraged to recognize students who exhibit Viking Values. Those students receive a letter of commendation signed by the superintendent and principal and a Viking Values t-shirt.

SIP Initiatives Instituted in 2016-2017

- *Academic Supports*
 - Revised Semester Grading Procedures
 - Beginning in the fall of 2016, semester grades were no longer figured on the formerly used 12-point scale. Instead, quarter and final exam grades are now determined using percentages. This change allows for students who finish the semester strong with better final exam grade percentages than quarter percentages to improve their overall semester grades. It also allows teachers to collect more accurate final exam data than they could under the previous 12-point scale system when students often did not try their best on their finals because they knew their final exam grades would not impact their semester grades.
 - Teachers of like courses and, most often, entire departments use one of the following grading weighting methods:
 - $2/5$ ($1^{st}/3^{rd}$ Quarter) + $2/5$ ($2^{nd}/4^{th}$ Quarter) + $1/5$ (Final Exam) = Semester Grade
 - $1/3$ ($1^{st}/3^{rd}$ Quarter) + $1/3$ ($2^{nd}/4^{th}$ Quarter) + $1/3$ (Final Exam) = Semester Grade
 - The revised semester grading procedure additionally requires teachers to meet with students as soon as their grades drop to an "F" to discuss ways to improve. Before students are assigned a failing semester grade, the teacher must make three documented parent contacts, which may include face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and/or emails.
 - Achieve 3000
 - The Achieve 3000 online learning system to improve reading comprehension is employed in all general education and special education reading courses. At the beginning of first semester, students take a level test that provides them with a baseline Lexile score. From this baseline, students set Lexile growth goals. The Achieve 3000 nonfiction articles they read are written at each student's individual Lexile level. Therefore, while a class reads about the same topic from an article that looks quite similar on the computer screen, the actual readings are differentiated for each student's Lexile level. Students are motivated to achieve by the high interest level of the readings, as well as by wanting meet the required minimum 75% mastery of each article's content as measured by their answers to the reading's accompanying comprehension and vocabulary questions. Through the Achieve 3000 career interest survey, the students learn what Lexile levels their career choices require. This provides additional motivation for them to meet and even exceed their semester Lexile growth goals.

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- Media, Visual and Performing Arts (MVP) Academy
 - Developed for the class of 2020 and beyond, sophomores interested in an in-depth study of media, visual arts, music and theatre apply to enter the two-year MVP Academy as juniors. Members of the MVP Academy have the opportunity to develop their talents in an art-focused field in order to foster their passions, cultivate their creativity and talents and, ultimately, develop into future leaders who enjoy lifelong engagement with and appreciation for the arts.
 - Enrollment begins for the 2018-2019 school year.
- Equal Opportunity Schools' Lead Higher Initiative
 - H-F worked with Equal Opportunity Schools, a not-for-profit organization out of Washington State, to identify, enroll, and support approximately 300 underrepresented low-income students and students of color in Advanced Placement classes for 2017-2018.
- *Socioemotional Supports*
 - H-F Cares
 - H-F Cares aims to increase the socioemotional well-being of students by enhancing H-F's overall school culture. This includes improving the climate for both staff and students in order to positively impact students' classroom and extracurricular experiences.
 - H-F Cares initiatives and events include a staff family back-to-school picnic, free cookie coupons for staff members to hand out to students who go out of their way to help or do something positive for another person, weekly free lunch giveaways, and bigger quarterly recognitions awarded to staff members who've been nominated for going above and beyond for others. Additionally, H-F Cares sponsors VTV "What Makes Life Good for You?" segments, distribution of *The Happiness Project: One Sentence Journal* to all staff members, as well as the November "Health & Wellness" staff Institute Day.
 - Take What You Need
 - Post-it notes with inspirational, positive messages are hung in designated locations of both the North and South Buildings for students to take as they pass by.
 - High School Me
 - Teachers post their high school pictures outside their classrooms with highlights of their high school experiences and advice they would give their former high school selves.
 - Lunch Crunch
 - Students who have been identified as needing connection with a trusted adult are invited to attend quarterly lunch-time discussions with staff members that focus on
 - Further plans for outreach and mentoring efforts for these disconnected students are being developed.

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- Staff Cultural Competency Training
 - All staff participated in cultural competency training during the November 2016 Institute Day. Cultural competence staff trainings continue through H-F University. National Council of Cultural Competence defines “cultural competence” as “a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professions to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.”

On-going SIP Student Academic and Socioemotional Support Initiatives

- Reading Initiative
 - Literacy strategy instruction infused into every teacher’s lessons at least two times a week
- Math Initiative
 - The infusion of mathematical thinking skills into all content area instruction
- Writing Initiative
 - The implementation of content-specific writing skills in all classes
- H-F Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks
 - Standards-aligned, data-driven instruction in all classes
 - Common syllabi for all courses
 - Standards-aligned scope & sequence documents for all classes
 - Standards-aligned common assessments for all courses
- Response to Intervention (RtI) Tier 1 Classroom Intervention Checklist
 - Providing a menu three levels of classroom-level intervention strategies for teachers to employ to support struggling students
- 7 Day a Week Tutoring
 - Math and science tutoring before and after school, as well as on Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons
 - Writing Center, staffed by an English teacher before and after school on weekdays, to provide assistance with writing assignments from any content area
 - World Language tutoring after school
 - General assistance available in the Teaching & Learning Center (TLC), staffed by a certified teacher
 - Expanded library hours: weekdays 7:30 – 8:30 AM and 3:15 – 5:45 PM
- On-Demand Videos
 - Posted online by H-F teachers to reinforce lessons and help students study for exams
- Student Planner
 - Issued each year to all students, the student planner contains a variety of helps, including student handbook excerpts, an overview of the literacy strategies and

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their year-long roll-out plan, the “H-F Dictionary of Academic Terms,” the “H-F Word of the Week,” the modified block schedule, and the school calendar.

- Gateway Review Summer Sessions
 - Three-day, five-hour-a-day Gateway sessions are offered just before the start of the school year to prepare students for Geometry, Algebra 2/Trig, Pre-Calculus, AP Calculus, Chemistry, and Physics
- Summer Academy
 - Six-week preparation courses for incoming freshmen include 90-minute sessions each of English 1, Biology, Algebra 1, and Geometry.
- Summer School
 - Full-day offerings for students who need to repeat a graduation requirement include English 1, English 2, English 3, Algebra, Geometry, Algebra 2/Trig, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics
 - Full-day preparation courses include Algebra 1 Prep, and Strategic Secondary Reading Prep.
 - Full-day offerings for students who want to get ahead with their graduation requirements or are interested in academic enrichment include Word Processing & Microsoft Suite Applications, Radio Practicum, Algebra 1, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, World History, U. S. Government & Politics, U. S. History, Economics, Summer Theatre, Leaders in Theatre Ensemble, and Drivers Ed.
- Double Block Math Courses
 - To support Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2/Trig students who need more time and instruction to master the College Prep math curricula
- Reading Courses
 - Required for freshmen and sophomores reading at or below the 41st percentile, and for juniors and seniors reading at or below the 23rd percentile
 - Recommended for all students reading at or near the 50th percentile
- Seminar in Teaching and Learning Course
 - Recommended for students new to H-F and for students who need assistance with study skills and time to complete assignments from other classes under the tutelage of their teacher as well as junior and senior peer leaders
- Co-Teaching
 - The expansion of general education/special education teacher teams to support students in general education courses
- Intervention for Success (IFS) class, Academic Intervention period, and Credit Recovery program
 - Tier 3 RtI interventions for students with multiple failures
- Student Support Team (SST)

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- A team of administrators, guidance counselors, social workers, and school psychologists that meets regularly to review students' academic and behavior records in order to make recommendations for more intensive interventions beyond RtI Tier 1 universal supports
- Student Support Groups
 - Run by counselors, deans, and social workers to meet students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs
- Behavior Intervention Program and Delta
 - In-house programs that provide assistance to general education students with severe social, emotional, and behavioral needs
- H-F IB Prep Academy/IB Diploma Programme
 - Freshmen and sophomores enrolled in the H-F IB Prep Academy (formerly the H-F Gifted Academy) take honors and AP courses to prepare enrollment in the IB Diploma Programme as junior and senior year

On-going SIP Parent Support and Communication Initiatives

- H-F Parent Association (HFPA)
 - Monthly meetings for H-F parents, plus HFPA members sponsoring and assisting with special events for parents
- PowerSchool
 - Technology Department members conduct virtual and face-to-face meetings to assist parents effectively utilize H-F's student information system
- Parent Contact
 - System developed for updating parent phone numbers, email and home addresses
- School Compact
 - Pledges for parents, teachers, and students to develop and enhance a mutually respectful, cooperative, and productive school learning environment for all
- Curriculum of the Home
 - "Good Practices" videos (i.e. limited screen time, a consistent time and place for homework, having daily parent/child conversations) created by SIP Committee members and played at Back to School Night and other parent events
- HFU for Parents
 - A series of after school and evening workshops for parents that take place throughout the school year
- School-to-Home Communication and Events
 - H-F website (www.hfhighschool.org)
 - *Viking Connection* quarterly newsletter
 - *Viking Voice* bi-monthly newsletter

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- *H-F FYI* e-newsletter
- Social media, i.e. Facebook and Twitter
- Annual Freshman Parent Orientation
- Annual Back-to-School Night
- Annual Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Annual Voyage to Excellence Open House
- Monthly Community Coffee and Tour
- Videos on Demand
 - 24/7 access to information regarding resources and events

Ongoing Professional Development Initiatives

- Professional Learning Community (PLC) Teaming
 - Bi-monthly regularly scheduled common meeting time to work towards reaching team-developed SMART goals to improve student achievement
- Quarterly Institute Days
 - Department-specific trainings and workshops, best practices breakout sessions, and PLC meeting time
- H-F University (HFU)
 - Series of summer workshops covering best instructional practices, unit and lesson design, assessment data utilization, and supporting students' social/emotional needs
- Peer Coaching
 - Literacy coaches to assist teachers effectively infuse literacy strategy instruction into their lessons
 - Technology coaches to assist teacher effectively infuse technology applications into their instruction
- New Teacher Induction Program
 - Week-long summer induction program for all new certified staff members followed by a year-long one-to-one mentorship by an H-F "model teacher"
- Observation Process
 - Pre- and post-observation conferences bookend formal observations by administrators and department chairs of all certified staff members with the goal of improving instruction
 - Informal classroom visits by administrators and department shares to assist teachers with their reflective practice as well as gain a broader understanding of teaching and learning at H-F