Envision: Reflect, Synthesize, Plan

Facilitator Guidance Document

Why It's Important

- Throughout the **Envision – Analyze – Listen** process, school teams will learn a lot of information about the status of school in relation to where the team would like the school to be. Some school teams may be struggling to make sense of everything learned thus far. Other school teams may feel compelled to address everything at once, but we know that having too many simultaneous initiatives can lessen the effectiveness of each individual initiative. The Envision: Reflect, Synthesize, Plan Activity is intended to assist teams in making sense of what they have learned and envision the best path forward.

How the Envision: Reflect, Synthesize, Plan Activity Fits into the Improvement Planning Process

- This activity is the final activity in the five-part Needs Assessment. This should occur before the team writes the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP).

SCEP Needs Assessment and Plan Development Activities	Envision: Exploring the Vision, Values and Aspirations for the school	Analyze: Internal and External Data	Analyze: Survey Data	Listen: Interviewing Students	Envision: Reflect, Synthesize, and Plan	Writing the Plan

Facilitator Guidance

- **Materials:** Bring chart paper and post-it notes to the activity and prepare to use them to capture responses and allow for a gallery walk for the multiple discussion prompts offered. For those conducting the meeting virtually, the facilitator should plan on using a platform such as Jamboard to collect the group's thoughts.
- Prior to the meeting, members of the team should review the notes from the *Envision* activity, the two *Analyze* activities (Analyzing Internal and External Data and Analyzing Survey Data) and the *Listen – Student Interview* activity.
- This document is broken into three distinct parts:
    1. Reflecting on the most recent school year (approximately 15-25 minutes)
    2. Synthesizing the information collected (approximately 15-20 minutes)
    3. Envisioning what happens next (approximately 2 hours)
- **Please note that this Activity is likely to take between 2 to 3 hours**. Teams may want to split this into multiple meetings.
- Upon completing all three parts, the team should have teased out the commitments and Key Strategies that will be foundational in composing the SCEP.
- The time estimates noted below are approximations of how long these activities may last. However, facilitators should recognize that deliberation and consensus building are necessary for each of these three parts, and some discussions may occur in less time than indicated and other discussions may require additional time.
- After the Commitments and Key Strategies are identified in the third part of this process, the principal should meet with the NYSED Liaison supporting the school and conduct the Pre-SCEP Team Meeting- Planning

Session 4, in which the proposed Key Strategies are shared. **Teams should not advance to writing the SCEP for implementation until after the Pre-SCEP Team Meeting- Planning Session 4 occurs.**

Part 1: Reflecting on the Most Recent School Year

Conducting Your Meeting

Reflecting on the Implementation of Key Initiatives (5 – 10 minutes)

Ask the group prompts such as the ones below that allow the opportunity for team members to share their perspectives on how the school was able to implement key initiatives this past year:

- *What is different about our school now compared to when we started the year? To what do we attribute those differences?*
- *We had aspirations at the start of the year – where have we fallen short of those aspirations? To what do we attribute that?*
- *Knowing what we now know, what do we wish we would have done differently this year?*

Reflecting on the Staff's Capacity and Readiness for Change (10 – 15 minutes)

Ask the group prompts such as the ones below to prompt discussion on the staff's capacity and readiness for change:

- *How have staff responded to new ideas this year, and what can we learn from that?*
- *In what areas of education are there feelings of urgency among staff, and an eagerness to try new things?*
- *What are staff members tired of or frustrated with? What should we be mindful of to limit or avoid?*
- *When we have seen large staff buy-in in the past, to what did we attribute that? What can we learn from that information moving forward?*

Part 2: Synthesizing What Has Been Learned

Conducting Your Meeting

Making Connections Across Activities (15 – 20 minutes)

Ask the group prompts such as the ones below that connect what was shared during student interviews with what was explored earlier:

- *During the Analyze activities, we used terms like "Notice" and "Wonder" when we came across data that we were curious about. What did we hear during student interviews that sheds light on what we were noticing or wondering when looking at data?*
- *During the Envision activity, we considered principles and values that were important to us as a school community. What did we hear in the student interviews that connects to the principles and values we identified?*
- *What did we hear from the student interviews that could help us better understand the Internal/External data and Survey data we examined?*
- *Earlier we reflected on the staff's capacity for change. Were there parts of what was shared that helps us understand the Staff Survey results better?*
- *Are there other takeaways from the earlier reflection conversations that help us better understand our data?*
- *What themes emerged in multiple activities?*

Part 3: Identify Commitments and Key Strategies

Conducting Your Meeting

Connect the Takeaways from the Needs Assessment to What the School Will Do Moving Forward (10 minutes)

Ask the group to consider how we might be able to connect the Needs Assessment process to what the school should do next, with prompts such as those below:

- *What can we reasonably take on to address some of the themes that have emerged?*
- *If the students we interviewed were here at the table with us right now, what would they be telling us we need to prioritize next year?*
- *Were there priorities that emerged essential to meeting our students' needs?*

Turning Aspirations into a Set of Commitments (10 – 20 minutes)

Based on what was learned thus far, ask the team to discuss the following questions:

- *In reviewing what has been learned thus far, what **areas of strength** have emerged that the school could build on to move closer to its vision, values, and aspirations?*
- *In reviewing what has been learned thus far, what **opportunities for growth** have emerged that the school could focus to move closer to its vision, values, and aspirations?*

Share with the team that the school will need to identify at least 2 Commitments that will guide future efforts. An ideal Commitment is something that the school team sees as part of a long-range vision for the school. At least one Commitment must be connected to Teaching and Learning, and schools can identify up to four Commitments if necessary. School teams may find it helpful to consider the following sentence starter to assist in identifying a commitment:

> *This school is committed to _____.*

Ask the team:

> *Based on this description of a commitment, what are two to four commitments we would like to identify in our improvement plan?*

Facilitator Guidance:
- For commitments outside of grade level/subject/content areas, the commitment should be something that most if not all staff can see a role for them. It may be helpful to find themes across ideas explored if the discussion is very narrow in scope. For example, rather than a commitment of "*This school is committed to students resolving conflicts on the playground*," this could be expanded, "*This school is committed to students having skills necessary to resolve conflicts peacefully*."
- If the team is struggling to narrow the list into a manageable number, the facilitator may want to incorporate a strategy such as "Diamond 9," also known as "[Diamond Ranking](#)," which is designed to prompt discussion and consensus building to ultimately determine how to take nine different ideas and decide, which ones should be prioritized.
- Facilitators may find it useful to remind the group to use positive, asset-based language.
- Commitments should connect to what emerged during at least one of the **Envision – Analyze – Listen** activities. The tables that follow may be helpful in ensuring that occurs.

After your team has identified WHAT it is hoping to achieve long-term by identifying Commitments, it can then begin to consider HOW it will achieve that Commitment in the next year by identifying **Key Strategies**.

As part of the annual improvement plan, schools will need to identify 1-4 Key Strategies for each Commitment and develop their plan around these strategies.

Each Key Strategy selected should be grounded in research and represent something that will look different this upcoming year in comparison to previous years. The Key Strategy should fit one of the following categories:
1. Something **new** to the school; or
2. Something existing that is **being expanded** to reach a wider audience; or
3. Something existing that is **being refined** in this upcoming year and will look different from the past.

These Key Strategies should connect to the data reviewed and/or the student interviews conducted through the needs assessment process. Teams will need to explain on the template **why they have selected each Key Strategy**.

While Commitments represent more long-term goals or values that are guiding the school, Key Strategies serve as the means by which the school will advance that Commitment during the upcoming year.

Schools may find the [Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) Framework](#) and [Phases of Implementation](#), along with Hattie's [High Impact Teaching Strategies](#) to be helpful resources when considering Key Strategies.

Optional Activity for school teams:
1. Share with the team the following:
   - *Not everything going on in the school will be part of the SCEP plan. As part of the Continuous Improvement process, we will need to be thinking about what **will look different** next year, and those things that will look different are what should make it into the plan. To get the team thinking about what may look different to help us advance our commitments, we will engage in several activities centering around three terms:*
     - ***Amplify** – things that we should grow or expand*
     - ***Sunset** – things that we should consider no longer doing*
     - ***Create** – things that we should start doing*
2. Share a version of the chart below:

Commitment:

	Amplify	Sunset	Create
Data Analysis			
Student Interviews			
Reflection			
Anything Else (including Hattie's [High Impact Teaching Strategies](#) and the [DTSDE Framework](#) and [Phases of Implementation)](#)			

3. Start with the first commitment identified. Announce to the team that the team will first consider that commitment in relation to the Data analyzed. Ask the team "*In order for us to advance toward [Commitment], are there things that emerged from the external, internal, or survey analysis that we should be considering as something we should amplify, sunset, or create*? Record the answers shared.
4. After discussing ideas from the Data Analysis, ask the team: "*In order for us to advance toward [Commitment], are there things that emerged from the Student Interviews that we should be considering as something we should amplify, sunset, or create*? Record the answers shared.
5. After discussing the Student Interviews, ask the team "*In order for us to advance toward [Commitment], was there anything identified during our earlier reflection conversations that we should amplify, sunset, or create?* Record the answers shared.
6. Share with the team: "*We are going to now have a chance to share anything else that may be ways to advance the commitment.*" Record the ideas shared.

Repeat the activity above for the second Commitment, and if applicable, the third/fourth Commitment.

At this point, the team can begin generating a list of Key Strategies for each commitment that would be:

- Something **new** to the school; or
- Something existing that is **being expanded** to reach a wider audience; or
- Something existing that is **being refined** in this upcoming year and will look different from the past.

   AND

- Could be something we could potentially provide professional learning around;
- Could be something the school could get behind or believe in;
- Is a logical next step for the school based on where it is currently (the Phases of Implementation may be useful when considering logical next steps)

The Key Strategies must connect to data (qualitative and quantitative) that emerged from the Envision, Analyze, and Listen activities. There are likely to be two different ways that this could happen:

1. Through the review of variations in data, the team has identified specific areas that need more attention (standards, skills, grade levels or groups of students) and identified factors that are contributing to those being needs through a Root Cause analysis.
   - In this example, the Key Strategy would be how the school will provide more attention to the skill, standard, grade level etc.
   - The Key Strategy would likely connect to a Root Cause identified by the team.
2. Through the envision and listening activities, the team learned that there is a gap between where the school would like to be and where it is currently.
   - In this example, the Key Strategy would be how the school will attempt to narrow that gap.

As a team, identify 1 to 4 Key Strategies for each Commitment that fit the descriptions above AND come to a consensus as to **WHY** these strategies have been selected. The facilitator may want to consider the prompt below for each potential Key Strategy.

- *What specific data suggest this being necessary for the school?*

Repeat this for the second Commitment, and if applicable, the third/fourth Commitment.

After the team has generated a list of strategies that would help the school advance its commitments, it will be important for the team to consider the appropriateness of the Key Strategies. Ask the team questions such as the ones below to ensure that the Key Strategies are position the school for success:

1. *Before moving forward with these strategies, are there things we have learned from past initiatives or continuous improvement efforts that may make us reconsider the strategies we have identified?*
2. *Given that time and resources are finite, anything we start doing next year will mean less attention to devote toward things we are currently doing. Are we comfortable moving our attention away from certain practices? Do we know what that might entail? Are there unintended consequences that need to be considered?*
3. *Before we move forward, we need to make sure what we are saying is doable. While each strategy may make sense, when these are all put together, is this the right amount for the school, considering what we discussed earlier when we reflected on Staff's capacity and readiness for change?*

Make any adjustments needed based on the discussion.

STOP. At this point the school should have 1 to 4 Key Strategies for each Commitment to propose to the NYSED Liaison or the District in the Pre-SCEP Team Meeting- Planning Session 4.
**Re-identified schools must have this meeting before advancing to writing the implementation of the plan.
Newly identified schools should consult with their district prior to proceeding.