

Envision: Reflect and Synthesize

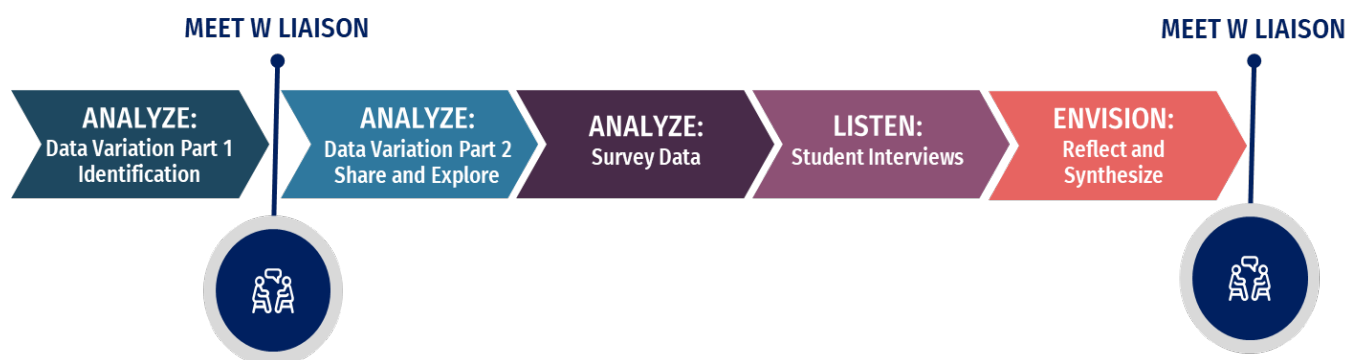
Facilitator Guidance Document

Why It's Important

- During the **Envision – Analyze – Listen** process, school teams gather significant information about the school's status and desired goals. Some teams may struggle to make sense of this information, while others may feel pressured to tackle everything at once. However, addressing too many initiatives simultaneously can dilute their effectiveness. The *Envision: Reflect and Synthesize* activity helps teams focus on key takeaways and determine the best path forward.

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

- This activity is the final step in the five-part Needs Assessment, which should occur before writing the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP).



Facilitator Guidance

- **Materials:** Bring chart paper and post-it notes for in-person activities or use a technology platform for virtual meetings to capture responses and facilitate a gallery walk.
- **Preparation:** Review notes from the previous needs assessment activities prior to the meeting.
- **Duration:** This activity may take 2 hours or more; teams may want to split it into multiple sessions.
- **Outcomes:** By the end of this process, the team should identify Key Strategies that will inform the SCEP.
- **Time Estimates:** The time estimates below are approximations; discussions may take more or less time depending on the team's needs.
- **Next Step:** After identifying Key Strategies, the principal should meet with the school's liaison for before proceeding to writing the SCEP. **Teams should not advance to writing the SCEP until after this meeting occurs.**

Part 1: Reflecting on the Most Recent School Year

Conducting Your Meeting

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

Ask prompts to discuss how key initiatives were implemented:

1. How is our school different from the start of the year? What caused these changes?
2. Where did we fall short of our initial aspirations? Why?
3. What would we have done differently with the benefit of hindsight?

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

Use prompts to discuss staff's capacity for change:

1. How have staff responded to new ideas?
2. Where do staff feel an urgency to innovate?
3. What are staff frustrations, and what should we avoid?
4. What past experiences with staff buy-in can inform future efforts?

Part 2: Synthesizing What Has Been Learned

Conducting Your Meeting

Making Connections Across Activities (15 – 20 minutes)

Ask questions that connect data from prior activities with student interviews:

1. What did we learn from student interviews that clarifies our data variation analysis?
2. What did we learn from student interviews that clarifies our survey analysis?
3. Were there any themes that emerged across the activities?

Considering Root Causes (20 – 40 minutes)

Ask targeted questions that connect specific identified issues to their potential root causes, focusing on concrete data variations and findings. Root cause analysis should be based on detailed item analyses or other precise data reviews, ensuring that conclusions are drawn from narrow, well-defined findings rather than broad or generalized trends.

1. *"Why is this [the specific data variation or other narrow issue] happening? (What factors might be contributing to this trend or variation?)*
2. *Which of these factors are within our control, and which are external?*
3. *Why do the factors within our control exist as they do? (What school-based decisions, structures, or practices contribute?)*
4. *For external factors, what can we do to mitigate their impact? (Are there partnerships, supports, or advocacy efforts that could help?)*
5. *For internal factors, what actions can we take to create meaningful change? (What policies, practices, or resources can we adjust?)*
6. *Why haven't we addressed this issue before? (What barriers—awareness, capacity, resources, or priorities—have prevented action?)*
7. *Why is this issue impacting some students/staff more than others? (What differences in experience, support, or opportunity might be contributing to disparities?)*

Part 3: Identify Key Strategies

Conducting Your Meeting

Connecting the Needs Assessment to Next Steps (10 minutes)

Ask prompts to align the Needs Assessment with the school's next actions:

1. What can we realistically tackle based on emerging themes?
2. If students were here, what would they prioritize?
3. Which priorities are critical for meeting student needs?

Introducing the Concept of Key Strategies (10 minutes)

Schools will need to identify 2 to 5 Key Strategies that will be the core of their plan. Each Key Strategy should:

- Be grounded in research.
- Address a gap between current reality and goals.
- Be new, expanded, or refined compared to previous efforts.

These Key Strategies should connect to the data variations identified 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**.

To ensure effective implementation, school teams must be strategic in selecting the number of approaches they plan to use to improve outcomes, avoiding the temptation to implement too many initiatives. To assist this process, NYSED has provided the following guidance:

- **At least 1 Instructional Key Strategy** must be identified.
- Non-Instructional Key Strategies are **optional**.
- **Total number of Key Strategies** (Instructional and Non-Instructional combined) must be between 2 and 5.
- Non-Instructional Key Strategies should not outnumber Instructional Key Strategies.

Schools may find Hattie’s [High Impact Teaching Strategies](#) and the resources gathered at [Visible Learning](#), especially the Teaching Strategies, to be helpful resources when considering Key Strategies. The [Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness \(DTSDE\) Framework](#) and [Phases of Implementation](#) may also be useful when considering different options to pursue.

Using Data to Identify Key Strategies (20-30 mins)

At this point, the team can begin generating a list of Key Strategies 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. 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.

- 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.

Prompts to consider:

1. *What specific data variation do we want to target?*
2. *What do we know is contributing to this gap based on what we’ve learned from the needs assessment process and any item analysis we’ve done?*
3. *What does research ([High Impact Teaching Strategies](#) and the resources gathered at [Visible Learning](#)) say would be an effective means of addressing such a gap?*
4. *What would that evidence-based strategy look like in our school? How might we adopt it successfully?*

Repeat this as needed, but ensure the school ends up with no more than five key strategies.

Finalizing Key Strategies (10 mins)

After the team has generated a list of potential, it will be important for the team to consider the appropriateness of the Key Strategies. Use the prompts below:

1. *Are there things we have learned from past 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.*
 - *What existing initiatives would we move our attention away from to adopt these key strategies?*
 - *Which existing school or district requirements should we consider advocating to eliminate or seek exemption from, in order to focus more effectively on these key strategies?*
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 2 to 5 Key Strategies to propose to the NYSED Liaison or the District **before advancing to writing the plan.**