

## GUIDANCE: Additional Prompts for Reflection

The following lists contain examples of additional areas for reflection that could be relevant to consider when completing the Strengths & Needs Tool. These examples are offered to spur your thinking, but they are not required, nor are they intended to limit what you choose to cover in your reflections for each domain.

### Contents

Overall .....	1
Academic Domain .....	1
Social/Cultural Domain .....	2
Capacity Domain .....	4

### Overall

#### Strengths & Celebrations

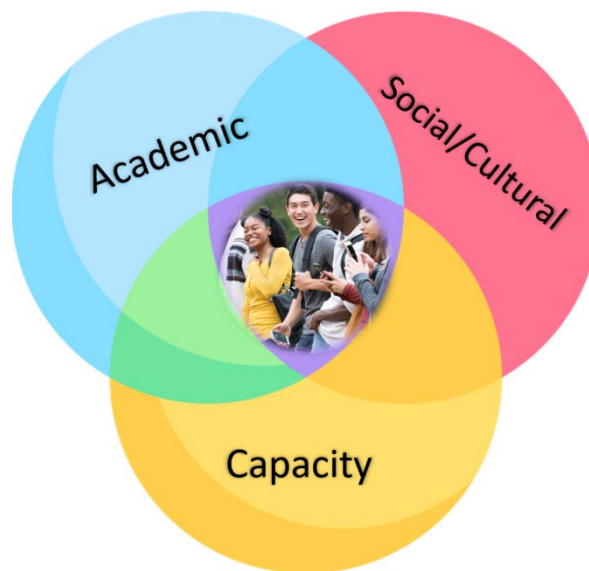
- In what areas has your district made significant gains in ensuring access to opportunities and supports for students? To what extent, and in what ways, are you seeing the impact of those gains?

#### Gaps & Challenges

- In what areas is your district seeing persistent gaps or challenges over time? What factors do you see as contributing to these persistent gaps or challenges?

#### Progress & Prospects

- What structures and supports do you have in place, or have you already implemented? In what ways does your district already share services with neighboring districts, BOCES, etc.?



### Academic Domain



*The academic domain considers the courses and programs your students have access to, student performance, and postsecondary pathways, as well as opportunities aligned with the elements of the proposed New York State Portrait of a Graduate.*

#### Student Performance & Postsecondary Pathways

- Consider the proficiency rates of differing student subgroups in your district, for Grades 3-8 assessments and/or annual Regents Examinations. Are there disparities among student subgroups?
- Beyond state assessments, in what ways do educators in your district collect data on student performance (i.e., classroom assessments)? To what extent does your district have a balanced assessment system?
  - What has your district learned from using multiple measures for assessing student learning?

### **Academic Courses & Programs**

- Reflect on the academic programming your students have access to, including recent trends in offerings. Are there areas of strength and/or gaps in equitable opportunities for your students?
  - How much is provided by your district? Is this sustainable?
  - How much is shared with neighboring districts or BOCES? Are such partnerships meeting your district's/students' needs?
- Consider your students' access to academic courses in multiple modalities (virtual, hybrid, distance, or a combination). What is the extent of availability of virtual and/or distance learning options among differing student subgroups in your district? Are there disparities?
- Reflect on the mechanisms for offering advanced coursework and CTE to students in your district. Are there disparities in access to these options among differing student subgroups?

### **Portrait of a Graduate**

- Do students in your district have access to other unique academic programs, courses, or offerings not yet mentioned? In what ways might these opportunities align with elements of the proposed New York State Portrait of Graduate?
- Reflect on the academic offerings in your district. In what ways is your district working toward implementing practices aligned to ongoing statewide initiatives (ideas from the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures; best practices around literacy and the Science of Reading; performance-based learning and assessment; etc.)?

## **Social/Cultural Domain**



*The social/cultural domain considers the services and activities your students have access to, student attendance and engagement, and your school district's broader community, including families, partnerships, and community resources.*

### **Student Attendance & Engagement**

- Consider the attendance, suspension, and chronic absenteeism rates for students in your district. Are there disparities among student subgroups?
- In your district, what does it mean to have a “high focus” on providing certain educational experiences to build/ensure a positive learning environment and school culture? What are some key indicators?
- Reflecting on the in-school and out-of-school educational experiences your district provides for students, are the areas of “high focus” the same ones in which you see high levels of student engagement? Does it seem that your district’s values are aligned with your students’ interests?
  - To what extent, and in what ways, does your district work to support students’ sense of belonging?
- Consider ways your district works to build/ensure a positive school culture for all members of the school community (i.e., not just students, but also teachers, leaders, support staff, etc.). What are key indicators of a positive school culture in your district?
  - What impact do the experiences, supports, and other offerings your district provides have on their sense of belonging and dedication to your district?

### ***Electives, Extracurriculars, & Community Service***

- Consider the electives and extracurricular activities offered by your district. What is the extent of student engagement in these offerings? Are there disparities among student subgroups?
- Consider the leadership and community service opportunities available to students in your district. What is the extent of student engagement in these opportunities? Are there disparities among student subgroups?
- Reflect on the electives, extracurricular, community services, and other activities available to students in your district. How do they align with or complement the in-school and out-of-school educational experiences your district focuses on?
  - To what extent, and in what ways, do these activities impact school culture?
- Reflect on the activities, opportunities, and services your students have access to, including recent trends in offerings. Are there areas of strength and/or gaps in opportunities for your students?
  - How much is provided by your district? Is this sustainable?
  - How much is shared with neighboring districts or BOCES? Are such partnerships meeting your district’s/students’ needs?

### ***Support Services & Family/Community Resources***

- Reflect on the local partnerships your district has, and the opportunities and supports they provide. Are there other local supports your students could benefit from?
  - Are there regional, state, or national partnerships your district has or could benefit from?
  - Does your district utilize any of the state’s school support networks / technical assistance centers? (e.g., CTE Technical Assistance Center, New York State Teacher Centers, Office of Special Education’s Regional Partnership Centers, Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network, Staff/Curriculum Development Network, etc.)

- Reflect on the activities, opportunities, and services your students have access to, including recent trends in offerings. Are these areas of strength and/or gaps in opportunities for your students?
  - How much is provided by your district? Is this sustainable?
  - How much is shared with neighboring districts or BOCES? Are such partnerships meeting your district's/students' needs?
- Reflect on the enrollment trends for English language learners, students in foster care, homeless students, and migrant students in your district.
  - How is your district addressing the needs of any shifting student subpopulations in your local community?
- Reflect on the opportunities your district offers to engage families/caregivers and local community members. What impact does this have on school culture and sense of belonging for your students?

## Capacity Domain



*The capacity domain considers the operational capacity of your district, including size of district, finances, staffing, student enrollment, transportation, technology, and other logistics.*

### **Enrollment & Personnel**

- Reflect on your district's student enrollment trends. What impact are these trends having on your district's operational capacity?
  - Consider staffing capacity, space adequacy, technology infrastructure, transportation capacity, per pupil expenditures, etc.
  - How is your district's capacity to meet the needs of special student populations enrolled in your district, such as English language learners and students with disabilities?
  - How do staffing trends compare with student enrollment trends?
- Reflect on student enrollment trends across individual buildings and grade levels in your district. Are there disparities? To what extent, and in what ways, are buildings within your district facing differing capacity challenges and/or strengths?
  - Consider staffing capacity, space adequacy, technology infrastructure, transportation capacity, per pupil expenditures, etc.
- Consider the teaching staff in your district. What do the data elements reviewed in the inventory suggest about the capacity of teaching staff in your district?
  - How does the percentage of inexperienced/novice teachers compare/relate to the percentage of teachers teaching out of certification within your district?

- Reflect on what teaching assignment areas are covered by certified teachers in your district. Are there areas of strength? Are there gaps?
- How does the turnover rate for all teachers compare to the turnover rate for novice teachers within your district?
- Reflect on your veteran teacher population. How many are approaching retirement? How will these retirements impact your district's capacity?
  - Consider your district' capacity as it relates to staffing as well as your district's financial capacity, including costs associated with both the new hire(s) and the retired educators in your district (e.g., post-employment benefits).
- Reflect on teacher qualifications and retention across individual buildings and grade levels in your district. Are there disparities? To what extent, and in what ways, are buildings within your district facing differing capacity challenges and/or strengths?
- Consider the percentage of inexperienced or novice principals in your district and recent trends. What does this data suggest about leadership capacity in your district?

### ***Technology, Transportation, & Facilities***

- Reflect on student connectivity in your district. Are there areas of strength? Are there gaps? In what ways does it address or heighten challenges your district is facing?
  - To what extent, and in what ways, does connectivity impact your district's capacity? Consider teaching capacity, transportation, space adequacy, finances, etc.
- Reflect on the primary means of transportation used by students in your district, including travel time. Are there areas of strength and/or strains in your district's capacity to provide services to your students?
  - Is your district's current transportation situation sustainable?
  - How much is shared with neighboring districts or BOCES? Are such partnerships meeting your district's/students' needs?
- Consider the technology infrastructure and connectivity, transportation, and/or major capital needs of your district. To what extent, and in what ways, is your district making progress toward meeting these needs?

### ***Budget & Finance***

- Reflect on the expenditures, revenue, and aid received in your district. What do the data elements reviewed in the inventory suggest about the financial capacity of your district?
  - Consider the anticipated costs associated with your in-service and retired educator workforce, the anticipated major capital needs, and student enrollment trends.
  - Consider the trends adjusted for inflation.
- Reflect on your district's ability to pass an annual school budget. What are key features that have helped the budget pass? What are key features that have prevented the budget from passing?