Appendix C.1 • Capability Discussion Starters

Questions to kick off your discussion and measurement of the five system capabilities both inside and outside of your change team

Understanding Your System

Establishing clarity around the real causes of underachievement. Who is underachieving, where, why, and in what ways? What system conditions are fostering and hindering deeper learning, respectively? How do our personal and collective actions impact learners' capacity for success?

Developing a systemic professional learning strategy that addresses the real causes of underachievement. Which identified causes of underachievement are the most pressing, and how will we address them? Are our professional learning opportunities directly linked to the improvement of learners' outcomes? How can we ensure that our approach is truly systemic and not simply creating change in isolated pockets?

Understanding what works best, for whom, and why. Are programs, initiatives, and approaches implemented in light of how they will impact which learners and why? Which individual strategies, programs, and approaches have worked, are working, and are needed for which learners, and what does that tell us? Do we make changes to our approaches or other implementation efforts in real time to account for evidenced successes and challenges?

Gathering meaningful, collective evidence in the system and in the community. What evidence are we gathering to inform our understanding of the system and our learners? Does this evidence provide a complete picture of what we're doing, whether what we're doing is working, and what needs to change? How do we involve students, teachers, families, community members, wider system leaders, and other learning partners in the process of sharing and gathering evidence?

Engaging Learners, Parents, and Communities as Real Partners

Partnering in every aspect of the inquiry process. Are students partners in the design and implementation of learning experiences that are meaningful and equitable and that enable the development of intended outcomes? Do students partner in reflecting on, assessing, and measuring their learning? Are students supported to run with their learning, taking it in directions that may not have been planned for?

Working with parents to jointly discover, understand, and realize learners' interests, needs, and goals. Do we ask parents who their children really are as individuals, and do we listen? Do we work alongside parents to make sure their learners achieve what's important to them? Are parents well informed about their children's learning and about what outcomes the system is focusing on and why?

Supporting, valuing, and utilizing partner insights and engagement. Have we established an environment in which students, parents, and community members feel encouraged to share their thinking and ideas? Do we actually value and use their ideas to influence teaching, learning, and work at all levels of the system? Are partners well informed and supported to know what's going on and how they can contribute?

Providing opportunities for technology-enhanced, connected learning anytime and anywhere. How do we facilitate access to digital tools and other technologies, both during and outside of regular school hours? Does our use of technology directly deepen learning outcomes? Do we leverage digital tools as an opportunity to connect with learning partners both locally and globally?

Identifying and Measuring What's Important

Collaboratively identifying what success looks like for your learners. Are students, families, and communities deeply involved in this process? Do we have a shared, comprehensive understanding of success that embodies learners' self-understanding, knowledge, competencies, and connections? Does success extend beyond graduation to the rest of students' lives?

Establishing clarity using deeper learning tools. Based on learning partners' descriptions of success, have we identified or developed a comprehensive set of deeper learning measures and other tools? Do we take the time to understand what it means to measure and assess deeper learning and to develop shared fluency in the language of our measures? Do we use the process of measurement as it's intended—to understand and celebrate our learners, build our capacity to measure their success, and inform learning experiences that respond to their needs?

Engaging in authentic assessment that fully informs the measurement of learning. Is our measurement practice informed by a wide and diverse range of assessment evidence? Does our assessment practice provide us with the complete set of evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, required to determine success? Can we identify, and then design assessments to fill, any existing evidence gaps?

Moderating exemplars to ensure inter-rater reliability and to identify and spread best practices. When measuring student, system, or other performance, are we confident that others using the same measures and drawing from the same evidence base would come to the same conclusion (inter-rater reliability)? Have we set up a change team and embedded moderation process to collectively share, evidence, and measure learning and practice? Do we use the learning from moderation to inform practice and professional learning?

Leading for Deep and Sustainable Change

Focusing every action and decision through the lens of the least-served learners. Are *all* our decisions unquestionably dependent on whether they're right for our learners? Have we established a clear line of sight between our actions and our students? Do learning partners feel encouraged to challenge "the way we do things around here"?

Prioritizing what needs to change and collaboratively designing solutions. What needs to be addressed and in what order, and how can we frame and form links within the overall change process? How will we ensure that the change is accelerated, sustainable, and deep? Do we involve the full range of learning partners in designing solutions that address the real causes of underachievement?

Leading change all the way through to measured, sustainable outcomes. Do we follow our actions and decisions all the way to their effects on individual learners? Are the effects of implemented solutions closely monitored and measured, and are we responsive to ongoing changes in outcomes at all stages of implementation? What do we do to ensure the sustainability and constant improvement of implemented solutions?

Fostering and supporting student, teacher, system, parent, and community leaders. What opportunities do we provide our learners for leading in their classrooms, schools, and communities? Have we developed a school or school-system culture in which everyone has a voice and in which anyone can lead? Do we open our doors to and actively welcome parents and other members of the community to take on leading roles in our school systems?

Creating a Culture of Learning, Belonging, and High Expectations for All

Providing the freedom to learn, share, celebrate, and improve. Are learning partners provided the space and freedom to take ownership of their learning, try new approaches, and even fail, as well as the support to learn from and create success out of those failures? Do *all* learning partners truly believe that they are welcome to learn from and with others to deepen practice and learning? Is our culture characterized by reflection, continuous improvement, and the sharing and celebration of successes and learning among all learning partners?

Engaging in deeper learning experiences and teaching for 100 percent success. Do our learning experiences deepen learners' outcomes and provide everyone with equal opportunities for success? Are *all* learners' cultures and individual identities represented in what and how they learn? Does our measurement and assessment practice tell us how each learner is doing and where they need to improve in real time?

Embedding a deep commitment to and expectation of success for all learners. Is our culture built on the foundation that every single learner can and will succeed if we establish the right conditions? Have we embraced a never-give-up attitude with regard to improving all learners' outcomes? Do we take a proactive approach to creating better conditions for the learners who are struggling the most?

Cultivating genuine personal relationships. Do we have personal relationships with all our students that exude knowledge of and connection with who they are as individuals? Have we cultivated relationships with our peers and colleagues at all levels of the system, with students' families, and with our communities? Are these relationships equitable and fueled by the realization that we're all learning from and with one another?

Celebrating students' learning and identities everywhere and in all things. How are our students' identities and cultures represented in the curriculum, learning environments, and all system decisions? What are the aspects of teaching, learning, and our school or school system at large from which our students and their identities are removed, and how can we bring them in? Do we treat education as a celebration of our learners and of what makes them who they are?