Question Bank for use in Monitoring Student Learning/Achievement

(This list is intended to provide examples of questions that might drive a conversation – it is not intended to be a complete list or appropriate in all data monitoring sessions. Questions are also not in any particular order.)

Understanding the Purpose of the Assessment

1. What are the assessments that we rely upon to measure student learning designed to tell us, what are their purposes? Will they reveal students' abilities to collaborate, apply knowledge to real world situations or to creatively problem solve?
2. Which assessments, if any, are essential for students to continue taking because of requirements in law or policy? Are these assessments aligned to district/state standards? How are the results used by teachers and students?
3. For any given assessment, is its purpose diagnostic, formative, or summative? What level of fidelity do we have for district-wide use of the assessment(s)?
4. What is the frequency of this/any assessment? Will this be a repeated measure to monitor progress over time?

Determining What Type of Performance is Being Measured

5. How is performance being measured? What type of assessment is represented or planned?
6. Are our students prepared for life after HS? How do we know?
7. What does it mean for students to succeed/excel/fulfill their potential/maximize their talents/thrive in our system, and how would we measure that?
8. How are we defining student success?

How is Performance Being Compared

9. Do we have schools or grade levels within the district that consistently break the patterns? Why are they better (or worse) than the others? How do they compare to schools within our peer group (as defined)?
10. In subsequent sessions the board may want to ask how the findings compare to the last time this assessment was administered. Is there improvement? Is the status quo being maintained? Is ground being lost? If we didn't meet the targets before are, we closer now than before?
11. Who or what are results being compared to? Is this a norm-referenced (large group of like students) or criterion-referenced (compared to a standard or set of criteria)?
12. Are students learning/succeeding? Is the district making progress on its goals?

Monitoring Student Learning

13. What, if any, is our student dropout rate?
14. What percentage of dropouts complete in another way (e.g. GED, move to another district)?
15. What is our graduation (completion) rate? How is that determined? Is the rate increasing, holding steady or decreasing over time?
16. What percent of students come to us with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in kindergarten? If the percent is low, what resources do we need to provide to get those few students on track by the end of the year?
17. In each grade, what percentages of our students are meeting our district-determined performance targets (proficiency/benchmarks)? Are those percentages acceptable?
18. As cohorts of students move through our district (third to fourth grade, fourth to fifth grade, and so on) does the percentage of those performing at or above grade level increase steadily?
19. Do the data indicate that the longer students go to our schools, the better they perform? If not, why not?
20. Is there an identifiable correlation between report card grades and student test scores? If so, what does it tell us?
21. What percent of our students were already exceeding set targets (proficiency/benchmarks)? What's happening for those students? How is their learning progressing?
22. What percent of our students reached the set targets (proficiency/benchmarks) by the end of this grading period? What's happening for them? How are we sustaining their progress?
23. What percent of students have not yet met the set targets (proficiency/benchmarks), but their progress would indicate they will make it by the end of the year? How do we know?
24. What percent of our students have not yet met the targets (proficiency/benchmarks) and their progress would indicate they are not likely to reach it by the end of the year? What's happening for them? How will we accelerate their learning to ensure adequate progress by the end of the year?
25. Is the achievement/progress consistent across buildings/grades?
26. Are our strategic plan's key performance indicators being met?

Digging Deeper into Equity

27. Are certain population or sub-groups graduating at lower rates than other groups? If so, why?
28. Are the assessments we rely upon differentiated to accommodate the cultural differences of our student population?
29. What is the racial and economic diversity of our student population?

30. Are there achievement gaps among population or sub-groups of students in our schools? If so, what are the gaps, if any, between students within the same groups? What does this tell us about the education provided to differing population groups of students?
31. Which students are dropping out of school?
32. Is there over- or under-representation of student population groups in district/school programs (e.g. Special Education or Advanced Placement) compared to the representation of total district/school population? If so, which groups in which programs are over- and/or under-represented?
33. Is the achievement/progress consistent across and within population groups of students (gender, ethnicity, SES, ELL, highly mobile, chronically absent, trauma-impacted, etc.)? Are certain groups significantly better or worse than others (achievement gaps)?
34. How does race, disability, economic status, etc. play a role?

Developing a Culture and Climate

35. How many assessments do our students typically take (beyond teacher-developed classroom assessments) each year? Does this vary by building/grade/subject?
36. What do we, the board, believe about all students' abilities to learn?
37. What are our board and district cultural norms (*the way we do things around here*), and do they support what we say we believe?
38. What does a HS diploma from our district/school mean? How is it different from a neighboring district? Should it be different?