Gatekeeping Audit Checklist

If our goal is to create problem solvers, not just calculators, then we have to ask—who gets to solve? Use this checklist with your PLC to examine how access to rigorous, meaningful mathematics is being offered (or unintentionally withheld). Go through it together during planning sessions, data meetings, or curriculum discussions.

1. Who Gets Access to Rich Tasks?

✓ Do we offer the same level of cognitive demand to all students, regardless of perceived ability?
✓ Are we adapting supports within the task rather than replacing the task with something simpler?
✓ Do we ever hold students back from a task until they've "mastered the basics"? Why?

2. What Beliefs Are Driving Our Decisions?

✓ Have we said or heard, "They're not ready for this"?
✓ Are we assuming that calculation ability equates to readiness for problem solving?
✓ Are we creating space for students to demonstrate understanding through models, drawings, or conversation—even if they struggle to compute?

3. How Are We Using Structure to Support Access?

✓ Are we modeling the structure of number stories consistently (using SoE, number lines, snap cubes)?
✓ Do we give students opportunities to make sense of the context before asking them to calculate?
✓ Are we using reading comprehension strategies as entry points into the math?

4. What Do Our Tasks and Talk Time Say About Equity?

✓ Are we modeling the structure of number stories consistently (using SoE, number lines, snap cubes)?
✓ Do we give students opportunities to make sense of the context before asking them to calculate?
✓ Are we using reading comprehension strategies as entry points into the math?

5. Are We Monitoring Access, Not Just Performance?

✓ Are we analyzing who participates—and how—in whole-group and small-group conversations?
✓ Are we providing supports that allow students to focus on thinking, not shortcuts to get an answer?
✓ Are our interventions focused on re-engaging students in reasoning, not just drilling procedures?

PLC Reflection Prompts

- Where might gatekeeping show up unintentionally in our team's practice?
- What shifts can we make to ensure every student has a way into the math, every day?
- How can we hold each other accountable to the belief that all kids are capable of thinking deeply?

Access to meaningful mathematics is not a reward for proficiency—it's the path to it.