# NCSI logo in blue and green National Center for Systemic ImprovementAssessing the Coherence of State General Supervision Systems: A Worksheet

## Introduction

The coherence of a general supervision system matters. In their 2016 book *Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts, and systems*, Fullan and Quinn define coherence as “a shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work” that exists in “the minds and actions of people individually and especially collectively” (pp. 2–3). Fullan and Quinn describe a framework of four drivers that promote systems coherence:

1. Focusing direction
2. Cultivating collaborative cultures
3. Deepening learning
4. Securing accountability

Leadership is at the center of this framework and therefore functions as a fifth driver. Leaders must find the right combination of these components to meet the varied needs of the complex systems that they lead.

A coherent state general supervision system will function in a coordinated and intentional fashion to achieve its ultimate aims—ensuring compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and improving student outcomes. The General Supervision System Coherence Self-Assessment Tool supports SEA staff to determine the current levels of coherence within its general supervision system, identify system strengths and opportunities for system improvement, and develop a triage plan to determine which areas the team feels are most pressing or important to achieving its coherence goals.

## General Supervision System Self-Assessment: Coherence Drivers

This self-assessment tool can be used by SEA staff who are responsible for, or involved with, the state’s general supervision system under the IDEA. The tool can be completed together as a team to reach consensus on scoring, or it can be completed individually, and scores can be shared, compared, and discussed to reach a consensus score. You may want to use an outside facilitator for this process and have a notetaker to capture the conversations. Please consider the following coherence drivers and assign points (3, 2, 1, or 0) to each reflection question. Then add the points together for a total score for each driver.

* 3 Points: I/We have addressed this issue/topic/question completely.
* 2 Points: I/We have participated in many meetings where we have discussed this issue/topic/question.
* 1 Point: I/We have begun to think about this issue/topic/question but more work or discussion in our state is needed.
* 0 Points: I/We have not considered this issue/topic/question yet.

Driver 1. Focus Direction

| Reflection Questions to Apply this Driver to State General Supervision Systems | Rating |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Has your state discussed the goals and purpose of your general supervision system? |  |
| 1. What are the goals of your state’s general supervision system? What vision is your system trying to achieve? |  |
| 1. If a vision for your general supervision system is in place, who was at the table when it was developed? Which educational partners (internal and external to the SEA) were involved? |  |
| 1. To what extent is the vision of your general supervision system aligned with the vision of the SEA? |  |
| 1. Where is the vision for your general supervision system documented? |  |
| 1. How has the vision for your general supervision system been shared and communicated within the SEA, local educational agencies (LEAs), Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs), families, and communities? |  |
| 1. How well is your general supervision system vision understood internally at the SEA and by external educational partners (LEAs, families, PTIs, legislators, etc.)? |  |
| **Overall Rating for This Driver (Total 21 Points)** |  |

Driver 2. Cultivate Collaborative Cultures

| Reflection Questions to Apply this Driver to State General Supervision Systems | Rating |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Is the culture of your general supervision system collaborative? How often do the leads of the various components of your general supervision system meet, share information or data, or work together? Is that collaboration effective? |  |
| 1. How well does information flow between the components of your general supervision system?  * Are data shared between monitoring, technical assistance/professional development, dispute resolution, fiscal, State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report or SPP/APR, etc.?) * Does the data generated by one component of the system (e.g., the SPP/APR) inform the implementation of other components of the system (e.g., monitoring or technical assistance)? * Do leaders of each system component consider the impact of decisions made about one aspect of the system on other parts of the system? |  |
| 1. What is the nature of your SEA’s relationship with LEAs? To what extent does your state’s general supervision system reflect an orientation of partnership and collaboration with LEAs? |  |
| 1. Would you characterize your state’s general supervision system as one that values continuous learning and improvement? At the SEA level? At the LEA level? In what ways does your SEA model learning and continuous improvement for LEAs? |  |
| 1. Is the culture within the SEA collaborative? What degree of collaboration exists between your general supervision system and other divisions within your SEA (e.g., school improvement, assessment)? |  |
| **Overall Rating for This Driver (Total 15 Points)** |  |

Driver 3. Deepen Learning

| Reflection Questions to Apply this Driver to State General Supervision Systems | Rating |
| --- | --- |
| 1. How clearly have the goals of your general supervision system been communicated to LEAs? Do all LEAs have the same understanding of the expectations? |  |
| 1. What technical assistance, professional development, or support does your state offer LEAs (either directly or indirectly)?  * How is this support aligned with the accountability requirements of your system (e.g., LEA determinations, risk assessments, monitoring)? * Are technical assistance, professional development, and support opportunities available to LEAs for each of the expectations in your state accountability system (e.g., LEA determinations, risk assessments, monitoring)? |  |
| 1. To what extent are state support efforts like the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) or the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) aligned to your accountability mechanisms (e.g., LEA determinations, risk assessments, monitoring)? |  |
| 1. How does your SEA assess LEA needs? |  |
| 1. Is your state’s support for LEAs differentiated based on district needs? What data are used to determine this differentiation (e.g., SPP/APR indicator data, fiscal data, dispute resolution data, etc.)?  * What technical assistance, professional development, or support is offered to all LEAs (universal)? To some LEAs (targeted)? To the LEAs with the highest needs (intensive)? |  |
| 1. What professional development and learning opportunities are available to SEA staff responsible for general supervision to support them to be effective in their roles and achieve the system’s goals? |  |
| **Overall Rating for This Driver (Total 18 Points)** |  |

Driver 4. Secure Accountability

| Reflection Questions to Apply this Driver to State General Supervision Systems | Rating |
| --- | --- |
| 1. To what extent does your state’s accountability mechanisms (e.g., LEA determinations, risk assessments, monitoring) align with your system’s overall goals and vision? Where is there a mismatch? |  |
| 1. How well are your system’s accountability expectations communicated to LEAs? (Consider policy/guidance, technical assistance/professional development, etc.) |  |
| 1. To what extent are the LEA support, TA/PD, and capacity-building opportunities offered by the state aligned with the accountability requirements (e.g., LEA determinations, risk assessments, monitoring)? |  |
| 1. How much of your system accountability is externally driven versus internally driven? What other steps can you take to increase internal accountability to achieve your system’s goals? At the SEA level? At the LEA level? |  |
| **Overall Rating for This Driver (Total 9 Points)** |  |

Driver 5. Foster Leadership at All Levels of the System

| Reflection Questions to Apply this Driver to State General Supervision Systems | Rating |
| --- | --- |
| 1. What does leadership at the state level look like for meeting the goals of your general supervision system? Does leadership rest with one person? Is it shared across individuals and teams? |  |
| 1. How can you deepen your state team’s commitment to achieving the goals of your system? |  |
| 1. What steps has your state taken to build ownership at the LEA level for achieving the goals of your general supervision systems? |  |
| 1. What opportunities are LEAs given to lead? How often does the state identify, celebrate, and elevate successful practices at the local level? |  |
| **Overall Rating for This Driver (Total 12 Points)** |  |

## General Supervision System Self-Assessment: Identifying Next Steps

Please look back at your overall rating on the self-assessment and then consider where each driver falls within each category of Excellent, Good, and Needs Improvement.

| Overall Scores | Excellent  68–75 Points | Good  50–67 Points | Needs Improvement  0–49 Points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Driver 1. Focus Direction  21 Points | Excellent  17–21 Points | Good  10–16 Points | Needs Improvement  0–9 Points |
| Driver 2. Cultivate Collaborative Cultures  15 Points | Excellent  12–15 Points | Good  8–11 Points | Needs Improvement  0–7 Points |
| Driver 3. Deepen Learning  18 Points | Excellent  14–18 Points | Good  9–13 Points | Needs Improvement  0–8 Points |
| Driver 4. Secure Accountability  9 Points | Excellent  7–9 Points | Good  4–6 Points | Needs Improvement  0–3 Points |
| Driver 5. Foster Leadership at All Levels of the System  12 Points | Excellent  9–12 Points | Good  5–8 Points | Needs Improvement  0–4 Points |

Reflect on the big picture. From this self-assessment, which drivers represent strengths for your system? Which drivers represent challenges and opportunities for improved coherence?

For any drivers rated *Excellent*, congratulations! Be sure to capture your responses to the reflection questions as part of your state’s overall general supervision documentation efforts.

For any drivers characterized as *Good* or *Needs Improvement*, start with the reflection questions in the section that gave your team pause and triage to determine which ones your team feels are most pressing or important to achieving your coherence goals. Once you have a list, begin the process of determining approaches and strategies that are responsive to the stated questions. Please feel free to use or adapt the template below. Be sure to capture your state’s decisions to further document your system. The National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) is happy to support you and your team in this process.

| Driver | Reflection Question | Possible Strategies, Approaches | Identified Next Step(s) | Point Person(s) | Timeline | Resources Needed |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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NCSI hopes that the drivers and reflection questions in this resource are helpful in your state’s pursuit of greater general supervision systems coherence.

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