

The Instructional Coherence Diagnostic

A Leadership Framework for Assessing Organizational Instructional Alignment

What This Diagnostic Is For

This brief provides a framework for leadership teams to assess how coherent instruction actually is across their building or district. It is not a rubric. It is not an evaluation tool. It is a conversation starter designed to help your team see the organizational conditions that are either supporting or undermining instructional alignment.

Too often, schools define coherence as compliance. Everyone using the same curriculum. Everyone following the same pacing guide. But coherence is not about sameness. It is about whether the organizational conditions exist for every teacher to deliver instruction at a consistent level of quality, and whether leadership has built the infrastructure to sustain that consistency over time.

The Five Conditions

Shared Instructional Expectations

Does every teacher in your building know what effective instruction looks like here? Not in theory, but in specific, observable terms that leadership has defined and communicated? If you asked five different teachers what the school's instructional priorities are, would you get the same answer?

Feedback Alignment

When teachers receive feedback from walkthroughs, coaching sessions, and evaluations, does that feedback point in the same direction? Or do teachers hear different things from different sources? Misaligned feedback is one of the most common and most invisible sources of instructional inconsistency.

Coaching Integration

Is coaching embedded in the organizational instructional architecture, or does it operate as a parallel system? When coaches work with teachers, does the work connect to building priorities, walkthrough look-fors, and leadership expectations? Or is coaching an island?

Leadership Consistency

Do leaders behave consistently around instructional priorities? When a principal says instruction matters, do their daily decisions, their time allocation, and their meeting agendas reflect that? Teachers read leadership behavior far more accurately than leadership language.

Implementation Follow Through

When a school adopts an instructional priority, does it stay in place long enough to produce results? Or does it get replaced by the next initiative before teachers have internalized the first one? Sustainable coherence requires organizational discipline around fewer priorities, implemented more deeply.

How to Use This Framework

Bring this to your next leadership team meeting. Ask each member to independently rate your organization on each of the five conditions using a simple scale: strong, developing, or underdeveloped. Then compare responses. The gaps between how different leaders perceive these conditions are often more revealing than the ratings themselves.

Most teams find they are strong in one or two areas and significantly underdeveloped in the others. That gap is where the real work begins.