

## Report on the SICI workshop on Sept. (24<sup>th</sup>), 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> 2025 in Nuremberg



Staatsinstitut für Schulqualität  
und Bildungsforschung

**SICI** The Standing International  
Conference of Inspectorates  
Better Inspection, Better Learning

# Welcome

SICI-Workshop in Nuremberg  
September 25–26, 2025

The essential role of inspection in a  
dynamic educational environment:  
challenges, opportunities and impact.



## Introduction

On September 24th, 25th and 26th, 2025 the first SICI workshop ever set up by Bavaria as host took place in Nuremberg on behalf of the Bavarian State Institute for School Quality and Educational Research (ISB) and the SICI Executive Committee.

In line with the SICI theme for 2025, the title of the workshop was chosen: ‘The essential role of inspection in a dynamic educational environment: challenges, opportunities and impact’. It included presentations and group activities on two main aspects: Measuring and ensuring relevance, impact and usefulness of external school inspection (focusing on requirements, definitions, functions/who do we want to reach, methods, etc.) on the one hand and exchanging and discussing examples of good practice on the other.

The aim of this workshop was to provide a worthy framework for gaining valuable and inspiring insights in these specific aspects of external evaluation and school inspection, and to provide insight into the specifics of the Bavarian way of life and mentality as well. Overall, this workshop represented the goal of promoting international exchange and understanding between nations and bringing the vision of the European idea to life.

Almost 50 colleagues from 25 nations (Belgium/Dutch-, German-, French-speaking community, Bulgaria, Cayman Islands, Czech republic, Estonia, Georgia, Germany/Bavaria, Germany/North Rhine Westphalia, Ireland, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Portugal-Madeira, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Spain-Basque Country, Sweden, UK-England, UK-Northern Ireland, UK-Wales) joined the workshop on site and some more (e.g. Austria) attending online.

### September, 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Pre-workshop cultural program: Guided city tour

The day before the official start of the workshop, a city tour was offered for early arriving participants: Despite nasty weather and heavy rain a group of members joined the tour through the picturesque medieval old town of Nuremberg and in this course were provided with interesting information by their guide on the city’s various roles in the course of the history of Germany and Bavaria. The tour started at the entrance of the venue NC Collection Nürnberg City and ended at the charming restaurant “Zum Albrecht Dürer-Haus”. Here - just opposite the famous Dürer-Haus, which in former times had been the residence of one of the most famous artists in the Renaissance – the group had dinner together and enjoyed meeting each other again or for the first time in the context of a SICI workshop.

## September, 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Day 1 of the workshop

On September, 25<sup>th</sup> the workshop officially started with the registration and with providing the attendants with their workshop kit containing the program, information leaflets and welcome gifts including a package of original Schmidt Nuremberg gingerbread.

The workshop was introduced with a musical welcome greeting, offering a set of traditional songs on trumpet and Styrian accordion to the audience from all over Europe and beyond and provided a taste of Bavarian musical culture to them.

This fresh performance led over to a set of welcome speeches, starting with EC member and General Secretary of SICI, followed by the national coordinator of Bavaria and organizer of the workshop. A rough outline was drawn from the central aims of the workshop to their connection to this years' SICI theme as well as to the motto of SICI: Better inspection – better learning. Both were also welcoming the participants on site and online and were wishing all members an inspiring workshop and a pleasant stay in Bavaria. The Bavarian Minister of State for Education and Culture had provided a video message, wishing all participants a fruitful and inspiring exchange of thoughts

### The Bavarian Education System

In the course of the first presentation, information was provided regarding basic data on the State's expenditure on education and the structure of the Bavarian school system and the role and various tasks of the Institute of School Quality and Educational Research. Another issue was the situation of external evaluation in Bavaria with its specific features, positive aspects but also the challenges the Bavarian measures of Quality assurance and development have been facing in the past and are still struggling with up to now. As a main factor the lack of coherence and consistency among all levels of the school and education system was emphasised in this course.

### Development and Status Quo of External School Evaluation in Bavaria

In the course of the next presentation the group perceived insight in the development of external evaluation in Bavaria which had been part of the Bavarian education system - except only one interruption in 2017 - almost constantly and mandatorily since its invention in 2003. It was only at the end of the year 2024 when the Ministry of Education and Culture announced that external evaluation was to be suspended and its concept to be fundamentally redefined and developed into a new format. What had been pointed out at the time of the decision already were the main aims and key objectives of external evaluation: Maintaining the mandatory nature of external evaluation, increasing the efficiency while reducing the burden on schools, increasing the concrete benefits for school development and the schools' self-directed development work and a more closely interlinking of school development and monitoring. The core message of the presentation were the central key questions arising from these aspects and thus were stated to be the basis of the forthcoming process of developing a new concept and being of fundamental relevance to be answered precisely before getting

into action: What precisely is meant by efficiency? What by concrete benefits (or better effectiveness) regarding school development and the schools' self-directed work? What are the explicit aims of external evaluation? What indicators can be found/defined to find out if or to what extent these defined aims are being reached? What methods and instruments are suitable to measure the impact of external evaluation? What kind of data is needed? For whom? What can/must be done to increase data literacy? How can systematic monitoring of results of external evaluation look like? (How) can it be interlinked with school development in the course of one concept of school evaluation?

Consequently, these questions had provided the baseline along which the title and the program of the workshop had been set up and thus also formed the centre of the impulses the workshop was aiming to give and to receive. The participants' reactions, statements and questions following these introductory presentations already made clear that the topic was of great concern for the group.

### **1st Keynote address: The Learning School System**

The first key note, provided online by the author of the recently published book "The Learning School System" which in Germany currently sets standards on the field of successful school development, gave insight in her work: Shared strategic goals in a learning school system and the relevance of building up a common understanding of data-informed (in contrary to the term 'data-driven') school(system)development in line with precisely defined meta-goals were emphasized as factors of central relevance. Coherence in this course was meant to be reached by means of combining top-down and bottom-up approaches, of focusing on developing professional trust and cooperative professionalism.

After this broad approach to the issue and a lively phase of Q&A, the topic narrowed on the first main aspect of the workshop, being the most complex issue of measuring the impact of school inspection, referring to the aspects from the introductory speeches as well as to the first keynote and corresponding with each other regarding structure and content as well.

### **Joint presentation**

#### **#1: Making School Supervision Measurable:**

#### **The Policy Theory Behind the Impact**

In the course of the presentation the group gained insight in the ambitious work of research conducted by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education, which is focusing on the relevance of a defined policy theory in order to receive information on the impact of school inspection as well as on key purposes which have to be defined. Furthermore – tackling the aspect of coherence – information was provided regarding the three levels of supervision, including the education system, the school boards and the individual schools

## **#2: Measuring Impact of Inspection Work: The Case of Flanders (What Aspects of Inspection Work Really Do Matter?)**

Originating from the key question ‘How do we know if inspection actually makes a difference?’ the way led to the need of defining a clear purpose of measuring the impact in relation to the purposes of Flemish inspection which are accountability, improvement and liaison. In this course the challenges in measuring the impact of school inspection were part of the presentation as well as information on the general framework and the impact questionnaire.

As central lessons learned the presentation was summed up as follows:

Measuring the impact of school inspection is complex but essential.

Quality of the feedback carries most weight in awareness and change process.

Not every recommendation leads to immediate measurable change; sometimes cultural or procedural change comes first.

Continuous monitoring is the key

Accounting for internal realities such as feasibility, staff workload and absenteeism is important, too.

A mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides the clearest picture.

After a phase of Q&A referring to the content of the joint presentation, participants had the opportunity for common reflection and discussion on the aspects of measuring relevance, impact and usefulness of external school inspection: requirements, definitions, functions/who do we want to reach, methods,... in small groups and presenting their results and findings for the whole group of participants.

### **Cultural program (optional): Tour of the Duerer-Museum**

The cultural program offered optionally between the workshop and the gala dinner, was a guided tour of the Duerer-Museum. Due to the small size of the museum – located in the former residence of one of the most popular and famous artists of the Renaissance – the group was divided in two and the tour was done twice at staggered times.

### **Gala dinner**

The gala dinner included an informal part offering the chance of socialising, talking and having a good time together, including singing and dancing to the live music.

## **September, 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025: Day 2 of the workshop**

### **2nd Keynote address: From Regulatory Delivery to Impact**

The second day of the workshop started with another keynote, setting a spotlight on the relevance of rules and the best way of their implementation in order to develop governance among all levels of actors. The basis of the presentation was formed by the OECD publication “Best Practice for Regulatory - Enforcement and Inspections”. In the course of the

presentation, the focus lay on how rules and their delivery can result in expected impact and also set a spotlight on the fact that rules are not magical, yet their delivery is essential. Furthermore the differences between process-oriented and outcomes-oriented regulation were pointed at and the advantages of the latter in order to achieve impact was focused on. More important aspects were the need to achieve compliance among all actors of the system, the benefits of a responsive, agile, human-centered, data-driven and risk-based regulation, the alignment with outcomes and goals and eventually the relevance of the distinction between effectiveness and efficiency. As a conclusion served the impulse, that evaluating impact is not the end of the story but the start of improvement.

Following this key note a phase of Q&A as well as a phase of reflection and discussion in small groups offered the opportunity to dive deeper into the issue of how to maintain and develop the relevance of external school inspection. After this group discussion the main results and insights were shared by the various groups as well.

### **Round table discussion**

In order to gather expertise from different members regarding good practice of both effective and efficient external school inspection/evaluation, a round table discussion offered a rich source of experience and successful approaches. In the course of the tandem-moderated discussion, SICI members from five nations shared their expertise with the whole group and presented their specific main challenges and ways to overcome them with new approaches in maintaining and developing the relevance of external school inspection/evaluation

### **Welcome to The Hague**

The final bullet point on the agenda was a presentation 'Welcome to The Hague', providing central information on the forthcoming GA in November, organised by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education.

After that presentation and a short speech of thank you of Bavaria's national coordinator and organizer of the workshop to all participants of SICI, to everyone having been of help and support regarding organisation and realisation of the event, the workshop was officially closed by representatives of the SICI Executive Committee. Teddy bears as a souvenir from Nuremberg, also known as the city of toys, were handed to all participants who had been actively involved in the program.

After having lunch together at the venue, the workshop was over and participants were either on their way home or took the chance to explore the region of Nuremberg or even the most famous Oktoberfest in Munich.

To sum it up: The SICI workshop was a great experience and one of the highlights of the year for the ISB. Not only did it offer the opportunity to welcome large number of international

guests and to represent Bavaria as the hosting nation, but also was this workshop a source of impulse and ideas for the forthcoming time of developing a new concept of quality assurance and development based on the idea of a school inspection/evaluation which is of great benefit for its recipients, namely the schools, school principals, teachers and most of all the students.