

Turning Impact into Advantage: Aligning Business Strategy with Student Outcomes

PART II

FROM RESEARCH TO RESULTS: HOW EVIDENCE ANCHORS EFFECTIVE OBCS

A 3-Part Resource for K-12 Provider Leaders in
Finance, Partnerships, and Strategy



From Research to Results: How Evidence Anchors Effective OBCs

How can a strong evidence base boost program confidence and increase revenue predictability?

The key is building operations that align to student success, because when you deliver for schools, student growth follows.

This article is the second in a three-part series on outcomes based contracting, co-authored by Maycomb Capital and The Center for Outcomes Based Contracting, with contributions from Air Tutors, Chapter One, Curriculum Associates, EdSolutions, Gates Foundation, Littera, and OWL Ventures.

This series is designed for senior leaders at educational provider organizations working in strategy, impact, partnerships and finance, focusing on aligning revenue models, growth strategies and organizational priorities with measurable student outcomes.

At the heart of every successful OBC is evidence that a program improves student learning. This evidence can range from pilot data to rigorous third-party studies.

Understanding where your offerings fall on this continuum and strengthening your position builds partner confidence and supports more predictable revenue.

The evidence continuum—from pilot data to rigorous studies—that drives confidence may include:

- Student achievement metrics aligned with district or state reporting
- Performance trends from similar implementations
- Internal pre-post data showing documented growth
- Studies meeting ESSA tiers of evidence or similar standards
- Rigorous third-party evaluations (RCTs, quasi-experimental designs)

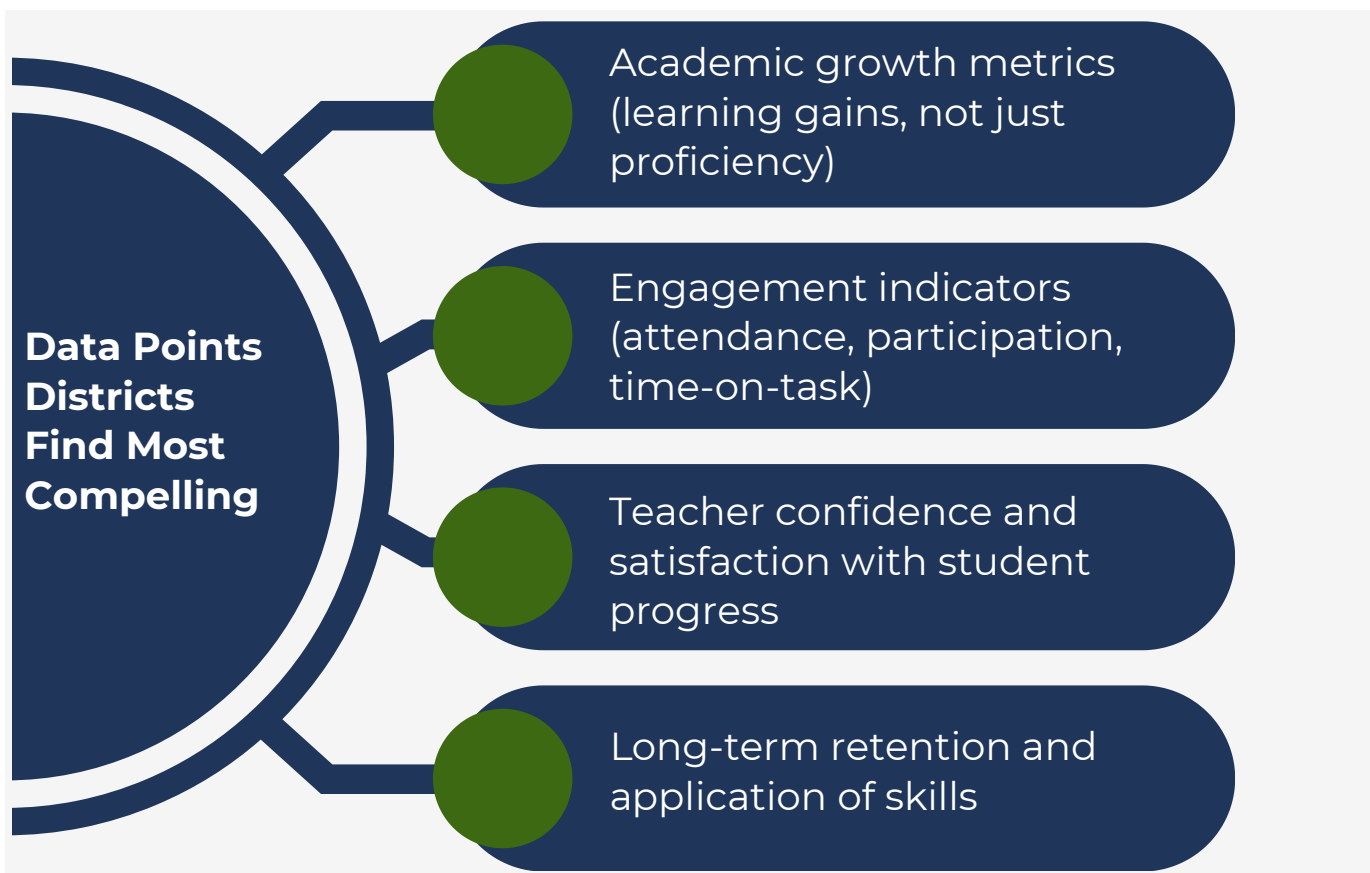
From Research to Results: How Evidence Anchors Effective OBCs

Gathering Evidence: Building Your Collection Framework

Outcomes based contracts establish a foundation for clear, ongoing performance management by aligning provider “customer success” metrics with those tracked by districts. For organizations with limited evidence, the priority is to collect it systematically and consistently to build credibility over time.

Evidence-First Starting Point

1. Document baseline student performance before program implementation using meaningful outcome metrics aligned with both district priorities and state accountability frameworks.
2. Capture detailed implementation data documenting program delivery compared to existing recommendations.
3. Identify and acknowledge other factors and conditions that could influence outcomes.
4. Collect stakeholder feedback from teachers, administrators, and students.
5. Track and report outcomes against with baseline student performance (not just significance and/or effect size).
6. Analyze and share results transparently including limitations and contextual factors.



From Research to Results:

How Evidence Anchors Effective OBCs

While independent validation can enhance credibility, it is not a prerequisite for getting started with OBC. Many early-stage and innovative providers make a strong case using internal data that is clear, relevant, and focused on student impact.

What matters most is whether the evidence supports the organization's value proposition: the outcomes it aims to achieve, the students it serves, and the conditions for success. A solid evidence base builds trust, informs pricing, and increases confidence in earning the full contract value.

Outcomes based contracts can also help generate new evidence. For many providers, participating in an OBC strengthens data systems, refines understanding of success conditions, and produces results that support future growth.

"In our run of the mill implementation, if the leader of that implementation leaves the district mid-year, the implementation tends to spiral out of control a little bit. In this situation... the good stress put on the implementation by the OBC, it was actually the opposite."

**- Billy Warden, VP of Customer Success,
Amira Learning**

When providers communicate these dosage expectations clearly and align them with evidence, they empower district partners to plan effectively and create the right conditions for student success. This communication must include specifying how dosage will be tracked for each student using clear units (e.g., average minutes per week, total lessons completed) and defined timeframes over which progress will be measured (e.g., weekly, monthly, quarterly).

It's also critical that providers commit to sharing clear reports and data needed to monitor dosage at the student, teacher/classroom, school, and district levels with appropriate granularity and frequency for each audience.

This level of clarity also helps providers stay focused on the inputs that matter most, reduce ambiguity, and build lasting, outcome-driven partnerships.

Implementation Success: How Defining Dosage and Mutual Accountability Leads to More Student Outcomes

Outcomes based contracts require more than strong program design. They depend on effective execution. When dosage and implementation expectations are well defined, providers and districts can align efforts, reduce risk, and focus on achieving student results. This shared clarity transforms contracts into blueprints for implementation.

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Risk Mitigation Through Implementation Clarity

Some contracts encounter road bumps not because programs are ineffective, but because the necessary conditions for student success are not consistently in place. Gaps in capacity, coordination, or communication can delay or prevent the achievement of intended outcomes.

By identifying these dependencies early, providers can set realistic expectations with districts, reduce ambiguity, and protect the integrity of the contract. This clarity helps ensure that students receive the full benefit of the program as designed.

When success relies on joint execution focused on student needs, the contract should reflect shared ownership of those responsibilities.

Benefits for All Stakeholders

- *For Providers:* Reduce risk and implementation focus on what's most essential for student success
- *For Districts:* Provide an operational readiness roadmap—turning contracts into collaboration tools for student benefit, not just compliance mechanisms
- *For Schools:* Create clear program expectations of what needs to happen at the building and classroom levels to meet student learning outcomes

Looking Forward: Evidence as Strategic Asset

With OBC, evidence is not just a compliance requirement; it is a strategic advantage. When providers clearly communicate the research-backed dosage requirements and success conditions and align implementation with measurable outcomes, they build trust, reduce risk, and create the conditions for lasting partnerships.

This is a powerful moment for providers to lead. Whether working with early-stage data or a mature research base, the goal remains the same: inspire confidence through clarity and deliver results that matter.

[Additional Resources](#)

Also in this series:

[Part I: Aligning Business Strategy with Student Outcomes](#)

[Part III: Financial and Operational Alignment \(Making OBCs Work for Your Business\)](#)

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