



The Center for
Outcomes Based Contracting
at the Southern Education Foundation

OUTCOMES BASED CONTRACTING FOR CURRICULUM-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Feasibility Analysis and Recommendations

OBC.SOUTHERNEDUCATION.ORG

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Southern Education Foundation partnered with Rivet Education to study the feasibility of using outcomes based contracting (OBC) for curriculum-based professional learning (CBPL) services to strengthen the implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM). **The study found that it is feasible to pilot OBC for some types of CBPL, and there is mutual interest from both districts and providers.** OBC requires districts and PL providers to proactively identify and align on goals and desired outcomes at the start of the partnership; this intentionality, coupled with the mutual accountability and collaboration required to make OBC work, presents an opportunity to strengthen CBPL delivery and HQIM implementation.

Key Terms:

CBPL: Curriculum-based professional learning

HQIM: High-quality instructional materials

OBC: Outcomes based contracting

The purpose of this report is to:

- Highlight how OBC can strengthen CBPL to support the implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) and ultimately improve student outcomes
- Build knowledge of CBPL and its important role in supporting HQIM implementation
- Offer recommendations on how to develop outcomes based contracts that include structures to overcome challenges that have impacted districts and providers in previous CBPL contracts

The **recommendations** in this report are grounded in OBC feasibility criteria - what must be true for OBC to work - and **how OBC can move CBPL from its current state to its desired state.**

- **CBPL Types for OBC Pilot:** Pilot OBC for CBPL contracts that provide Initial Implementation and/or Ongoing Implementation Support for Teachers.
- **Understanding of CBPL and HQIM Implementation:** Support districts in understanding the HQIM implementation journey and procuring CBPL to achieve specific outcomes aligned with this work.
- **Measuring CBPL Outcomes:** Leverage Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation to identify clear outcome-metric pairs grounded in the research.
- **Minimum Service Requirements:** Develop clear minimum service requirements for all parties to create the conditions for effective CBPL.
- **Contract Development:** Develop and structure contracts intentionally - and with input from teachers - to build buy-in and achieve both short- and long-term outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Purpose of this Report

Since 2021, the Outcomes Based Contracting Initiative at the Southern Education Foundation has supported school districts in establishing contracts with academic service providers in which a substantial portion of the payment is contingent upon meeting agreed-upon outcomes. To date, the OBC Initiative has primarily supported districts in developing outcomes based contracts (OBCs) for high-impact tutoring and ed tech interventions. In both of these spaces, districts have leveraged OBC to improve the likelihood of achieving student outcomes. One of the major celebrations from participating districts and providers is that OBC serves as a powerful mechanism to improve implementation.¹ Historically, these interventions have had limited efficacy at scale, despite the research base on their potential effectiveness. While it remains critical to continue the work of OBC in these areas, interventions such as tutoring and ed tech do not directly impact the tier-one instruction that students receive. Strengthening the core instruction that students receive daily is key to improving student outcomes.

EdReports estimates that in the 2021-22 school year, districts spent nearly \$19B of ESSER funds² on instructional materials to support accelerating student learning. Furthermore, states such as Florida, Texas, and California are rapidly approaching curriculum adoption cycles that will continue to bring new HQIM into districts and classrooms. The research is clear: when students are taught using high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), they learn more and perform better.³ Yet, there is a common preconception that simply handing teachers a box containing their HQIM will increase teacher performance and student outcomes. Research increasingly shows that the improvements in student learning resulting from HQIM can be greatly enhanced if the instructional materials are paired with curriculum-based professional learning (CBPL): professional learning that supports and strengthens how HQIM is used for instruction.⁴ See the [CBPL section](#) below for a more comprehensive description.

Without effective CBPL to strengthen the implementation of high-quality instructional materials and build teacher skill and knowledge, districts' investments in instructional materials are unlikely to change student outcomes. Districts are now eager to understand if OBC can help them close implementation gaps that have hampered the potential of HQIM. Understanding the challenges that have impacted districts and providers in previous CBPL engagements is key to developing outcomes based contracts that include structures to overcome these barriers.

The Outcomes Based Contracting Initiative partnered with [Rivet Education](#), a consulting firm focused on curriculum implementation, to explore the feasibility of K-12 school districts using an OBC model to procure CBPL services from organizations that provide professional learning. Specifically, this report intends to:

- Highlight how OBC can strengthen CBPL to support the implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) and ultimately improve student outcomes;
- Build knowledge of CBPL and its important role in supporting HQIM implementation; and
- Offer recommendations on how to develop OBCs that include structures to overcome challenges that have impacted districts and providers in previous CBPL contracts.

The primary objective of this study is to highlight how OBC can strengthen CBPL and HQIM implementation, ultimately resulting in meaningful student outcomes.

Note: This report is exclusively intended to explore how OBC can strengthen the implementation of curriculum-based professional learning delivered by external providers. While it discusses teacher and student outcomes and performance measures, this report does not address or suggest that districts explore pay for performance or other teacher evaluation and incentive practices.

1 [Outcomes-Based Contracting for Tutoring: Insights and Recommendations](#) (NSSA, 2024)

2 [EdReports: State of the Instructional Materials Market](#) (2022)

3 [What we teach matters: how quality curriculum improves student outcomes](#) (Steiner, Magee, Jensen, 2018)

4 [High-quality curriculum and system improvement](#) (Steiner, Magee, Jensen, 2019)

METHODOLOGY

The findings and recommendations in this report represent insights gathered from:

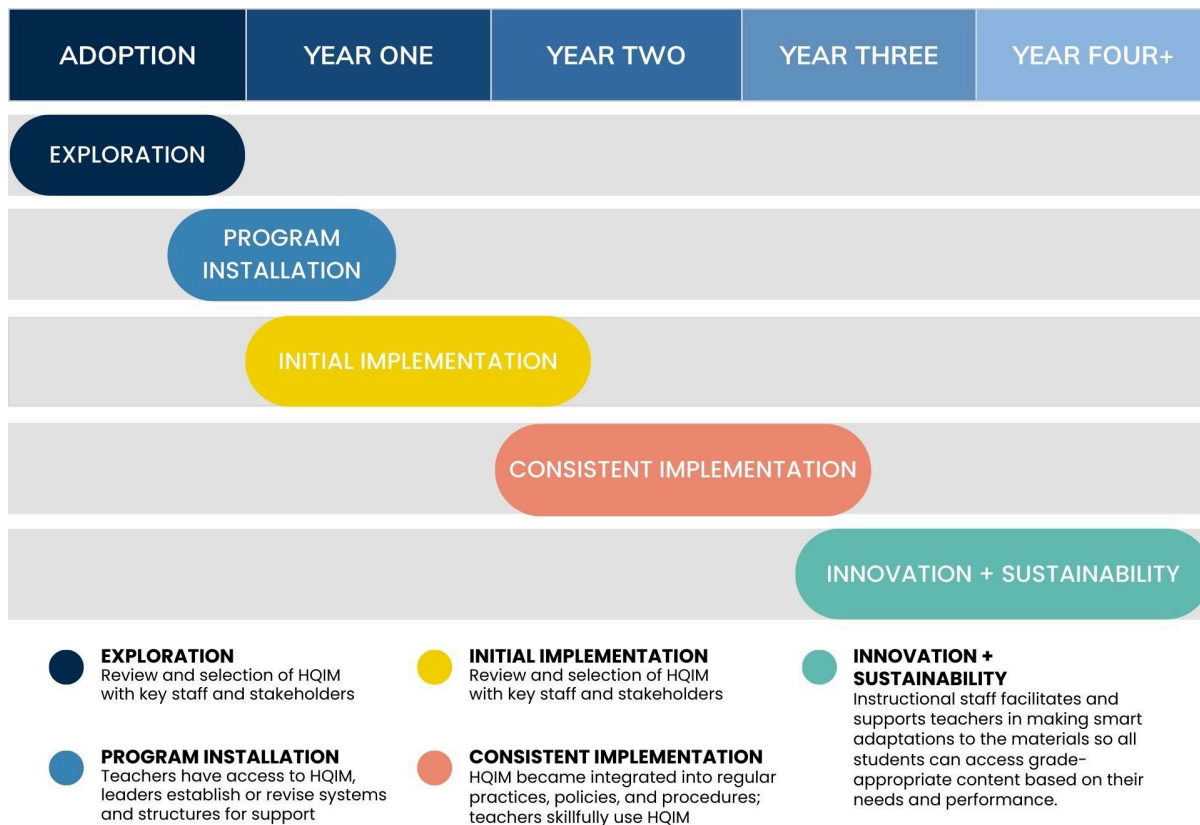
- In-depth interviews with eight district leaders, nine professional learning providers, research institutions, labor representatives, and state education agencies in April and May 2024;
- CBPL research conducted by Rivet Education and other researchers; and
- A synthesis of data from Rivet Education’s review of professional learning organizations for the [Professional Learning Partner Guide](#) (PLPG).

The district leaders interviewed for the study represent a cross-section of geographies and student demographics, all using high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) or those rated green on EdReports or their state-approved adoption list. The professional learning providers represent those featured in the PLPG and are certified to provide high-quality CBPL services. This includes HQIM publishers as well as professional learning organizations of diverse sizes and for-profit statuses.

UNDERSTANDING CURRICULUM-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Successful implementation of HQIM is a [multi-year journey](#) that requires strategic planning and sustained effort from educators at all system levels. Implementation science suggests that people move through a series of non-linear but relatively predictable stages when implementing a new program, including new instructional materials. The chart below documents that journey; CBPL is interwoven into each phase.

Figure 1. The Five Phases of Curriculum Implementation



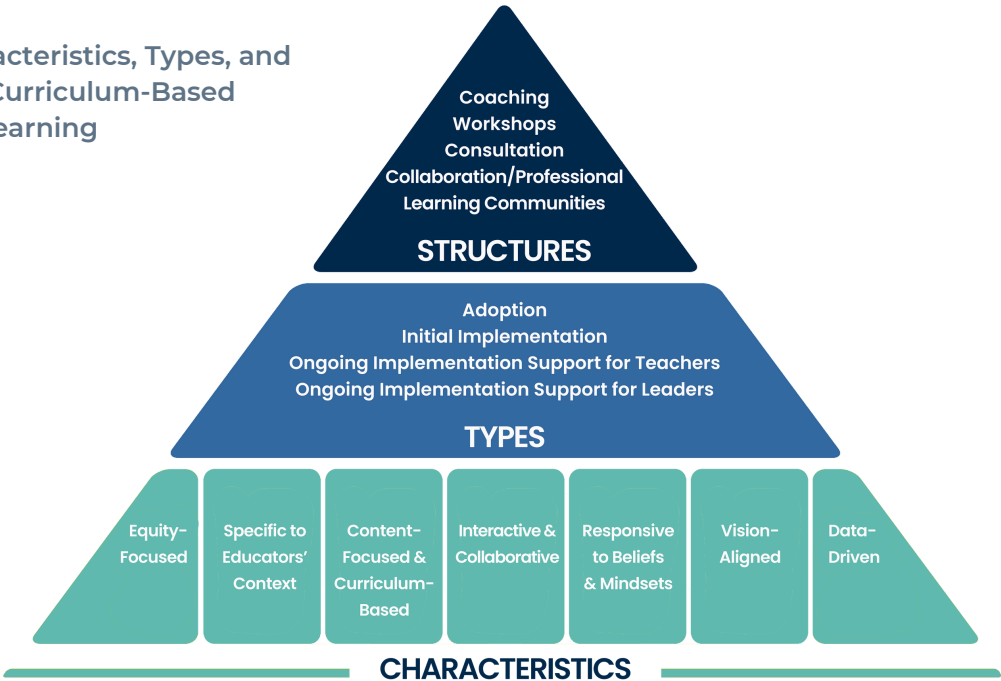
In 2020, Carnegie Corporation released [The Elements](#), a challenge paper on curriculum-based professional learning. It emphasizes that educators need support to ensure that students are reaping the maximum benefits of HQIM, especially as these materials often require a shift in teaching and a daunting amount of work for educators.” With the new curricula, we have handed teachers a tool much more complicated than any smartphone, one that holds great promise but requires complex behavior changes,” wrote Thomas Kane in a report about adoption of more-rigorous curricula.⁵

CBPL is professional learning that supports and strengthens instruction using HQIM. It focuses on what to teach and how to teach it within the context of the instructional materials teachers use daily in their classrooms. It goes beyond the initial product training associated with HQIM unboxing to provide teachers and leaders with the ongoing support needed to use HQIM skillfully.

Rivet Education [defines](#) CBPL as:

- **Content-focused and curriculum-based:** Deepens educators’ understanding of what to teach and how to teach it within the context of teachers’ HQIM.
- **Specific to educators’ context:** Customized to educators’ roles, subject areas, grade levels/bands, and skill levels.
- **Equity-focused:** Supports educator practices to ensure all students, regardless of their background or context, can engage in rigorous, grade-level tasks. It maintains high expectations, addresses disparities, and promotes inclusivity.
- **Data-driven:** Supports educators in collecting, analyzing, and using data from various sources, including HQIM-embedded student work and assessments, to determine how to meet students’ learning needs or support teachers with their implementation of the HQIM.
- **Addresses beliefs and mindsets:** Attends to educator motivation, mindset, and implicit bias; involves courageous conversations that challenge negative assumptions about what students are capable of.
- **Interactive and Collaborative:** Provides opportunities for educators to see models, practice skills, review data, engage with tasks from the HQIM, and collaborate with peers.
- **Vision aligned:** Supports educators with connecting the HQIM and goals for teachers and students to a vision for excellent, equitable instruction.

Figure 2. Characteristics, Types, and Structures of Curriculum-Based Professional Learning



Rivet defines four types of CBPL: Adoption; Initial Implementation; Ongoing Implementation Support for Teachers; and Ongoing Implementation Support for Leaders. Each type is tailored to specific audiences and stages of HQIM implementation. The intersection of the HQIM implementation phase and CBPL type and structure will influence the feasibility of pursuing OBC, particularly during pilot work.

5 [Don't Give Up on Curriculum Reform Just Yet](#) (Kane, Steiner, 2019)

Table 1. Supporting Curriculum Implementation with CBPL

Supporting Curriculum Implementation with CBPL				
Types of CBPL	Implementation Phase	Typical Timeline	Purpose	Delivery Methods
Adoption	Exploration	Year 0	Supports schools and school systems in developing and executing a plan for HQIM selection	• Consultation • Workshops
Initial Implementation	Program Installation Initial Implementation	Years 1-2	Equips teachers and leaders with their initial understanding of the HQIM and prepares them to implement it with integrity from day one of instruction	• Workshops • Coaching • Collaboration
Ongoing Implementation Support for Teachers	Consistent Implementation Innovation & Sustainability	Years 2+	Deepens teachers' initial understanding of how to implement the HQIM by providing opportunities for teachers to reflect on their implementation and plan for upcoming instruction	• Workshops • Coaching • Collaboration
Ongoing Implementation Support for Leaders	All phases but Exploration	Year 1 and beyond	Supports leaders in identifying and implementing the enabling conditions and resources required for a successful implementation of the HQIM	• Coaching • Consultations • Workshops

How is CBPL different from traditional PL?

While \$36 billion is spent annually on professional learning in the United States, only one in three teachers find it effective.⁶ Teachers want active, ongoing, and collaborative professional learning led by an expert and grounded in the materials they are using in their classrooms each day. However, traditional teacher professional development often takes the form of a lecture-heavy workshop disconnected from the day-to-day lessons teachers lead. By contrast, CBPL is more aligned with what teachers desire, providing active and ongoing learning focused on improving the rigor and impact of teachers' lessons. It calls for six major shifts.⁷

Figure 3. Shifting from Traditional Professional Development to Curriculum-Based Professional Learning

FROM TRADITIONAL TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	»»	TO CURRICULUM-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
Focused on topics or themes	»»	Focused on instructional materials with specific teaching strategies
One-time workshops; usually when school is closed	»»	Repeated sessions, coaching, and feedback opportunities during teachers regular workdays
Teachers grouped by school	»»	Teachers grouped by the curriculum they are using
Information shared in lectures, presentations, or Q&A discussions	»»	Active learning experiences, such as practicing instructing or participating in lessons as students
Coaching and feedback reserved mostly for new or struggling teachers	»»	Curriculum-focused coaching and feedback for all teachers
Selected teachers receive support for using new curriculum materials	»»	All teachers using new materials participate in curriculum-based professional learning

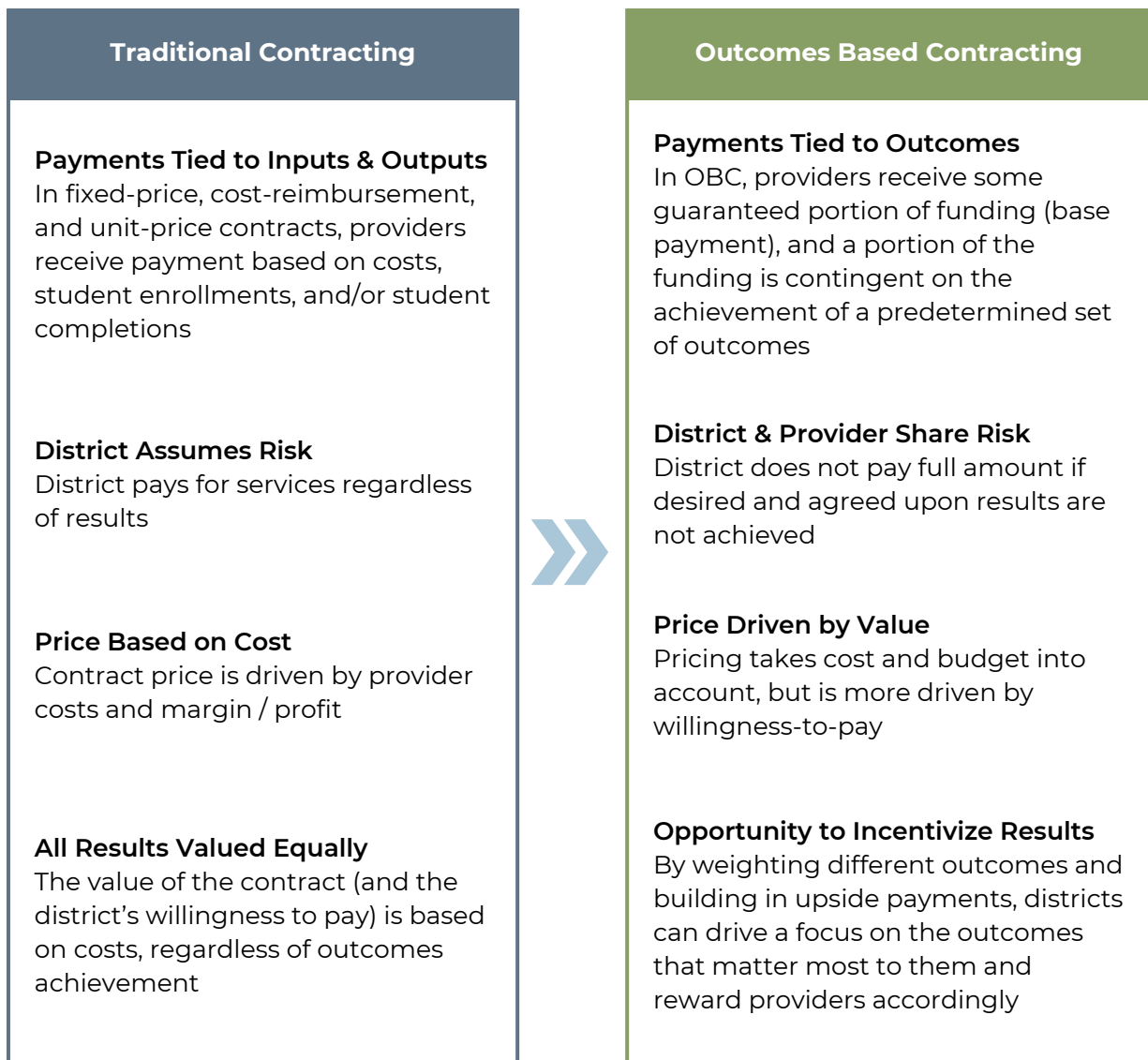
6. [Trends in High-Quality Professional Learning](#) (Rivet Education, 2022)

7. [The Elements: Transforming Teaching through Curriculum-Based Professional Learning](#) (Carnegie Corporation, 2020)

UNDERSTANDING OUTCOMES BASED CONTRACTING

Under a traditional contracting model, school districts pay external providers for their services, regardless of whether those services improve student outcomes. In contrast, OBC is a method of contracting in which a substantial portion of payment to a service provider is contingent on meeting agreed-upon outcomes. This approach compels mutual accountability between school districts and providers for achieving outcomes and helps ensure that dollars spent deliver academic impact.

Figure 4. OBC Requires a Mindset Shift from “How much does it cost?” to “How much is it worth?”



KEY FINDINGS

Based on this study, it is feasible to use OBC to procure and execute CBPL services. The key findings summarized below will inform the next steps in planning a pilot cohort of districts procuring and implementing CBPL under an OBC.

1. Both districts and providers are interested in pursuing an OBC model for CBPL: OBC requires districts and PL providers to proactively identify and align on goals and desired outcomes at the start of the partnership. This intentionality, coupled with the mutual accountability and collaboration required to make OBC work, presents an opportunity to strengthen CBPL delivery and HQIM implementation. Providers recognize that identifying desired outcomes at the start of the contract will likely lead to greater district satisfaction, and districts appreciate the opportunity to partner with their providers to get measurable value from their services.

2. Building district leaders' understanding of CBPL is necessary in order to establish and execute OBCs for CBPL: Under an OBC, districts contract for outcomes aligned with research-backed results of a given intervention. For a district and provider to contract for CBPL, a clear definition of the services and an understanding of the research base are necessary. Districts have preconceptions about how, when, and to whom to provide CBPL to support HQIM implementation that may not always reflect best practice. Because CBPL is still an emerging field, developing OBCs between districts and providers requires building a mutual understanding of the research base and marketplace for these services.

3. Collecting data on CBPL efficacy is challenging but critical: The success of an OBC hinges on identifying outcomes that are meaningful (important to the district), malleable (able to be impacted by the CBPL), and measurable (feasible to be accurately monitored to assess progress and attainment). While models such as Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation offer research-backed frameworks to assess CBPL outcomes, it remains challenging for districts and providers to confidently measure the efficacy of professional learning and its impact on teacher practice and student outcomes. Barriers include a lack of universal measurement instruments, limited observation and data collection capacity, and sensitivity around teacher and student privacy. Guskey's five evaluation levels and the associated data-gathering methods will form the foundation for the recommended outcome-metric pairs used in OBCs. A cross-functional working group will provide recommendations about when these will serve as process or payment metrics in the trajectory of the contract and services.

The CBPL working group, which will build on the findings from this report, will continue to discuss recommended payment and process outcomes - particularly how best to measure higher-level outcomes such as teacher practice and student impact - and identify which combinations of outcomes will be fair, accurate, and measurable from the perspectives of all parties.

4. OBC is better suited for certain types of CBPL: OBC requires a clear theory of change that links measurable inputs and activities to desired outcomes. More specifically, OBC is suitable for types of CBPL that meet the following criteria:

- Job-embedded (e.g., collaborative planning and coaching);
- Ongoing (i.e., not limited to a single workshop);
- Designed to achieve a clear outcome and/or drive change in teacher practice;
- Targeted to a specific group of teachers/instructional leaders; and
- Grounded in the HQIM.

The table below summarizes the primary types of CBPL and the feasibility of using OBC for each.

Table 2. OBC Feasibility for Types of Curriculum-Based Professional Learning

ADOPTION			
Purpose	Delivery Method	Objectives	OBC Recommendation & Rationale
Supports schools and school systems in developing and executing a plan for HQIM selection	• Consultation • Workshops	Adoption supports leaders in: • Defining and communicating a vision for excellent, equitable instruction and understanding the role of HQIM in achieving that vision • Developing an adoption plan that includes clear goals, action steps, a timeline, stakeholder engagement, and communication plans that result in the selection and procurement of HQIM aligned with the vision • Running an adoption process with a clear process for reviewing, piloting, and selecting an HQIM, emphasizing stakeholder engagement and alignment to vision	NOT RECOMMENDED While the outcome of this type of CBPL - selecting an HQIM - can easily be measured, it lacks a direct, immediate connection to teacher practice or student outcomes.
INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION			
Purpose	Delivery Method	Objectives	OBC Recommendation & Rationale
Equips teachers and leaders with their initial understanding of the HQIM and prepares them to implement it with integrity from day one of instruction	• Workshops	Initial Implementation supports educators in: • Developing a vision for strong implementation of the HQIM that connects back to the vision for instruction. • Understanding the HQIM's approach and design, and how it supports the vision for instruction • Navigating publisher-specific logistical and technological considerations, such as the components of the materials, how they are organized, and how teachers and students access them • Internalizing and rehearsing first units and lessons with colleagues who teach the same content and curriculum	RECOMMENDED FOR PILOT While it is difficult to tie student outcomes to Initial Implementation CBPL, it is tied to changes in teacher practice. Initial Implementation CBPL is critical to teachers' skillful implementation of HQIM because it builds the essential, foundational knowledge of the curriculum needed for success in the first few months of implementation.

Table 2. OBC Feasibility for Types of Curriculum-Based Professional Learning (Continued)

ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS			
Purpose	Delivery Method	Objectives	OBC Recommendation & Rationale
Deepens teachers' initial understanding of how to implement the HQIM by providing opportunities for teachers to reflect on their implementation and plan for upcoming instruction	- Coaching - Collaboration - Workshops	Ongoing Implementation Support for Teachers supports educators in: - Reinforcing the vision for strong implementation of the HQIM that connects back to the vision for instruction - Internalizing and rehearsing units and lessons with colleagues focused on anticipating student thinking and responses - Adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of all students and support rigorous, grade-level instruction - Reflecting on and analyzing student data, especially student work from the HQIM, to address the needs of students with diverse needs through the use of HQIM-embedded supports	RECOMMENDED FOR PILOT Of all the types of CBPL, Ongoing Implementation Support for Teachers is the longest-lasting and the most directly connected to changes in teacher practice and meaningful student outcomes.
ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT FOR LEADERS			
Purpose	Delivery Method	Objectives	OBC Recommendation & Rationale
Supports leaders in identifying and implementing the enabling conditions and resources required for a successful implementation of the HQIM	- Coaching - Consultations - Workshops	Ongoing Implementation Support for Leaders supports leaders in: - Communicating a vision for strong implementation of the HQIM that connects back to the vision for instruction - Allocating the essential time (e.g., class time, PLCs) and resources (e.g., trade books) needed for curriculum implementation - Building coherence by eliminating policies and procedures that impede strong implementation - Providing professional learning, including PLCs, coaching, observations, and feedback, that is anchored in the HQIM - Monitoring and identifying trends within student learning and teacher practice	RECOMMENDED FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION This type of PL is focused on supporting leaders in creating the conditions for HQIM to thrive. While payment could be tied to outcomes related to organizational change (level 3 of Guskey), districts are currently most interested in paying for outcomes more immediately linked to student performance.

To date, OBC has primarily tied payments directly to student outcomes, and the pilot for CBPL will focus on impacting student outcomes through teacher practice, one degree removed. Ongoing Implementation Support for Leaders aims to impact student outcomes through changing enabling conditions that support teacher practice - another degree removed from direct student impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Feasibility Criteria

Interviews with districts and providers focused on the current and desired state of several feasibility criteria and key questions that are critical to implementing OBC:

- **Service model / delivery:** a key feature of OBC is its ability to align service implementation with the research base.
 - *Based on the research-backed characteristics of high-quality PL, what types of CBPL are most suitable for OBC?*
- **Data, outcomes, and measures:** having a defined process for collecting data on CBPL efficacy that is communicated to all stakeholders is essential to measuring its impact.
 - *What types of data do districts and PL providers use to understand the quality and impact of CBPL, and how are these data collected?*
- **Pricing and procurement:** under an OBC, a substantial portion of payment to the provider is contingent on meeting agreed-upon outcomes.
 - *How do districts procure and pay for HQIM and CBPL, and to what extent do districts and providers believe payments can be tied to outcomes?*
- **Mutual accountability and partnership:** outcomes based contracts include minimum service requirements that both the district and provider must meet to ensure that all parties clearly understand their role in achieving the contracted outcomes.
 - *What non-negotiables must districts and providers be accountable for in order to create the conditions for CBPL to be effective?*

The following recommendations on implementing OBC for CBPL are grounded in these four feasibility criteria - what must be true for OBC to work - and how OBC can move CBPL from its current state to its desired state.

1. CBPL Types for OBC Pilot:

Pilot OBC for CBPL contracts that provide Initial Implementation and/or Ongoing Implementation Support for Teachers

When asked how they plan for and provide curriculum-based PL to their staff, districts described a wide range of PL structures, formats, and topics - not all of which were consistent with the research-backed characteristics of high-quality CBPL. OBC is most suitable for types of CBPL that meet the following criteria:

- Job-embedded (e.g., collaborative planning and coaching)
- Ongoing (i.e., not limited to a single workshop)
- Designed to achieve a clear outcome and/or drive change in teacher practice
- Targeted to a specific group of teachers/instructional leaders
- Grounded in the HQIM

Initial Implementation and Ongoing Implementation Support for Teachers are the CBPL models most aligned with these criteria. These types of CBPL are sustained over the course of the year and are most directly tied to teacher practice and outcomes; consequently, they are most suitable for OBC. Districts procuring one of these two CBPL models from external PL providers will be best positioned to use OBC.

An example contracted scope of work for Ongoing Implementation Support for Teachers CBPL could include:

- Initial 2-day training workshop with school leaders and instructional coaches on coaching best practices and how to observe the implementation of the curriculum in classrooms
- Consultation with school leaders to establish:
 - Weekly collaborative planning time through professional learning communities (PLCs)
 - A coaching plan that provides each teacher with one monthly coaching and feedback session
 - PLC expectations and agenda template
 - Coaching expectations and observation rubric
- Co-observation of at least 10 teachers with the school's instructional coach, using observation rubric based on instructional practice guide to model and norm on effective observations and follow-up coaching sessions
- Observe and provide feedback on at least three PLCs throughout the year

2. Understanding of CBPL and HQIM Implementation:

Support districts and providers in understanding the HQIM implementation journey and procuring CBPL to achieve specific outcomes aligned with this work

A hallmark of OBC is that it moves districts from *buying services* to *buying outcomes*. Accordingly, to successfully procure CBPL under an OBC, a district must identify specific outcomes that it hopes to achieve as a result of the PL. Ideally, those outcomes should be grounded in the instructional materials implementation journey and the district's vision for teaching and learning. Similarly, providers must ensure that they are delivering high-quality CBPL services so that districts have the opportunity to procure effective PL that meets their needs.

District Preparation for CBPL OBC

Specifically, a district that seeks to develop an OBC for CBPL should:

- **Build knowledge of HQIM and CBPL:** understand at a high level what it takes to implement HQIM skillfully through CBPL
- **Define the scope of work:** define data-driven instructional priorities (for teachers and students) as well as the CBPL services, enabling conditions, and measurable outcomes needed to achieve those priorities
- **Procure outcomes:** procure CBPL that is both likely to achieve the desired outcomes and meets the criteria for OBC suitability

Provider Preparation for CBPL OBC

Providers seeking to deliver high-quality CBPL under an OBC should:⁸

- **Support adoption and implementation of HQIM:** have the content and curriculum expertise necessary to support the skillful use of curriculum; understand the approach, design principles, structure / components, and content standards / instructional shifts of the HQIM.
- **Design high-quality professional learning experiences:** incorporate opportunities for active engagement and collaboration, employing appropriate adult learning strategies in a variety of formats, and tailor PL to address key objectives specific to the type of CBPL (Initial Implementation, Ongoing Support for Teachers, etc.).
- **Collect and use data to plan for, evaluate, and improve services:** have an evaluation model in place to continuously improve services based on Guskey's professional development evaluation framework and have systems and processes in place to ensure strong execution of the designed PL offerings.

3. Measuring CBPL Outcomes:

Leverage Guskey's professional development evaluation framework to identify clear outcome-metric pairs grounded in the research

Effective professional development evaluations require collecting and analyzing data about the [Five Critical Levels of Professional Development](#).⁹ Because each level builds on those before, success at one level is usually necessary - but not sufficient - for success at higher levels. While the ultimate goal of CBPL (and OBC) is student outcomes (Guskey level 5), tracking and measuring outcomes at Guskey levels 1-4 under OBCs for CBPL will also be important, especially because, in some instances, it can take multiple years for student outcomes to change.

Currently, districts and providers often struggle to measure the efficacy of professional learning and its impact on teacher practice and student outcomes. Districts report using teacher surveys to get participant reactions to PL (Guskey level 1) and describe conducting classroom observations to understand teacher practices. Still, they are sometimes disconnected from one another and the desired outcomes. Additionally, providers name barriers such as a lack of universal measurement instruments, limited observation and data collection capacity, and sensitivity to teacher and student privacy as challenges to evaluating their PL services. While districts are already well-positioned to collect data for some outcome-metric pairs, others will require modifications or additions to current data collection practices.

The CBPL working group, which will build on the findings of this report, will continue to discuss recommended payment and process outcomes - particularly how best to measure higher-level outcomes such as teacher practice and student impact - and identify which combinations of outcomes will be fair, accurate, and measurable from the perspectives of all parties.

8. These recommendations come from the [Scoring and Evidence Guide](#) for Rivet Education's Professional Learning Partner Guide

9. [Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation](#) (Guskey, 2000)

Table 3. Possible Payment and Process Outcomes to Measure CBPL Results

- **Payment outcomes:** determine contingent payment; listed in rate card and assigned a price
- **Process outcomes:** used to inform ongoing learning and continuous improvement; listed in contract expectations

Guskey Level (CBPL Outcome)	Possible Measurement Approaches and Recommended OBC Outcome Type	Considerations	Recommendations and System Preparedness to Measure
Level 1 - Participant Reaction: Teachers are satisfied with the CBPL and believe it will improve their practice.	Payment Outcome: Participant satisfaction surveys or reflections at the end of the session	• While insufficient to change student outcomes, including participant satisfaction as a payment outcome could be a lever to increase teacher buy-in by demonstrating the district's commitment to providing PL that meets teachers' needs. • Satisfaction surveys are the most straightforward approach; participant reflections could also be analyzed using AI-enabled technology.	Prepared to measure Recommended to include for payment in contracts addressing: • Initial Implementation • Ongoing Implementation Support for Teachers
Level 2 - Participant Learning: Teachers acquire the intended knowledge / skill of the CBPL.	Payment Outcome: • PL exit tickets Process Outcomes: • Simulations or demonstrations • Participant reflections	• Exit tickets are one approach to measuring participant learning but are limited as a self-reported measure. • Further exploration is necessary to understand additional measurement and data collection approaches, e.g., how to measure deliberate practice during a PL session in a non-evaluative way and how to ensure data collection on participant learning is embedded into PL time.	Partially prepared to measure Recommended to include for payment in contracts addressing: • Initial Implementation • Ongoing Implementation Support for Teachers
Level 3 - Organizational Support and Change: The school system changed to support CBPL and HQIM.	Process Outcomes: • Leadership interviews • Review of PL plan • Observance of PL structures (e.g., coaching, PLCs, PD days) or review of agendas	• While frameworks exist to assess the conditions necessary to support effective CBPL (example), districts do not typically have a systemic or quantitative approach to monitoring. • Districts should consider using process outcomes to measure organizational context and processes in contracts for Initial Implementation and Ongoing Support for Teachers, reflecting the contribution of these factors to creating the necessary conditions for effective CBPL and HQIM.	Partially prepared to measure Recommended to include for payment in contracts addressing: • Ongoing Support for Leaders (recommended for future consideration, not pilot)

Table 3. Possible Payment and Process Outcomes to Measure CBPL Results ((Continued))

- **Payment outcomes:** determine contingent payment; listed in rate card and assigned a price
- **Process outcomes:** used to inform ongoing learning and continuous improvement; listed in contract expectations

Guskey Level (CBPL Outcome)	Possible Measurement Approaches and Recommended OBC Outcome Type	Considerations	Recommendations and System Preparedness to Measure
Level 4 - Participant Application: Teachers can successfully apply their new knowledge and skills in their classrooms.	Payment Outcome: - Classroom observations using a curriculum-based rubric (e.g. instructional practice guide) Process Outcomes: - Self-report questionnaires or surveys - Interviews with teachers and instructional coaches	- Observation data is the gold standard in understanding teacher practice. Currently, many districts use district-specific frameworks for teacher observations that may not provide the data required to understand shifts in specific practices targeted by CBPL. - Developing a reliable metric for this outcome will require determining both <i>how</i> to measure shifts in teacher practice and <i>who</i> should measure this (school, district, provider, etc.).	Partially prepared to measure Recommended to include for payment in contracts addressing: - Initial Implementation - Ongoing Implementation Support for Teachers
Level 5 - Student Learning: Student outcomes improve.	Payment Outcomes: - Growth on nationally-normed assessments - Achievement or projected achievement on national and/or state-based assessments Process Outcomes: - Student work specific to the HQIM - HQIM-embedded assessments - Classroom observations using a curriculum-based rubric (focused on student behaviors)	- Districts are well-equipped to measure student performance using summative assessment data (e.g., state assessments, and progress monitoring / benchmark tools such as Renaissance Star, i-Ready, and NWEA MAP). - Developing metrics to measure student learning and performance related to specific curricular elements (e.g., higher-order thinking) will likely require additional discussion; currently, districts often use student work samples / protocols, which may be difficult to scale and standardize. - In most instances, student outcomes take longer to achieve and should be used as process outcomes in year 1 of a contract as well as in contracts covering initial implementation support.	Partially prepared to measure Recommended to include for payment in contracts addressing: Ongoing Implementation Support for Teachers

4. Minimum Service Requirements:

Develop clear minimum service requirements for all parties to create the conditions for effective CBPL

OBC requires increased coordination between districts and providers; a strong partnership is essential to success. To ensure CBPL is delivered in a method most beneficial to teachers and students, contracts must include language and components to create mutual accountability, such as minimum service requirements and defined partnership structures.

District Requirements

Both providers and districts named factors such as attendance and engagement - of teachers as well as instructional and district leaders - as critical to effective CBPL and suggested that these should be incorporated into the contract as minimum service requirements to ensure clarity and accountability. Additionally, districts will be expected to collect and share data with providers to facilitate continuous collaboration and improvement - something that is inherent to outcomes based contracting but does not often happen in traditional CBPL contracts.

Provider Requirements

Districts also expressed the importance of providers “doing PL with [them], not to [them]” and being responsive to district needs and context, co-creating the PL with the district rather than trying to apply a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach. This could include elements such as requiring the provider to align their content with the district's instructional framework and meeting regularly with principals and building-level instructional leaders to plan and debrief.

The CBPL working group will develop baseline language around mutual accountability and partnership (including minimum service requirements for all parties and recommended continuous improvement structures) to include in the CBPL outcomes based contract template.

5. Contract Development:

Develop and structure contracts intentionally - and with input from teachers - to build buy-in and achieve both short- and long-term outcomes

The research shows - and districts and providers agree - that it can take multiple years to realize changes in student outcomes after implementing a new curriculum.¹⁰ Thus, districts should take a multi-year approach when planning for CBPL, with contract outcomes and key milestones defined for each year (potential / proposed outcomes are described in recommendation #3 above). While districts must take a longer-term perspective during planning, many district contracts must be single-year (typically with renewal options). An effective outcomes based contract for CBPL might include planned payment and process outcomes for multiple / subsequent years, even while the actual contract is limited to one year. This signals the long-term plan while providing flexibility to adjust based on district satisfaction, outcomes achieved, or evolving needs.

It is also critical that the individuals most impacted by the planned work - teachers and the individuals responsible for facilitating CBPL directly to teachers, such as school leaders and instructional coaches - have the opportunity to engage in the contract development and planning process. This ensures that teachers' needs are being met and that the contract scope of work is feasible to deliver; multiple labor leaders also suggested it as a key means to create buy-in.

10. [Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature](#) (Fixsen et al., 2005)

NEXT STEPS

This study, which explores the feasibility of outcomes based contracting for CBPL, is just the first step in the OBC cycle of learning. The recommended next steps emphasize building on the findings to move from exploration to execution and continuous improvement.

- **Share findings with both OBC and CBPL networks.** These findings are of interest to districts that have previously developed and executed OBCs for areas such as high-impact tutoring and ed tech. Districts interested in procuring effective CBPL as well as CBPL providers and other organizations seeking to increase the efficacy of HQIM should also review this report. The OBC and Rivet teams will work together to disseminate the findings and recommendations.
- **Establish an OBC CBPL working group to further unpack feasibility and prepare for a pilot cohort.** This report presents several recommendations regarding how to structure outcomes based contracts for CBPL; however, more work must be done to prepare for a pilot cohort. A working group - including representatives from districts, CBPL providers, labor organizations, and other industry experts - will build on the findings. Among other topics, this group will:
 - Recommended payment and process outcomes, including how best to measure higher-level outcomes such as teacher practice and student impact; and
 - Develop baseline language around mutual accountability and partnership (including minimum service requirements for all parties and recommended continuous improvement structures).
- **Develop CBPL-specific OBC resources, including recommended outcome-metric pairs, pricing guidelines, minimum services requirements, and RFP / contract templates.** While the core tenets of outcomes based contracting - payment contingent on outcomes, mutual accountability, etc. - are consistent across product lines (e.g., high impact tutoring, ed tech, curriculum-based PL), the nuances of each type of service require the development of tools and resources specific to the product line. Developing these resources ahead of the pilot launch will ensure that pilot districts are best positioned for success.
- **Determine the timeline for and launch a cohort piloting OBC for CBPL.** Previous OBC cohorts have launched in either the fall or spring to develop RFPs / contracts for services to be delivered during the following school year, typically with student outcomes measured at mid- and/or end-of-year. The contract runs for either a semester or year and then may be renewed, usually with similar payment outcomes / terms. Two features of CBPL contracts suggest an alternate timeline may be considered. CBPL contracts may prioritize teacher outcomes for payment in year 1 and then shift to longer-term student outcomes for subsequent years, prompting the need for a multi-year cohort; also, the timeline of measurement of teacher outcomes is not dictated by a district's assessment calendar, which could offer greater flexibility. The working group will advise on the potential / desired cohort timeline.
- **Partner with professional learning experts (e.g., RPPL) to conduct and share research on pilot implementation effectiveness.** Reviewing qualitative and quantitative data to understand how OBC works in CBPL will be critical. Early research on OBC implementation can both inform continuous improvement of future OBC cohorts and also highlight key findings to share with the field, e.g., what are the most important requirements and practices to monitor in order to drive strong implementation.



About Southern Education Foundation

Since 1867, the mission of Southern Education Foundation has been to advance equitable education practices and policies in the South through research, advocacy, and leadership development that will result in every student regardless of background attaining a high-quality education that propels them toward the opportunity-rich life they deserve.



The Center for
Outcomes Based Contracting
at the Southern Education Foundation

About The Center for Outcomes Based Contracting

The Center for Outcomes Based Contracting, an initiative of the Southern Education Foundation, empowers districts to contract for clear student outcomes, ensuring mutual accountability for achieving them. By 2030, one million students will receive services under outcomes based contracts, leading to two million student outcomes being achieved. The initiative supports school districts, charter management organizations, state education agencies, and providers through the following:

- **Cohort Learning:** Participants engage in a year-long learning experience, implementing OBC alongside peers and national experts. Cohorts launch twice a year, in January and the fall.
- **Annual Convening:** OBC hosts an annual convening and provider summit, bringing together participating districts, education experts, and key stakeholders to share best practices, discuss challenges, and explore emerging trends in outcomes-based contracting.
- **Technical Assistance:** OBC offers technical assistance for developing outcomes based Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and subsequent contracts.
- **Webinars:** OBC experts and partners host webinars to present strategies for improving student achievement through outcomes-based contracting.
- **Resources:** The initiative provides public resources, including toolkits for high-performing programs and services that achieve measurable, long-term student outcomes.



About Rivet Education

Rivet Education is a national expert in high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) and curriculum-based professional learning (CBPL). We devise simple, practical, and scalable strategies and tools that promote excellent instruction for every student in every classroom, every day. Our core values drive our work - an unwavering commitment to students, equity, and quality. We offer three primary services to state and local education agencies.

- **Consult:** Rivet consults with SEAs and LEAs to help them develop academic strategies and resources to scale educators' access to high-quality instructional materials and curriculum-based professional learning.
- **Connect:** Our digital tools, such as the Professional Learning Partner Guide, connect SEA and LEA leaders to the knowledge and support needed to implement high-quality curricula successfully.
- **Check:** Our professional development diagnostic and Instructional Materials Implementation Tool help state and local education leaders check the quality of school curriculum implementation.



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