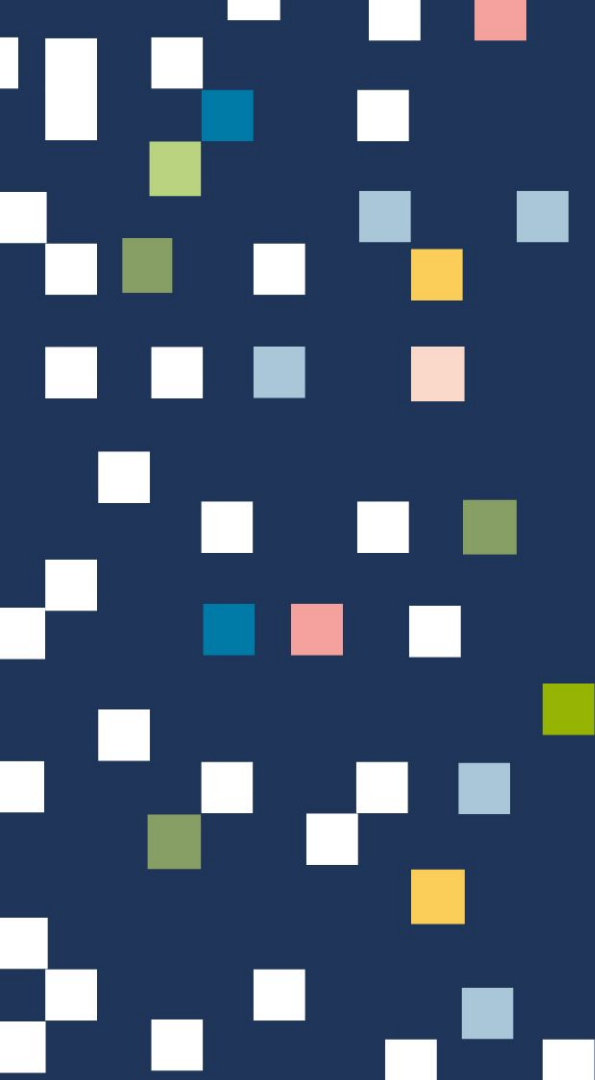




The Evidence Is In:

A Third-Party Look at What Works in
Outcomes Based Contracting

August 19, 2026

Welcome



Brittany Miller, PhD
Chief Innovation Officer &
Executive Director,
Center for OBC

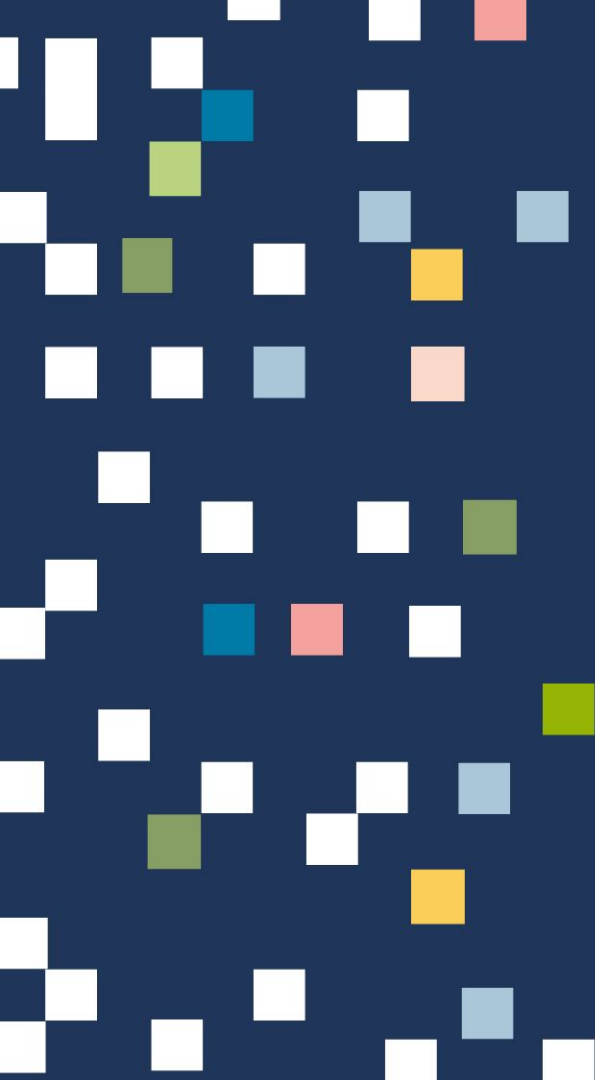


Cara Jackson, PhD
Senior Fellow, Research &
Evidence Use,
Center for OBC

Objectives



- **Explain** how OBC shifts payment from services delivered to results achieved, and why the Standards of Excellence set the bar for quality.
- **Describe** the WestEd findings: OBC works when implementation is strong and runs its full duration, and produces weaker results when it doesn't.
- **Identify** how the Center is using these findings to strengthen the model.
- **Name** your own next steps



Introduction to Outcomes Based Contracting (OBC)

Defining Outcomes Based Contracting

Clear Outcomes & Responsibilities

Districts and providers agree upfront on specific student goals and define who's responsible for what, creating true partnership.

Payment Tied to Results

At least 40 percent of the overall contract value is contingent on meeting agreed-upon outcomes, ensuring focus on student success.

Cost Effectiveness Model

Districts pay full contract value when students show meaningful progress, providing clear understanding of investment value.

Innovation Incentives

Districts determine what they'll pay for success, incentivizing providers to find the best ways to help students learn.

OBC empowers partnerships to **contract for clear student outcomes** and **compels mutual accountability** for achieving them.

Goals of OBC



Improve Procurement Practices

Enable buyers to clearly define their desired outcomes from the beginning, enhancing the educational procurement process.



Strengthen Implementation

Ensure instructional products and services align closely with their research-backed design during implementation.



Achieving Meaningful Outcomes

Empower districts and providers to work together in achieving meaningful results for all students, regardless of background or circumstance.



The Center for
Outcomes
Based
Contracting

The Fundamental Shift

TRADITIONAL CONTRACTING

“Did you deliver what
you promised?”



OUTCOMES BASED CONTRACTING

“Did students achieve
the results we all
committed to?”

**The difference between paying for services
and investing in success.**

Reimagining Partnerships

Traditional Partnerships

Contract is paid in full **when services begin**, and further payment is rendered as additional services are delivered



Roles and responsibilities around partnership support are **not always clearly defined** from the start in the contract



Stakeholders **often work independently** to identify ways to improve implementation and student learning



Outcomes Based Partnerships

Base payment of the contract is paid when services are executed, and the remainder of the contract (**contingent payment**) is paid when student outcomes are met

Specific implementation expectations, as outlined through **mutual accountability**, are clearly agreed to - improving implementation integrity for districts and providers

Stakeholders review data collaboratively through **continuous learning practices** and discuss opportunities for improvement together



The **Center for Outcomes Based Contracting** serves as the field's trusted leader to advance the growth of the outcomes based contracting (OBC) model.

**We ensure investments meant to advance student learning
deliver measurable results.**

Technical
Assistance

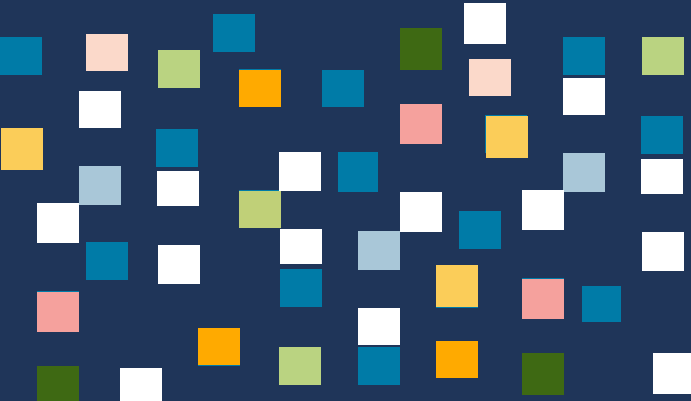
Research Insights

Public Resources

Cohort-Based
Learning

Vision: By 2030, **1 million students** will receive instructional services under an outcomes based contract, with **2 million student outcomes** achieved.

The Standards of Excellence for Outcomes Based Contracting™

A decorative pattern of small, colorful squares in shades of blue, orange, green, and white, arranged in a grid-like fashion, located at the bottom left of the slide.

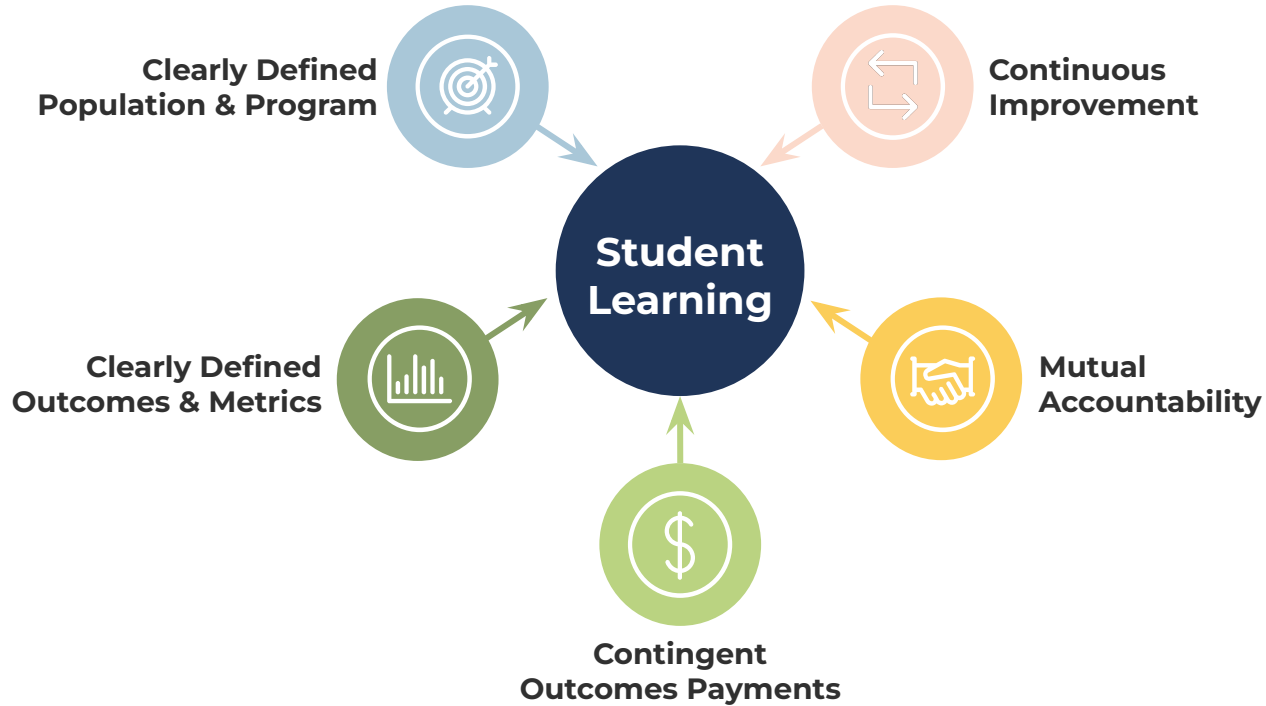
Our North Star for High-Quality OBCs

The Standards of Excellence create clarity, alignment, and accountability across outcomes based contracts, ensuring every partnership is designed to deliver meaningful student outcomes.

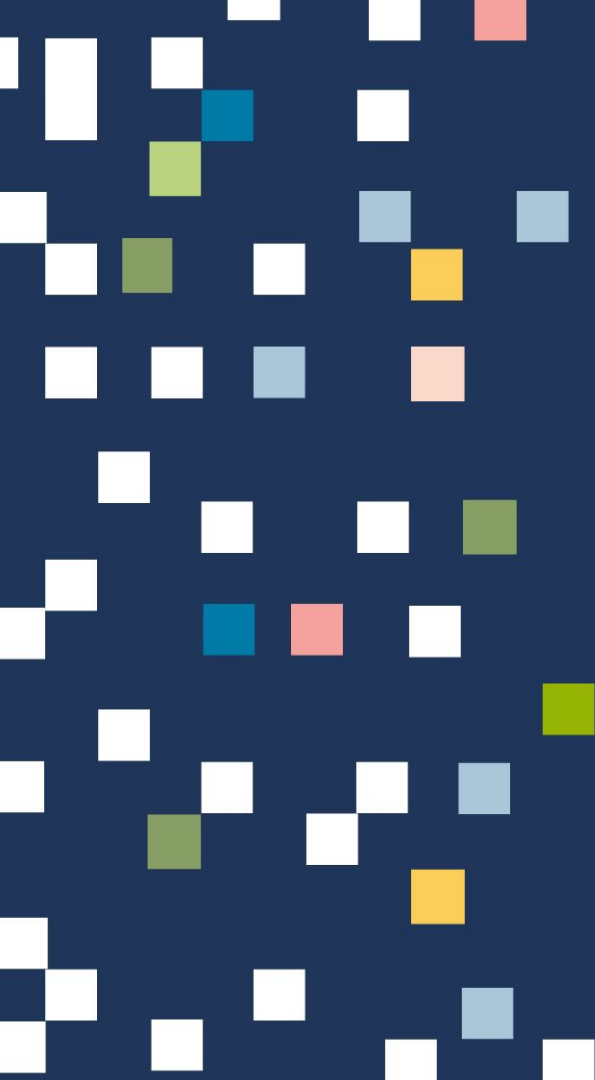
What changes when the Standards are in place

- Clarity replaces guesswork
- Alignment replaces ambiguity
- Shared accountability replaces unclear responsibility

Domains for a Successful OBC



The **Standards of Excellence for Outcomes Based Contracting™** define five interconnected domains that ensure every OBC is clear, high-quality, and results-driven. Together, they create a unified framework for designing contracts that drive measurable improvements in student learning



The Evidence Behind OBC



Does OBC Work?

When...

Districts and providers agree on student goals upfront, define shared responsibilities, and tie payment to results

Then...

Implementation improves

Leading to...

Better outcomes for students

Implementation Integrity

Does OBC produce the implementation integrity it's designed to create?

Student Outcomes

Does higher-quality implementation translate into meaningful gains for students?

Testing this theory is the Center's most fundamental research commitment.

What WestEd Studied

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does OBC affect the bidding and contracting process?
- How does OBC affect the relationship between districts and providers?
- How does OBC affect district spending on interventions?
- Which components of OBC most contribute to its effectiveness?
- Under what conditions is OBC successful?

What impact do tutoring and edtech interventions under an OBC have on student academic performance (ELA and math), including that of nontargeted students?

SAMPLE

2023-24 & 2024-25

8

districts in 4 states

Document review, observation, and 31 interviews with district leaders, providers, and school staff.

2023-24 & 2024-25

10

contracts, 6 districts

RDDs: 4 contracts in 3 districts
~5,000 students in grades 2–8

Headline Findings

1 Positive student impact

In districts where causal analysis was possible and interventions ran for their intended duration, OBC generated positive causal effects on student outcomes.

2 Stronger accountability & partnership

OBC created stronger mutual accountability between districts and providers, driven by clearer contracts, better communication, and stronger data use.

3 Coaching enabled success

District leaders credited the Center's coaching and TA with driving successful OBC development and implementation — most valuable early on, and most present where implementation integrity was strongest.

4 Building organizational capacity

OBC participation, paired with COBC coaching and TA, strengthened district and school practices in implementation integrity, continuous improvement, and data use — benefits that may extend beyond the contract.



The Implementation Findings



Contract development requires **internal district collaboration** and guidance for those new to the process, and **some providers appeared more “OBC-ready” than others.**



OBC created **stronger accountability** between districts and providers. Contracts placed **more implementation responsibilities on districts** than providers.



Spending under OBC was similar to spending on comparable interventions under traditional contracts, suggesting **districts received greater intensity of services for a similar cost.**



OBC participation and **COBC coaching** strengthened the ability of districts and schools to **use data and communicate** in ways that drove **continuous improvement.**



The Impact Findings + What They Mean

3 of 4 impact analyses found large positive effects on student outcomes

District / Intervention	Population	Effect Size	What This Means in Practice
District A   Virtual math tutoring SY2023-24	1,276 students 7 schools Grades 7-8	 +0.39 SD on state math assessment	A “large” effect using education researchers' standard benchmark (Kraft, 2020) for interpreting effect sizes.
District A   AI-enabled reading tutoring SY2024-25	1,998 students 20 schools Grades 2-4	 2nd grade: +0.26 SD on state ELA assessment 3rd & 4th grade: null	Bigger than the 4th-grade reading proficiency gap between the lowest- and highest-scoring states on the 2022 NAEP.
District B   Virtual math tutoring SY2023-24	736 students 7 schools Grades 6-8	 Null	Consistent with what researchers typically observe for a short implementation window (~8 of 25 planned weeks).
District E   Virtual reading tutoring SY2024-25	611 students 17 schools Grades 3-5	 +31 percentile pts on NWEA MAP	A meaningful shift in students' growth trajectory — same order of magnitude as the NAEP state-gap benchmark above.

Why This Evidence Is Different

STRONGER THAN A SINGLE IMPACT STUDY



Real implementation at scale, not a small pilot or a hand-picked group of highly engaged students



Independent outcome measures pulled from state and local accountability systems, not the program itself



The result: **stronger external validity than a single-site study**. Evidence for real-world implementation, not just one setting.

A FOUNDATION FOR MORE EVIDENCE



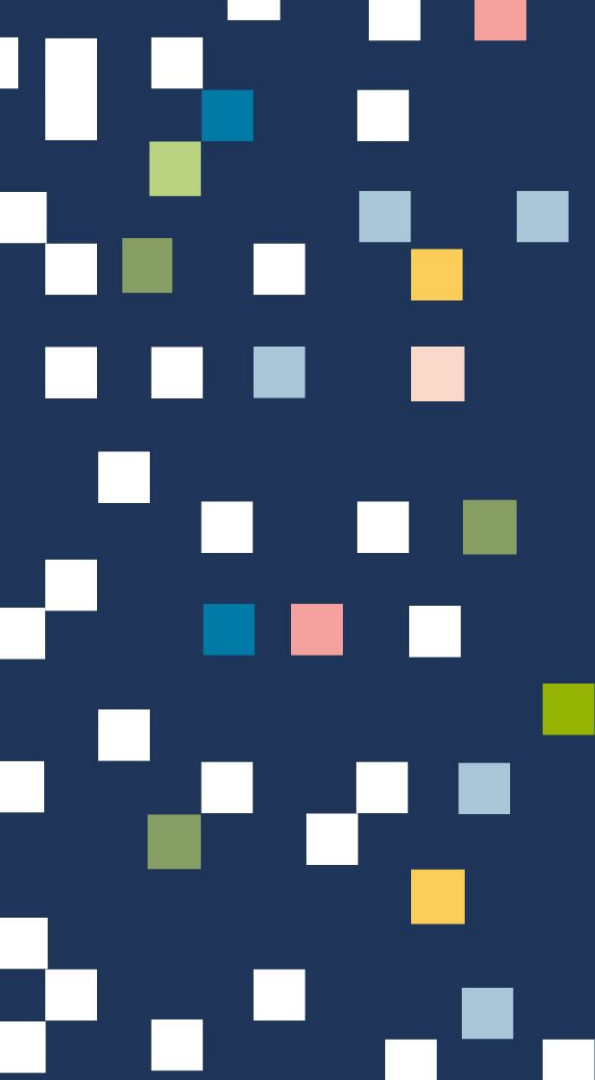
OBC already generates the **data to enable rigorous causal evaluation** at scale



District-embedded researchers can produce it in-house: **no formal study to commission, no data-sharing hassles**



The result: **faster, cheaper evidence** — built at scale, not one study at a time



Next Steps: How the Center is Using Evidence to Improve

→ What These Findings Make Possible

These findings are encouraging, but they are a starting point, not an endpoint. OBC shows promise as a **sustainable opportunity to strengthen accountability and keep focus on student learning**. The field still has much more to learn about **what works, for whom, and under what conditions**.

WHAT WE LEARNED

OBC required internal district collaboration and external guidance



**District Contract
Accelerator**

Provider readiness for OBC varied widely



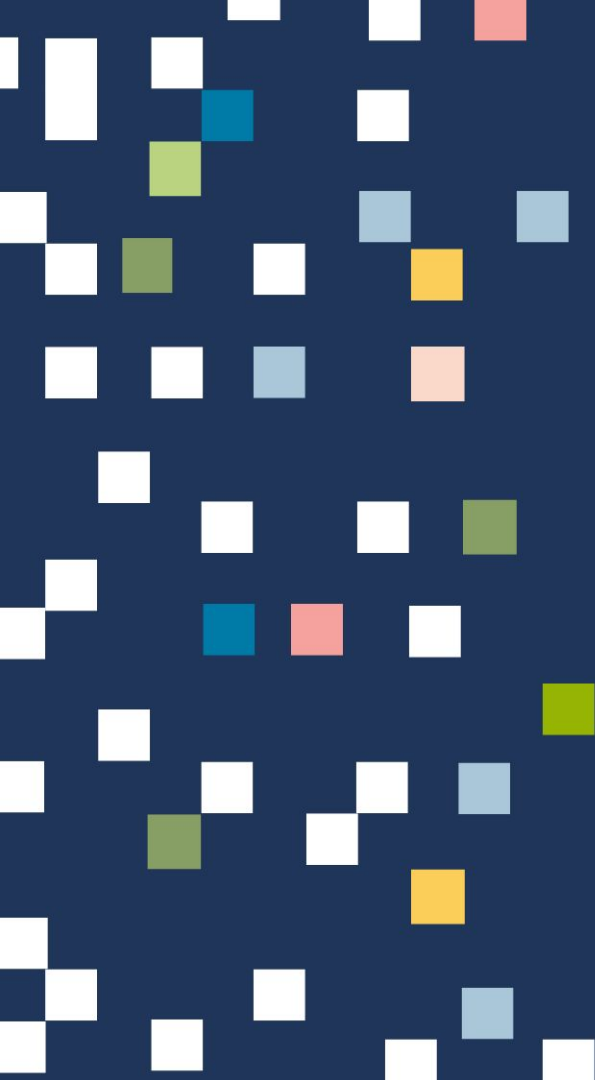
**Provider Learning
Series**

Districts carried more of the implementation load than providers



**OBC Data
Dashboard**

HOW WE'RE RESPONDING

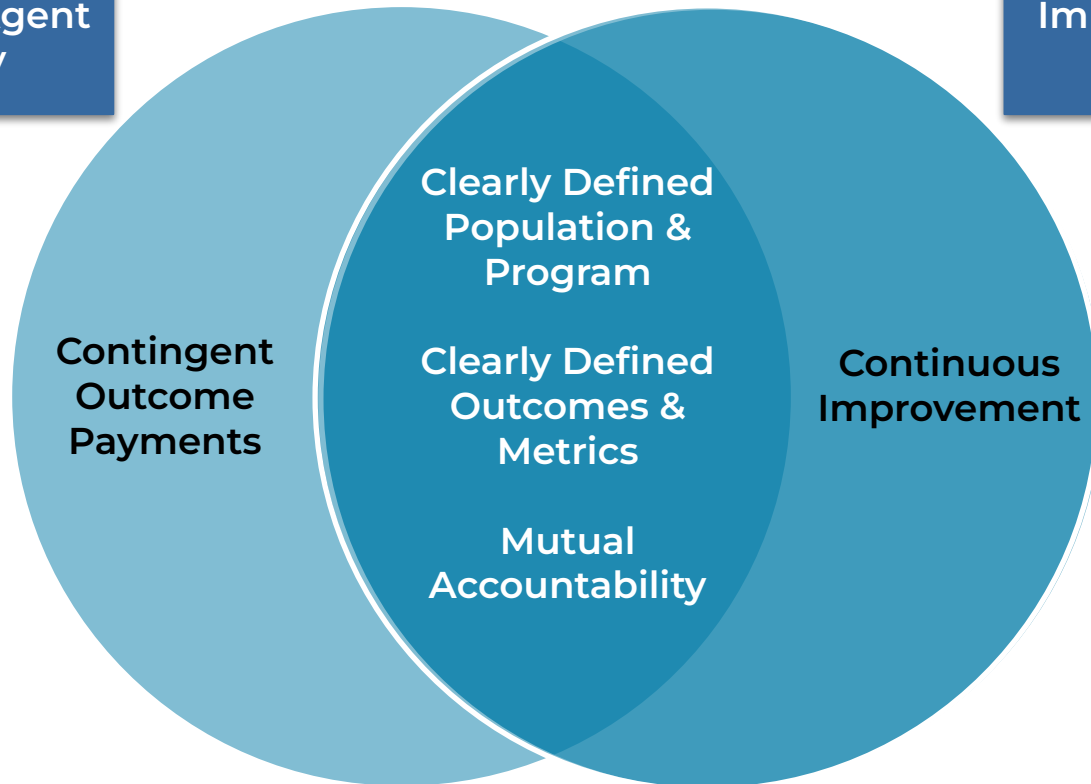


Frequently Asked Questions

What is the theory behind OBC?

Principal-Agent
Theory

Improvement
Science





Under what conditions is OBC successful?



Baseline district capacity

Districts need foundational systems and staff capacity in place before layering on an OBC.



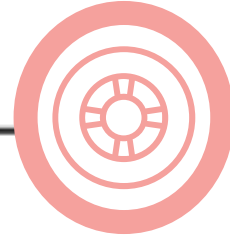
Implementation integrity

Districts and providers collaborate and adapt to local context — while holding the line on what makes the intervention work.



School-level buy-in

Communication that empowers school leaders to make site-level adjustments is critical for continuous improvement.



External support

Coaching and technical assistance from the Center help create and sustain the conditions for OBC to succeed.



What resources can help me get started with OBC?

About the Center for OBC

tinyurl.com/About-OBC



District Contract Accelerator

tinyurl.com/OBC-DCA



Provider Learning Series

tinyurl.com/OBC-PLS



Standards of Excellence for OBC™

tinyurl.com/OBC-Standards



The Center for
Outcomes Based Contracting