



The Center for  
Outcomes Based Contracting  
*at the Southern Education Foundation*

# Standards of Excellence for Outcomes Based Contracting: High-Dosage Tutoring

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## The Center for OBC Standards of Excellence

The Center for Outcomes Based Contracting Standards of Excellence embody the foundational principles and concepts of outcomes based contracting (OBC), serving as the cornerstone for all related training, tools, and resources. The Standards establish clear benchmarks for outcomes based contracting across the K–12 landscape, balancing the need for robust support with accountability for maintaining high-quality contracts that drive meaningful outcomes for districts, educators, and students.

The Standards of Excellence for OBC are designed to:

- **Promote Consistency:** Set clear, uniform expectations for OBC, ensuring the presence of critical contract components.
- **Ensure Quality:** Provide a rigorous framework to ensure outcomes based contracts are thoughtfully designed, high-quality, and aligned with best practices.
- **Foster Efficiency:** Provide a clear and efficient framework that streamlines the development of high-quality, well-defined contracts and enables scalability.

These Standards are essential for driving impactful, scalable, and sustainable improvements across the K–12 education ecosystem. They will help LEAs, ESAs, SEAs, providers, and any organizations that support them create outcomes based contracts that are clear, thorough, and designed to achieve student outcomes.

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## Understanding the Standards of Excellence for OBC: High-Dosage Tutoring

Each of the five domains represents an essential component for a successful Outcomes Based Contract (OBC), collectively forming the foundation for effective implementation. These domains are Mutual Accountability, Contingent Outcomes Payments, Clearly Defined Outcomes and Metrics, Clearly Defined Population and Program, and Continuous Improvement. Each domain is anchored by two to three standards that outline the critical elements needed for robust outcomes based contracting within that domain. These standards serve as overarching statements, summarizing the key components of an effective OBC. Additionally, each standard is accompanied by specific indicators—tangible, observable elements that provide evidence the standard has been met. This structure clarifies expectations and provides a concrete framework for evaluating the success and fidelity of OBC implementation, ensuring each domain supports sustained, impactful outcomes.

While the standards and domains are consistent across all outcomes based contracts, the indicators are specific to each product line. The indicators in this document are specific to outcomes based contracts for high-dosage tutoring.

The [National Student Support Accelerator's High-Impact Tutoring Standards](#) provide research-grounded guidelines for high-impact tutoring programs across six elements: Tutor, Data Use, Instruction, Learning Integration, Safety, and Cohesion. The Standards of Excellence for OBC - particularly the Mutual Accountability and Continuous Improvement domains - are informed by the NSSA High-Impact Tutoring Standards, incorporating evidence-based practices such as tutor consistency requirements, specific student attendance thresholds, and structured data collection for ongoing program improvement.

*Note: For readability, these standards use the term “district” to refer to any organization serving students that enters into a contract with a provider. This may include CMOs, regional service centers, county offices of education, state education agencies, etc.*

## Five Domains of Outcomes Based Contracting

Domain	Description	Rationale
<b>Clearly Defined Population and Program</b>	The contract defines the target population to be served, specifying the content area, grade level, and like-performing student group (defined by one or more quantitative criteria), and the research-based instructional intervention to be implemented.	Selecting a research-backed intervention appropriate for the population, aligning implementation with the research base, and tracking participation and outcomes for a specific, clearly defined population of schools, students, and/or teachers is essential for measuring impact, allocating resources effectively, and ultimately achieving desired student outcomes.
<b>Clearly Defined Outcomes and Metrics</b>	The contract includes clear outcome definitions - aligned with district priorities - with associated measures and achievement goals specific to the target population.	Clear outcome definitions and measurement processes help ensure that interventions deliver meaningful results. Identifying outcomes that are meaningful (important to the district), malleable (able to be impacted by the intervention), and measurable (feasible to be accurately monitored to assess progress and attainment) enables districts to track progress effectively, make informed decisions, and hold providers accountable for delivering results that matter for students.
<b>Contingent Outcomes Payments</b>	The contract articulates a financial structure including payments that are disbursed as the agreed-upon outcomes are achieved.	Establishing a financial structure that directly links payment to student success, with at least 40% of the contract value contingent on student outcomes, creates meaningful incentives for achievement while maintaining sufficient funding for quality implementation. This framework provides financial clarity and predictability for both districts and providers while maintaining focus on individual student achievement rather than aggregate outcomes.

## Five Domains of Outcomes Based Contracting

Domain	Description	Rationale
<b>Mutual Accountability</b>	The contract includes agreed-upon commitments made between a district and provider, ensuring each party is responsible for the achievement of student outcomes.	Successful implementation depends on clear, shared responsibilities between the district and provider. A comprehensive framework for mutual accountability that defines specific obligations, remedies, and processes ensures that both districts and providers have concrete responsibilities for creating the conditions necessary for student success, with clear remedies when expectations aren't met.
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	The contract establishes a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and collaboration that supports informed, transparent decision-making between districts and providers.	Establishing a framework for data-driven collaboration between districts and providers ensures that implementation challenges are identified and addressed promptly. This systematic approach to continuous improvement helps maintain program quality, supports rapid problem-solving, and ultimately increases the likelihood of achieving desired student outcomes.

## Standards of Excellence for Outcomes Based Contracting: High-Dosage Tutoring

### Domain 1: Clearly Defined Population and Program

The contract defines the target population to be served, specifying the content area, grade level, and like-performing student group (defined by one or more quantitative criteria), and the research-based instructional intervention to be implemented.

**Standard 1: Target Student Population** - The contract clearly describes the target student population.

#### Indicators:

**1.1 Target Population** - Specifies a group of **like-performing students** who need additional support in the focus area based on grade level, subject area, historical performance, and any other relevant identifiers (e.g., first language, IEP status)

**1.2 Historical Performance Data** - Provides **historical baseline data** (using the same or a proxy assessment tool) to describe baseline performance for the targeted student group

**1.3 Student Identification Criteria** - Identifies **assessment, metric(s) / criteria, and performance thresholds** that will be used to identify like-performing students

**1.4 Population Size Estimate** - States the **estimated number of students** intended to be served (from the like-performing population)

## Domain 1: Clearly Defined Population and Program

The contract defines the target population to be served, specifying the content area, grade level, and like-performing student group (defined by one or more quantitative criteria), and the research-based instructional intervention to be implemented.

**Standard 2: Program Description** - The contract includes a program description.

### Indicators:

**2.1 Research-Based Intervention** - Identifies a **tutoring intervention consistent with the research base** about [effective practices for high-dosage tutoring](#), e.g., group size; tutor consistency; frequency / duration; schedule; tutor preparation and coaching / development; data-informed; material / curriculum quality, rigor, and alignment

**2.2 Aligned Implementation** - Articulates intention to **use and implement the intervention in alignment with the research base and best practices** associated with demonstrated impact for the product

**2.3 District Strategic Alignment** - Articulates alignment with long-term **district priorities, goals, and strategy**

**2.4 Implementation Timeline** - Outlines intervention **timeline consistent with research** demonstrating impact, including the duration and planned start / end dates

## Domain 2: Clearly Defined Outcomes and Metrics

The contract includes clear outcome definitions - aligned with district priorities - with associated measures and achievement goals specific to the target population.

**Standard 3: Measurable Outcomes and Metrics** - The contract includes measurable, research-backed outcomes and metrics.

### Indicators:

**3.1 Achievement Metric** - Includes one or more **achievement** outcome - and corresponding metric (assessment, measure, and threshold) - that is valid, reliable, and rigorous

**3.2 Growth Metric** - Includes one or more **growth / gains** outcome - and corresponding metric (assessment, measure, and threshold) - that is valid, reliable, and rigorous

**3.3 Meaningful Outcomes** - All contract outcomes and metrics are **meaningful**, i.e., aligned to district priorities

**3.4 Malleable Outcomes** - All contract outcomes and metrics are **malleable**, i.e., able to be impacted by the intervention

**3.5 Measurable Outcomes** - All contract outcomes and metrics are **measurable**, i.e., feasible to be accurately monitored to assess progress and attainment

**3.6 Assessment Diversity** - Outcomes and metrics leverage **valid, reliable, rigorous, and comprehensive assessments from multiple sources** to provide a more complete picture of student performance and protect against gaps and biases

## Domain 2: Clearly Defined Outcomes and Metrics

The contract includes clear outcome definitions - aligned with district priorities - with associated measures and achievement goals specific to the target population.

**Standard 4: Data Collection and Sharing** - The contract includes expectations, processes, and timelines for data collection and sharing.

### Indicators:

**4.1 Data Collection Timeline** - Articulates **timelines** for assessment administration, data reporting/sharing, and payment for each outcome-metric pair, including process outcomes

**4.2 Data Collection Responsibilities** - Indicates **individuals** responsible for assessment administration, data reporting/sharing, and payment for each outcome-metric pair, including process outcomes

### Domain 3: Contingent Outcomes Payments

The contract articulates a financial structure including payments that are disbursed as the agreed-upon outcomes are achieved.

**Standard 5: Payment Structure** - The contract includes a per-student base payment.

#### Indicators:

**5.1 Student-Based Pricing** - Specifies **per-student base price**, i.e., not class-, school-/site-, or district-based pricing

**5.2 All-Inclusive Pricing Structure** - Specifies **inclusive pricing**, i.e., no additional line items for professional learning, project management, curriculum development, etc.

**5.3 Implementation Price** - Contract price (base + contingent payments) accounts for services required (per the research base) to enable fidelity of implementation and does not require additional payments or inputs in order to produce the outcomes

**5.4 Outcome Cap Scaling** - Specifies that the **base payment and outcome caps** are scaled based on the total number of rostered students

### Domain 3: Contingent Outcomes Payments

The contract articulates a financial structure including payments that are disbursed as the agreed-upon outcomes are achieved.

**Standard 6: Contingent Payments** - The contract articulates a structure for payments contingent on outcomes.

#### Indicators:

**6.1 Payment Contingency Requirement** - At least **40%** of the total contract value is contingent on student outcomes

**6.2 Individual Outcomes Based Payment** - Specifies that **contingent payments** will be made based on the attainment of individual student outcomes

**6.3 Payment Definitions** - Defines **key terms**, including base payment, payment outcomes, process outcomes, contingent payments, price per outcome, and outcome payment cap

**6.4 Maximum Payment Specification** - Specifies **maximum** potential payment

### Domain 3: Contingent Outcomes Payments

The contract articulates a financial structure including payments that are disbursed as the agreed-upon outcomes are achieved.

**Standard 7: Rate Card** - The contract includes a completed rate card.

#### Indicators:

**7.1 Payment Outcomes** - Rate card includes **2-5 payment outcomes**, including middle-of-year and end-of-year payment outcomes (for year-long interventions)

**7.2 Rate Card Structure** - Rate card includes clearly-defined outcome and metric pairs with **per-student price** and **outcome cap** for each

**7.3 Budget Alignment** - Sum of the individual outcome caps **is equal to** the total budget

**7.4 Base Payment Cap** - Base payment outcome cap **is equal to** the per-student base payment multiplied by the number of students served

**7.5 Outcome Cap Limits** - Outcome caps are **no greater than** the per-student outcome price multiplied by the number of students served

**7.6 Non-Exclusive Outcomes** - Outcome-metric pairs are **not mutually exclusive**, i.e., each outcome can be achieved by every student. For example, if using multiple growth outcomes, one outcome might be “typical+” and another outcome might be “high”; if using multiple proficiency outcomes, one outcome might be “meets expectations+” and another might be “exceeds expectations”

## Domain 4: Mutual Accountability

The contract includes agreed-upon commitments made between a district and provider, ensuring each party is responsible for the achievement of student outcomes.

**Standard 8: Minimum Service Requirements** - The contract includes minimum service requirements for all parties.

### Indicators:

**8.1 Student Attendance** - Articulates **minimum attendance requirements** for participating students and the district's responsibility to ensure it is met, e.g., 70% attendance over the duration of the contract (based on the research about effective high-dosage tutoring)

**8.2 Consistent Tutor** - Specifies the provider's responsibility to ensure tutor consistency, e.g., that students have the **same tutor for at least 80%** of tutoring sessions and adjustments to groupings occur sparingly and strategically (based on the research about effective high-dosage tutoring)

**8.3 Platform Access Requirements** - If necessary, specifies requirements for **accessing the platform** (detailed information on required hardware, software, peripherals, bandwidth, etc.) and the district's responsibility to ensure requirements are met

**8.4 Data Sharing Protocol** - Outlines **data sharing** between district and provider for key elements, including district data that enables the provision of instructionally appropriate content for students and provider data that enables continuous improvement

## Domain 4: Mutual Accountability

The contract includes agreed-upon commitments made between a district and provider, ensuring each party is responsible for the achievement of student outcomes.

**Standard 8: Minimum Service Requirements** - The contract includes minimum service requirements for all parties.

### Indicators:

**8.5 Implementation Success Plan** - Includes initial **provider-developed implementation success plan** that outlines the activities needed to support and drive implementation consistent with research-based best practices (including but not limited to: implementation timeline and key support milestones; professional learning plans for a variety of audiences; continuous improvement process, including frequency of data / report review; office hours and on-demand resources to support implementation and troubleshoot issues; and an assigned Client Success Manager and supporting Provider team) and all parties' responsibilities for completing these activities

**8.6 Progress Monitoring Reports** - Identifies the **key reports** (2-3) needed to drive strong implementation and monitor process outcomes at the classroom, school, and district levels - e.g., attendance, participation, student performance, and other key metrics of engagement and progress - and details their availability, including how they can be accessed by all parties and the frequency with which they update

**8.7 Technical Requirements** - If necessary, specifies requirements for **platform performance** (platform uptime and operational status, single sign-on and user verification, SIS and LMS interoperability, system performance and response time, data encryption and cyber protection, and support response time) and the provider's responsibility to ensure requirements are met

**8.8 Support Timeline** - If necessary, specifies a timeframe for when the provider will deliver **technical support** when issues arise with the platform

## Domain 4: Mutual Accountability

The contract includes agreed-upon commitments made between a district and provider, ensuring each party is responsible for the achievement of student outcomes.

**Standard 8: Minimum Service Requirements** - The contract includes minimum service requirements for all parties.

### Indicators:

**8.9 Roster Finalization Timeline** - Specifies a timeline during initial stages of implementation for **finalizing the participating student roster** and computing associated base payment

## Domain 4: Mutual Accountability

The contract includes agreed-upon commitments made between a district and provider, ensuring each party is responsible for the achievement of student outcomes.

**Standard 9: Mutual Accountability Mechanisms** - The contract outlines mutual accountability mechanisms and remedies when responsibilities are not met for all parties.

### Indicators:

**9.1 Missing Assessment Remedy** - Outlines a remedy for any student who is participating but for whom **an assessment score is not available** for determining outcome payment(s)

**9.2 Low Attendance Remedy** - Outlines a remedy for any **student who does not meet the attendance requirements**

**9.3 Tutor Consistency** - Outlines a remedy for any **student for whom the tutor consistency requirement is not met**

**9.4 Roster Modification Process** - Specifies a process for **substituting / removing students** from the roster after it is finalized, including timeline and payment requirements

**9.5 Implementation Plan Remedy** - Outlines a remedy if **any party does not meet the expectations in the Implementation Success Plan**

## Domain 5: Continuous Improvement

The contract establishes a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and collaboration that supports informed, transparent decision-making between districts and providers.

**Standard 10: Partnership** - The contract describes a partnership between the district and provider.

### Indicators:

**10.1 Collaboration** - Articulates how the district and provider will **collaborate to successfully achieve student outcomes**, e.g., proactive communication about important updates, challenges, and opportunities; informal sharing of knowledge and feedback; and other mechanisms that prevent friction and build trust

**10.2 Proactive Problem-Solving** - Specifies that **all parties will proactively identify strategies** to increase / maintain student engagement, attendance, and participation (e.g., session reminders, attendance incentives)

## Domain 5: Continuous Improvement

The contract establishes a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and collaboration that supports informed, transparent decision-making between districts and providers.

**Standard 11: Process Outcomes** - The contract includes process outcomes (indicators of student success and program implementation that are used to inform ongoing learning and continuous improvement but are not tied to payment).

### Indicators:

**11.1 Process Outcomes** - Includes **4-7 process outcomes** and corresponding metrics

**11.2 Service Requirement Metrics** - Includes process outcomes that measure and provide data **for each minimum service requirement**, e.g., student attendance; tutor consistency

**11.3 Improvement and Progress Measures** - Includes process outcomes that can be used to **inform continuous improvement and monitor progress towards achieving payment outcomes**, e.g., lesson / session pass rates; student performance on district or state assessments not tied to payment; feedback from teachers, school, and district leaders; responsiveness to feedback

## Domain 5: Continuous Improvement

The contract establishes a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and collaboration that supports informed, transparent decision-making between districts and providers.

**Standard 12: Continuous Improvement Structures** - The contract includes clear expectations and structures to drive meaningful continuous improvement and progress monitoring.

### Indicators:

**12.1 Provider Meeting Schedule** - Specifies schedule of continuous improvement meetings between the **district lead** and the **provider**, with meetings occurring no less than bi-weekly

**12.2 District Meeting Schedule** - Outlines cadence of continuous improvement meetings, including both provider-led and district-led sessions, for various combinations of **district staff, school leaders, and teachers** as needed to support implementation and progress monitoring (e.g., district data meetings that include cross-departmental district staff; district-provider-school meetings that include school leaders and teachers)

**12.3 Data Use** - Articulates a **plan for data analysis and determination of next steps**, including timelines for data availability and expectations for how process outcomes will be used to inform continuous improvement and monitor progress towards achieving payment outcomes

**12.4 Participants** - Identifies participants - including individuals from both the district and provider **who hold appropriate roles** and levels of **authority** within their organizations - **to act on findings promptly and effectively** as part of the continuous improvement process

## Glossary: Outcomes Based Contracting Terms and Definitions

The terms below will be referenced throughout the Center for OBC Standards of Excellence.

**Base Payment:** Payments that are disbursed for contracted product / service delivery

**Contingent Outcomes Payment:** Payments that are disbursed as students achieve the agreed upon outcomes

**District:** Any organization serving students that enters into a contract with a provider - CMOs, LEAs, regional service centers, county offices of education, state education agencies, etc.

**Implementation Success Plan:** Comprehensive plan that outlines the activities needed to support and drive implementation consistent with research-based best practices - designed and driven by the provider with input from the district - including but not limited to implementation timeline and key support milestones; professional learning plans for a variety of audiences; continuous improvement process, including frequency of data / report review; office hours and on-demand resources to support implementation and troubleshoot issues; and an assigned Client Success Manager and supporting Provider team. This plan articulates the responsibilities for all parties to improve implementation and drive towards agreed-upon student outcomes.

**Metric:** Includes assessment and measure/metric and threshold

**Minimum Service Requirements:** Agreed-upon commitments made between a district and provider that establish baseline service delivery standards necessary for achieving student outcomes

**Mutual Accountability:** Agreed-upon commitments made between a district and provider, ensuring each party is responsible for the achievement of student outcomes

**Mutual Accountability Mechanisms:** Clear, predefined remedies for unmet partnership obligations that maintain trust and drive desired outcomes by making roles and responsibilities explicit

**Outcome:** Growth, gains, achievement, etc.

**Outcome Payment Cap:** Maximum amount paid for each payment outcome in aggregate

**Payment Outcomes:** Indicators of student success that are tied to payment

**Price per Outcome:** Amount paid per student for each payment outcome achieved

**Process Outcomes:** Indicators of student success and program implementation that are used to inform ongoing learning and continuous improvement but are not tied to payment

**Student Outcome:** Measurable indicators of student success (e.g., growth, gains, achievement, proficiency) that demonstrate academic progress



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