How Districts Can Focus on Student Outcomes with **Outcomes-Based Contracts**

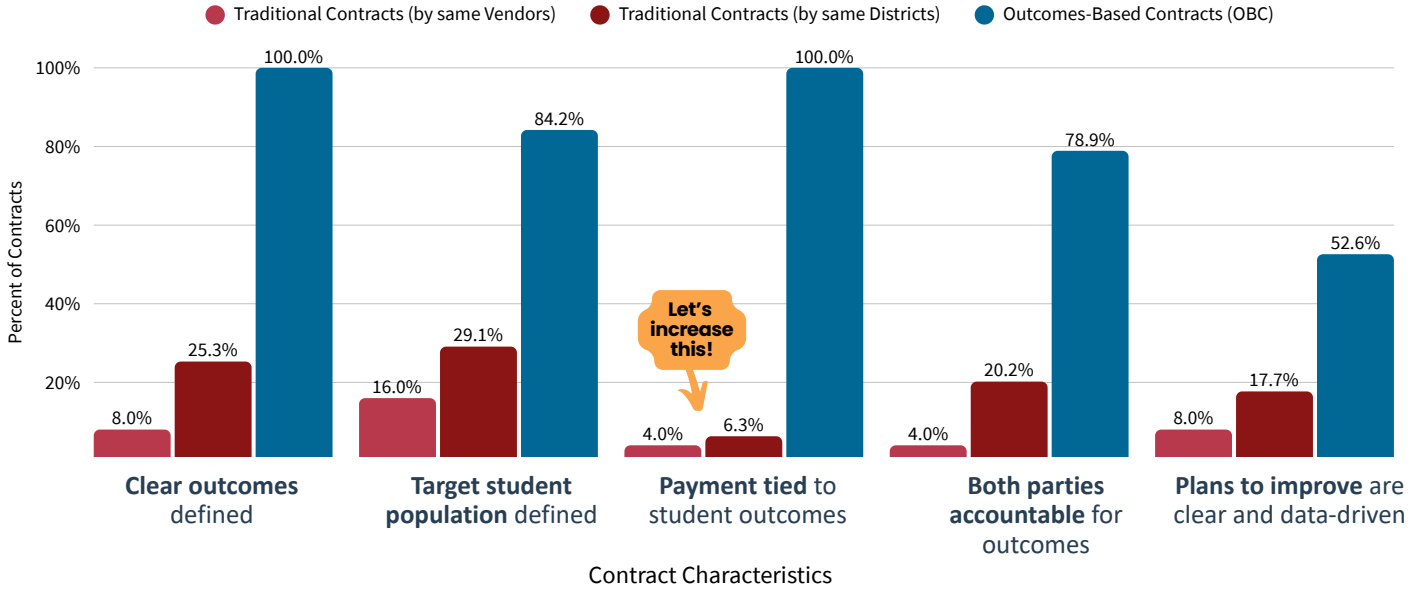
BRIEF SUMMARY

District spending is under the microscope—contracts have potential to better align with student outcomes.

An analysis of 120+ contracts for services like tutoring, curriculum, and edtech found that the vast majority do not define student success, track outcomes, or prioritize the students most in need. Nearly two-thirds of traditional contracts lacked a basic rationale for vendor selection, and fewer than 1 in 5 tied payment to results.

But there's good news: outcomes-based contracts (OBCs) offer a path forward. 100% of OBCs analyzed included clear goals and metrics, and all tied payments to results according to the SCALE Initiative's analysis.

Outcomes-Based Contracts are more likely to center student outcomes:



What this means

- **Districts can use their buying power.** OBC contracts are a powerful way to help districts realize their buying power to drive student impact.
- **Contracts are not just legal formalities, they are strategic tools** that can either reinforce the status quo or drive innovation.
- **Districts need support and resources.** Widespread adoption of OBCs will require changes in procurement practice, capacity, and even policy.
- **Students stand to benefit.** Embracing OBCs can strengthen district–vendor relationships and, most importantly, improve the services that students receive.

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