

BCBAs in Schools: Guidelines and Professional Standards for Connecticut

Adapted from the Virginia Guidelines for the
Provision of Behavior Analysis in Public Schools
(Virginia Department of Education)



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Commonly Used Abbreviations

ABA: applied behavior analysis

BACB: Behavior Analyst Certification Board

BCaBA: Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst

BCBA: Board Certified Behavior Analyst

BCBA-D: Board Certified Behavior Analyst — Doctoral

CSDE: Connecticut State Department of Education

BIP: behavior intervention plan

FAPE: free appropriate public education

FBA: functional behavior assessment

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP: individualized education program

LBA: licensed behavior analyst

LRE: least restrictive environment

PPT: planning and placement team

RBT: Registered Behavior Technician

VDOE: Virginia Department of Education

Introduction

The purpose of this document, *BCBAs in Schools: Guidelines and Professional Standards for Connecticut*, is to provide educators with an understanding of the training and expertise of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts (BCaBAs), and Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs), and the unique application of their training to school-based settings. This document was developed to **define and clarify** the scope of practice for behavior analysts working in schools.

This document is divided into two parts. **Part 1** provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of behavior analysts in schools and includes guidance for the provision of applied behavior analysis (ABA) in schools, the range of services provided by BCBAs that align with student-specific programmatic and/or school/districtwide goals, and considerations for personnel who provide ABA services in public school settings. **Part 2** presents the professional standards that serve as a compass for school-based behavior analysts, including legal and ethical considerations, evidence-based instruction, and the tenets of working collaboratively to build sustainable systems capacity.

This document was developed to promote meaningful programming and supports for students who *may* receive ABA services. It is important to note that while schools may provide ABA services and supports, they are not required to do so unless the planning and placement team (PPT) determines that these supports are required for a student to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). ABA is one of several approaches to supporting students; the approach used should be based on its efficacy with each individual student's needs.

The application of ABA in schools is relatively recent, and as such, clear comprehensive professional standards by which school-based behavior analysts can craft their skills and expertise are essential to maximize efficient, effective outcomes for students. The professional standards delineated within this document are adapted from the standards developed in Virginia that complement the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) guidance document. The standards are meant to add an educational context to the competencies (i.e., *BACB Task List*, 5th Ed., 2017) and ethics code (*Ethics Code for Behavior Ana-*

lysts, BACB, 2020b) by which all behavior analysts adhere to and practice.

These standards also ensure alignment of expectations and responsibilities within the multidisciplinary team by drawing upon best practices in related fields, including the *Advanced Special Education Preparation Standards* (CEC, 2015), the *Professional Standards of the National Association of School Psychologists* (NASP, 2020), and the *National Educational Leadership Preparation Program Recognition Standards* (NPBEA, 2018).

School-based behavior analysts engage in a multitude of roles and responsibilities within educational settings. The professional standards delineated herein aim to ensure that behavior analysts define and apply appropriate practices within their scope of competence, and that collaboration, capacity-building, and positive outcomes for students are at the center of the work.

This guidance document was developed with input from a variety of individuals with diverse perspectives across schools, states, and organizations. Initial efforts followed an extensive review of *Guidelines for the Provision of Behavior Analysis in Schools* (Virginia Department of Education, 2020) and adaptation, with permission, to the unique needs of Connecticut.

Members of the Connecticut Association for Behavior Analysis (CTABA), the professional organization serving BCBAs in Connecticut, engaged in writing, active dialogue, and feedback on the document over several months. CTABA members who are school-based practitioners representing more than 15 school districts with diverse needs participated in the adaptation process and provided feedback on all aspects of the proposed guidance.

Furthermore, this guidance was reviewed by a diverse group of relevant key participants including agencies supporting families, attorneys for families and for school districts, school districts, and regional educational service centers (RESC) representatives. Feedback from sessions is summarized within this document.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) recommends that this guidance be used in concert with local school district policies and procedures to develop frameworks and practices that maximize positive student outcomes.

Acknowledgments

The CSDE acknowledges with appreciation the contributions of school-based BCBAs, district administrators, families, community partners, the RESC Alliance, the CTABA, and others, for their input, expertise, feedback, and support in the development of this guidance document.

The CSDE specifically acknowledges the work of Dr. Jennifer Connolly and Dr. Ravit R. Stein from EASTCONN in the visioning of this important resource supporting BCBAs, BCaBAs, and RBTs working in Connecticut schools. Please see [appendix A](#) for a complete list of contributors.

Part 1: The Roles of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) in Schools

What Is a BCBA?

Overview

A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) is an individual who holds a graduate-level certification in a science of behavior called **behavior analysis** (Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2023b). When a practitioner has a BCBA certification, they have taken specific coursework in behavior, have received training in providing behavior-analytic services, and have passed a comprehensive examination (BACB, 2023). BCBAs study patterns of behavior to create individualized plans to help learners succeed and can supervise the work of others who implement behavior-analytic interventions. The knowledge and skills that a BCBA needs to successfully practice are included in a guiding document called the [BCBA Task List](#) (BACB, 2017). As part of their practice, BCBAs are also required to follow a specific code of [ethical guidelines](#) (BACB, 2020b).

There are multiple levels of certification relevant to behavior analysis, including Board Certified Behavior Analyst–Doctoral (BCBA–D), BCBA, Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA), and Registered Behavior Technician (RBT). For a summary of the certification levels, see Table 1, adapted from the [Virginia Guidelines for the provision of behavior analysis in public schools](#) (VDOE, 2020).

Table 1: Summary of BACB certification levels

Credential	State Licensure Designation	Description	Education	Practice
BCBA–D	Licensed behavior analyst (LBA)	A certified behavior analyst with doctoral training	Doctoral degree	May practice independently
BCBA	LBA	A certified behavior analyst with training at the graduate level	Master’s degree	May practice independently
BCaBA	No state licensure	A certified behavior analyst with training at the undergraduate level	Bachelor’s degree	Must practice under the supervision of a BCBA or BCBA–D
RBT	No state licensure	An individual who practices ABA under the supervision of a certified behavior analyst	High school diploma	Must practice under the supervision of a BCaBA, BCBA, or BCBA–D

Despite serving many different roles across a variety of settings, all BCBAs, BCBA–Ds, BCaBAs, and RBTs use an approach called **applied behavior analysis (ABA)**.

What Is ABA?

Scientists have conducted thousands of studies over a century to identify laws and principles around behavior. They have learned that the behaviors we engage in follow a set of predictable patterns (BACB, n.d.a). ABA is an applied science based on those principles of behavior. BCBAs use the science of ABA to develop strategies and interventions that help others learn new behaviors and improve existing ones (Cooper et al., 2020). There are a few key characteristics of ABA:

- ABA focuses on learning and promoting **socially significant** behaviors that are important to the learner, their family, and society.
- Using ABA, BCBAs analyze and define behavior in a way that is **specific, objective, and measurable**.
- The science of ABA guides BCBAs in **measuring behavior to determine the effectiveness of recommended interventions**, as defined by the learner and the team supporting that learner. BCBAs receive extensive training in data collection and analysis methods.

Common ABA Misconceptions

There are several common misconceptions about ABA that are worth addressing, as educators who have heard these misconceptions may be resistant to or hesitant about working with a BCBA (Fielding et al., 2013). See Table 2 for a summary of common ABA misconceptions.

Table 2: Common ABA misconceptions

Misconception	Explanation
I thought ABA was only used for autistic individuals.	While many interventions guided by ABA have been empirically validated for supporting autistic learners, ABA is a science of learning, the principles of which support a broad array of settings, people, and areas. For example, ABA has been used in sports psychology, health and fitness, substance use disorders, gerontology, businesses, public health, and classroom management. See the BCBA's Applied Behavior Analysis Subspecialty Areas (2023a) for more information.
Isn't ABA the same as DTI?	DTI stands for discrete trial instruction, and it is an intensive, specific type of instruction that uses the principles of ABA. A learner may benefit from DTI when they require explicit and repetitive contingencies to learn. DTI is just one of the many types of interventions and strategies informed by ABA. A BCBA may recommend DTI for a learner, but not all students who could benefit from ABA need DTI. Keep in mind that to implement a DTI program, the team needs specific training and support, and the development of the program requires time and resources.
Isn't ABA just bribing? OR I really don't want to use food to motivate my students.	Reinforcement is a pivotal principle of ABA. All behaviors we learn or engage in continuously are reinforced in some way. For example, most of us would not keep going to work if we did not receive a paycheck. BCBAs use and evaluate reinforcement to motivate learners. Some students may require reinforcement that is more concrete than praise or good grades. In some rare instances, reinforcement that is edible, like a student's favorite snack, may be considered. Regardless of the type of reinforcement used, BCBAs work with the team to ensure that the reinforcers used are safe and acceptable to all members of the team.

Misconception	Explanation
In ABA, they just focus on getting rid of problematic behaviors, right?	The science of ABA informs interventions for both increasing and decreasing behavior. Specifically, the field highlights ways to teach new behaviors, increase behaviors that are meaningful for an individual, and set up an environment so that positive behaviors can flourish. While there are also interventions designed to reduce interfering behavior, BCBAs strive to create well-rounded programming that includes ways to set up an individual for success, teach positive behaviors, and reduce behaviors that interfere with the individual's well-being.

For a quick reference on common misconceptions of ABA, see [“Myths & Facts about Applied Behavior Analysis”](#) from the Kennedy Krieger Institute (2016).

ABA in Schools

ABA is the application of the science of learning and behavior and thus can be used to improve teaching practices and increase student access to learning across content areas, grade levels, and student populations (BACB, n.d.b). Subareas of education in which ABA has been effectively applied include, but are not limited to, classroom management, curriculum and instruction, educational technology, schoolwide positive behavior support, educational systems, and teacher education. Many evidence-based ABA interventions are already used as part of quality educational practices, including but not limited to specific praise, modeling, using visuals, prompting, and reinforcement. However, simply implementing one of these strategies does not mean a practitioner is using ABA (VDOE, 2020).

For more information about behavior analysis in education, see the [BACB’s “Behavior Analysis in Education” handout \(n.d.b\)](#).

What Do I Need to Know About the Certification Board for BCBAs?

BCBAs are certified through the **Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB)**. The BACB is a nonprofit corporation that was established in 1998 in order to “meet professional credentialing needs identified by behavior analysts, governments, and consumers of behavior analysis services” (BACB, n.d.a). In addition, the BACB is the authority for BCBAs on establishing practice standards and ethics requirements and implements a disciplinary system for BCBAs who do not adhere to those requirements (for more information, see [“Ethics and Educational Law”](#) in part 2 of this document). The BACB regularly updates guiding documents for BCBAs, BCaBAs, and RBTs, and each certified/registered practitioner is responsible for staying informed about those changes.

What Is a Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA)?

In Connecticut, behavior analysts must be licensed to practice in addition to having their BCBA certification. The **Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH)** is responsible for the licensing of behavior analysts in Connecticut. The licensed behavior analyst (LBA) designation is used for individuals who are behavior analysts licensed by the state and can practice behavior analysis in Connecticut. With few exceptions, BCBAs may not practice in Connecticut unless they have a current LBA license in Connecticut.

Note: Throughout the document/guidelines, the use of the term BCBA will refer to a BCBA who is also credentialed through the Connecticut DPH as an LBA.

What Is the BACB Ethics Code?

BCBAs are obligated to adhere to the specific ethical principles and standards found in the [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts \(BACB, 2020b\)](#). The ethics code guides the decisions BCBAs make across any setting or situation. Violating the ethics code could lead to **disciplinary action** for the BCBA, such as the BCBA’s certification being invalidated, revoked, or suspended, practice restrictions, or mandatory disciplinary supervision (BACB, 2019). **It is recommended that school personnel who oversee BCBAs in schools talk with their BCBAs about their ethical obligations as they relate to their role in the school.**

What Are the Roles of BCBAs in Schools?

Overview

The role of a BCBA in schools varies depending on a variety of factors, including the size and needs of the school, the experience and skills of the BCBA, the experience and skills of the educators in the school, and the roles and responsibilities of other support staff in the school. **It is critical that BCBAs and their supervisors in the school co-create a clear and comprehensive written description of the roles and responsibilities of the BCBA in their district.** The roles and responsibilities of a BCBA in schools should align with the *BCBA Task List* (BACB, 2017) and the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* (BACB, 2020b). Anything outside of the *BCBA Task List* and/or outside the scope of the BCBA's competence should not be included under a BCBA's roles/responsibilities in schools. Table 3 below summarizes common roles and responsibilities BCBAs may hold in schools. BCBAs are likely to have a combination of multiple roles within their school.

Table 3: Roles and Responsibilities of BCBAs in Schools

1. Assessment			
Lead or support teams in conducting functional behavior assessments and other relevant assessments of behavior, e.g., Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP); Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS); Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS); Essential for Living (EFL); Promoting Emergence of Advanced Knowledge (PEAK); preference assessments. Additional behavior-related assessments that may fall under the scope of a BCBA include ecological assessments, certain rating scales, and other criterion-referenced assessments on which the BCBA has been trained.			
2. Data Collection and Analysis			
Assist teams in collecting and analyzing data related to interventions, individualized education programs (IEPs), skill acquisition programming, or classwide, schoolwide, or districtwide initiatives.			
3. Training			
a. Supervision		b. Capacity Building	
Supervise BCaBAs, RBTs, or other educators in implementing behavior analytic services and interventions (i.e., services and interventions that align with ABA).		Provide coaching and professional development opportunities for educators and families in areas related to ABA.	
4. Intervention			
a. Indirect Individualized Student Intervention	b. Direct Individualized Student Service	c. Classroom Management	d. Systems Support
Design and implement behavior-analytic services and interventions based on assessments and data.	Provide direct behavior analytic services with students.	Support educators and teams in creating classroom environments that effectively utilize behavior strategies.	Collaborate on teams in charge of systems initiatives, such as positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), scientific research-based interventions (SRBI), and/or multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).

BCBAs and Crisis Management

Because of the BCBA's expertise in behavior management, BCBAs are often called on to respond in the moment to situations in which student behavior has escalated to an intensity that no longer feels manageable to the educators involved. This may range from situations in which students are engaging in behaviors that could harm themselves or others to situations in which students are disruptive in class and the teacher is seeking support. A few notes regarding the role of BCBAs in **crisis management**:

- Like all school employees, BCBAs need to be provided with the additional and **appropriate training and certification** required to be able to respond to crisis management situations in the school (C.G.S. §10-236b).
- **According to the BCBA ethics code, BCBAs need to obtain informed consent prior to intervention.** As crisis response may be considered intervention, when possible, a BCBA should avoid providing crisis intervention for students with whom informed consent has not been appropriately documented. However, if a student for whom informed consent has not been obtained is engaging in a behavior that could cause imminent harm to themselves or others, and no other trained adult is in the vicinity, the BCBA may have to respond until other adults arrive. For a full definition of informed consent and assent, see "[Ethics and Educational Law](#)" in part 2.
- While there may be times in which the BCBAs presence is beneficial and/or necessary when student behavior has escalated, it is important that the BCBA and their supervisor have a **clear system of communication** to ensure that responding to these situations is not preventing the BCBA from fulfilling their agreed-upon role. A BCBA is typically more impactful when they have the availability to develop interventions to prevent unsafe behaviors than when responding to unsafe behaviors.

BCBAs and Collaboration

The potential roles of a BCBA will likely overlap with other professionals in a school, including teachers, related service providers, and other mental/behavioral health providers. As such, interdisciplinary collaboration and communication are critical components of determining the BCBA's role on a school team. See "[Working Collaboratively](#)" in part 2 for more information on interdisciplinary collaboration for school-based BCBAs.

How Do You Determine the Number of Students a BCBA Will Support?

The number of students a BCBA supports will vary greatly depending on their agreed-upon role within the school. A BCBA who is providing direct service or oversight for students with intensive ABA programming will require a smaller caseload than BCBAs who are focused on capacity building, systems-work, and supervision. Other duties that are not specifically related to individual students, such as the supervision of RBTs and/or BCaBAs, will also affect the number of students a BCBA can support. It is recommended that the school-based BCBA work with their supervisor and administrators to ensure they have an appropriate workload based on their scope of competence and agreed-upon role.

When determining an appropriate number of students a BCBA can support, consider the following factors for each of the cases:

1. The **amount** of BCBA services listed in the students' IEPs.
2. The **frequency** of support and training needed for school staff and the students' families.
3. Whether or not the BCBA needs to create **separate instructional programming** for the student.
4. The **impact of the interfering behaviors** being addressed (i.e., do the behaviors pose a safety risk to the student or others?).

A BCBA will have the capacity to support a smaller number of students if the students have high levels of BCBA services listed in the IEP, frequent contact with the student and family is needed, separate DTI programming is needed, and unsafe behaviors occur, as compared to a group of students whose needs are infrequent or less intense.

BCBAs and Special Education

According to a survey study conducted by Layden et al. (2024), one of the most common roles a BCBA has in schools is programming for students receiving special education services. Even within special education, the role of the BCBA will vary depending on the needs of the student as determined by a planning and placement team (PPT).

When Is a BCBA Included as Part of the Student's PPT?

A PPT includes the student, the student's parent, a general education teacher of the student (if the student is or may be participating in the general education environment), a special education teacher of the student, a representative of the school district, a person who can interpret evaluation results, a paraeducator if applicable, and any other individual who has knowledge of special expertise regarding the student. This "other individual" is included at the discretion of the parent or school ([CSDE, 2023](#)). The BCBA may fall under the category of "other individual." The PPT will determine if a BCBA's expertise is **educationally relevant and necessary** to support the student's IEP, given a student's educational program components and how they intersect with other educational related services in terms of potential gaps, overlaps, and contradictions (Giangreco et al., 2021).

See below for a non-exhaustive initial list of questions to consider regarding the appropriateness of including a BCBA as part of a student's PPT:

1. Is an **assessment** of socially significant behaviors needed that requires the additional expertise of a BCBA (e.g., functional behavior assessment, VB-MAPP, ABLLS, PEAK, preference assessment)?
2. Does the PPT require consultation in **defining measurable goals** or developing a data analysis system to analyze those goals?
3. Does the PPT require consultation in determining **methods or reinforcement systems** that align with ABA principles?
4. Does the student require access to **ABA services**? (for more specific information on this question, see "[When Might a Student Need ABA Services During the School Day?](#)" on page 16).

When a BCBA is invited to be a part of a PPT, the specific roles and responsibilities of the BCBA for that student must be **clearly defined**. As described above, the BCBA's role may be in any of the following areas, including, but not limited to assessment, designing individualized student intervention, data collection and analysis, supervision, training, and capacity building. The BCBA's role may be defined as consultation with the team or consultation with a program, or the BCBA may hold the role of providing direct services. The BCBAs' ethics code requires specific steps and components of informed consent for services. (see "[Ethics and Educational Law](#)" in part 2 for more information).

BCBA and General Education

BCBAs may also provide support outside of special education. Given their training in ABA as well as data collection and analysis, the roles of BCBAs most commonly suited for supporting general education in schools include (a) capacity-building; and (b) systems-support.

Capacity-Building

BCBAs are trained in implementing evidence-based training modalities and may provide professional development opportunities for others in areas relevant to ABA. This may include workshops, coaching, or developing other training materials and resources. Training relevant to schools that BCBAs may be able to provide include, but are not limited to, data collection, data-based decision-making, evidence-based classroom management strategies, reinforcement strategies, teaching strategies, and proactive/prevention strategies (e.g., visual supports, active supervision, environmental setup).

BCBAs are required to practice within their **own scope of competence** and should only provide training on topics that are within their own area of expertise. BCBAs can provide general training without the need for informed consent. However, consent must be obtained prior to the delivery of student-specific training (i.e., training that is on a specific student's plan).

Systems Support

A BCBA's knowledge and training may be well suited to support schoolwide or systems initiatives. In particular, a BCBA will likely be able to help develop measurable goals, create data systems to monitor the progress of initiatives and contribute ideas related to ABA including reinforcement, teaching strategies, and other contingencies. Three common schoolwide initiatives that may benefit from the contributions of a BCBA include, but are not limited to:

- **Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS):** PBIS is an evidence-based, tiered framework for supporting students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health ([PBIS.org](https://www.pbis.org)). PBIS is a framework that is closely aligned with the principles of ABA (Horner & Sugai, 2015), and a school-based BCBA may be a key member of the PBIS team. BCBAs may be able to help with the data systems to monitor outcomes and the practices and systems that are aligned with ABA.
- **Attendance teams:** Connecticut legislation ([C.G.S. Sec 10-198c](#)) and priorities have underscored the importance of early detection of chronic absence and truancy and the promotion of schoolwide efforts to improve attendance. BCBAs' expertise in analyzing data and developing interventions to increase attendance and engagement may be beneficial to improving outcomes for all students.
- **Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS):** An MTSS framework provides a structure to ensure all students and staff access appropriate levels of evidence-based intervention and support across both academic and social-emotional and behavioral skills ([CSDE, 2020](#)). MTSS implementation emphasizes measurable **outcomes** using **data** to monitor those outcomes, defining a continuum of evidence-based **practices**, and **systems** to support the implementation of selected practices. A key aspect of MTSS is defining supports across multiple "tiers" (i.e., Tiers 1, 2, and 3). Table 4 overviews the various roles a BCBA may hold across tiers in an MTSS model.

Table 4: The BCBA role in a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS)

	Tier 1 Schoolwide and Classroom Supports	Tier 2 Targeted Supports	Tier 3 Individualized Supports
Assessment	• Conduct school- and classroom-based needs assessments • Observe classrooms	• Support screening process to identify students in need of additional support	• Conduct functional behavior assessments (FBAs)
Intervention	• Support teachers in developing classroom management plans • Recommend changes to classroom management plans as needed (or refer students for Tier 2 supports)	• Select appropriate targeted behavior support strategies • Recommend changes to targeted behavior supports as needed (or refer to Tier 3) • In some cases, implement targeted behavior supports directly with the student	• Develop behavior intervention plans (BIPs) and crisis/safety plans • Recommend changes to BIPs/crisis plans as needed • In some cases, implement a BIP directly with the student • In some cases, respond to crises

	Tier 1 Schoolwide and Classroom Supports	Tier 2 Targeted Supports	Tier 3 Individualized Supports
Data Systems	• Attend schoolwide MTSS meetings • Develop schoolwide data collection systems • Analyze schoolwide behavior data with team • Develop classwide data collection systems • Monitor fidelity of classroom management plans • Analyze classwide behavior data with teachers	• Develop Tier 2 data collection systems • Monitor fidelity of targeted behavior support implementation • Analyze student behavior data with interventionists	• Develop data collection systems for FBA and BIP • Monitor fidelity of BIP/crisis plan implementation • Analyze student behavior data with interventionists
Training	• Develop and deliver professional development to school staff • Train and coach teachers to implement classroom management plans with fidelity • Train and coach school team members to collect student behavior data	• Train and coach interventionists to implement targeted behavior supports with fidelity • Train and coach interventionists to collect student behavior data	• Train and coach interventionists to implement BIPs and crisis plans with fidelity • Train and coach interventionists to collect student behavior data
Informed Consent	• Generally, not required	• Required only if the intervention/ approach is student-specific and outside of typical educational practices	• Required

Important notes regarding BCBAs and systems-level work:

- Although BCBAs may have foundational knowledge and expertise related to a particular systems initiative (e.g., PBIS or MTSS), not all BCBAs are specifically trained in these initiatives and may need additional support and training in order to actively contribute to the teams.
- Informed consent in systems-level work is context-dependent as relevant to the degree to which interventions are student-specific. BCBAs will need to consider an ethical informed consent process before becoming involved in any ongoing conversation about a student-specific plan, even if this plan is discussed within the context of a tiered support.

Four BCBA Case Examples

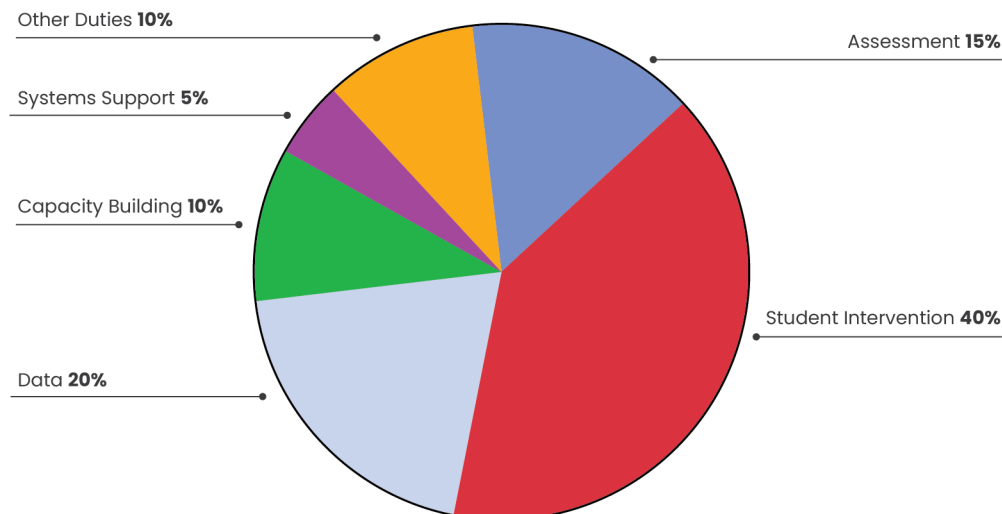
The following section describes four case examples of the BCBA role in schools.

Example 1: BCBA in District A

In District A, the BCBA was hired to support four specialized programs for complex learners across three schools. The BCBA is in the elementary school two days per week, the middle school two days per week, and the high school one day per week. The BCBA worked closely with the teams across the schools to develop clear roles and responsibilities for all team members associated with the programs as established by the district/school administrators.

Role (District A)	Specifics
Assessment	The BCBA provides consultative support in completing assessments like the ABLLS, AFLS, or VB-MAPP. The case manager leads the process, writes the report, and seeks out guidance from the BCBA when needed. The BCBA also leads the FBA process and writes the report for students within the programs who require them. Members of the PPT may help with aspects of the FBA process.
Individualized Student Intervention	The BCBA collaboratively creates and maintains behavior intervention plans with the case manager. Within this category, the BCBA also attends PPT meetings and other team meetings; and regularly communicates with parents.
Data Collection and Analysis	The BCBA supports the creation of data collection systems for assigned IEP goals/objectives and supports the team in analyzing the data to make decisions. The RBTs collect and enter the data.
Capacity Building	With the case manager, the BCBA co-creates an ongoing training plan for the staff within the programs to build their skills. The training plan consists of didactic training, modeling, and ongoing observations with feedback.
Systems Support	While the BCBA is not involved in systems outside of the programs, the BCBA collaborates to build systematic supports within the programs ensuring alignment of systems across the school buildings.
Other School Duties	Travel between schools during the day, non-student-related meetings, and other school duties.

Distribution of Roles for Example 1: District A



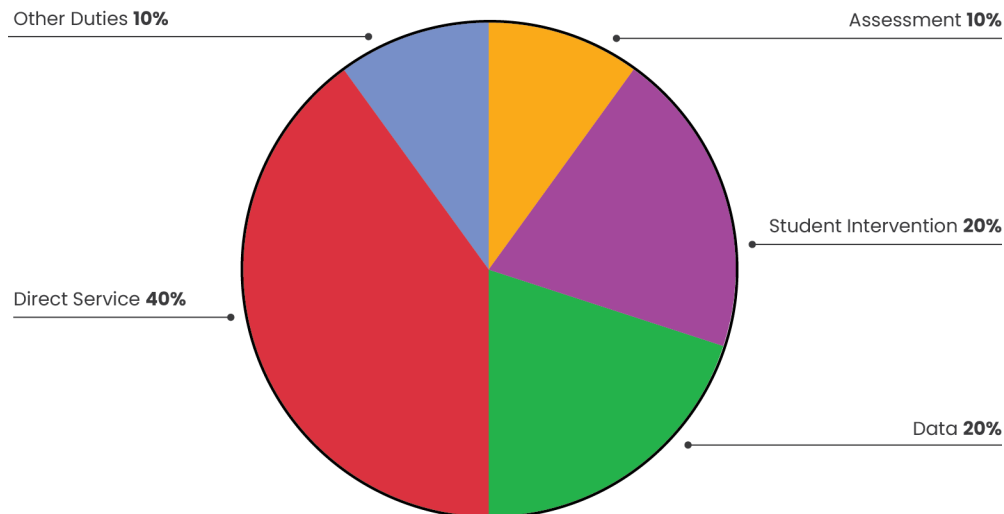
Number of Students Supported by the BCBA: 24 across three schools

Example 2: BCBA in District B

In District B, the BCBA is assigned to one school and supports a small number of students with complex learning needs. The BCBA is one of five other BCBAs in the district, and the BCBA group has defined roles and responsibilities based on each of the BCBAs' scope of competence, as well as the district's needs. The administration has determined that there is a small number of students for whom direct BCBA support is needed.

Role (District B)	Specifics
Assessment	The BCBA conducts the FBAs for all students they have been assigned.
Individualized Student Intervention	The BCBA creates and manages all BIPs, updating when needed, and monitoring implementation throughout the day. The BCBA also attends PPT and other team meetings and connects with parents.
Data Collection and Analysis	The BCBA creates the data collection systems for assigned IEP goals/objectives, collects data, enters data, and analyzes the data for the team.
Direct Service	The BCBA provides direct service for a portion of each day for all students they support.
Capacity Building	The BCBA trains other members of the team on the BIP and monitors the fidelity of the plan.
Other School Duties	Non-student-related meetings, and other school duties.

Distribution of Roles for Example 2: District B



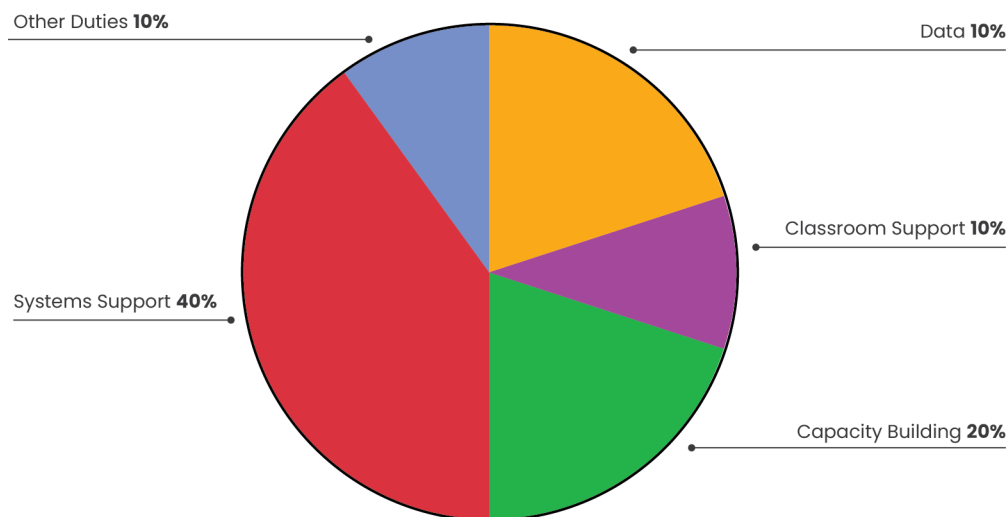
Number of Students Supported by the BCBA: 4

Example 3: BCBA in District C

In District C, the BCBA is the only behavior analyst in the district. Because of all the behavior needs and the BCBA's expertise in PBIS and systems support, the BCBA spends most of their time supporting districtwide and schoolwide initiatives. The BCBA is not included on any student IEPs, and instead leads the PBIS team and is heavily involved in the school's MTSS process. The BCBA also leads an initiative to increase meaningful training for educators and paraprofessionals in areas related to positive behavior strategies.

Role (District C)	Specifics
Data Collection and Analysis	The BCBA supports data systems for each initiative.
Capacity Building	The BCBA has created and led the implementation of a training plan to support all educators in strategies related to behavior.
Classroom Management	The BCBA supports educators in creating classroom environments that help students succeed.
Systems Support	The BCBA leads the PBIS team and is heavily involved in the district's MTSS process.
Other School Duties	Non-student-related meetings, and other school duties.

Distribution of Roles for Example 3: District C



Number of Students Supported by the BCBA:

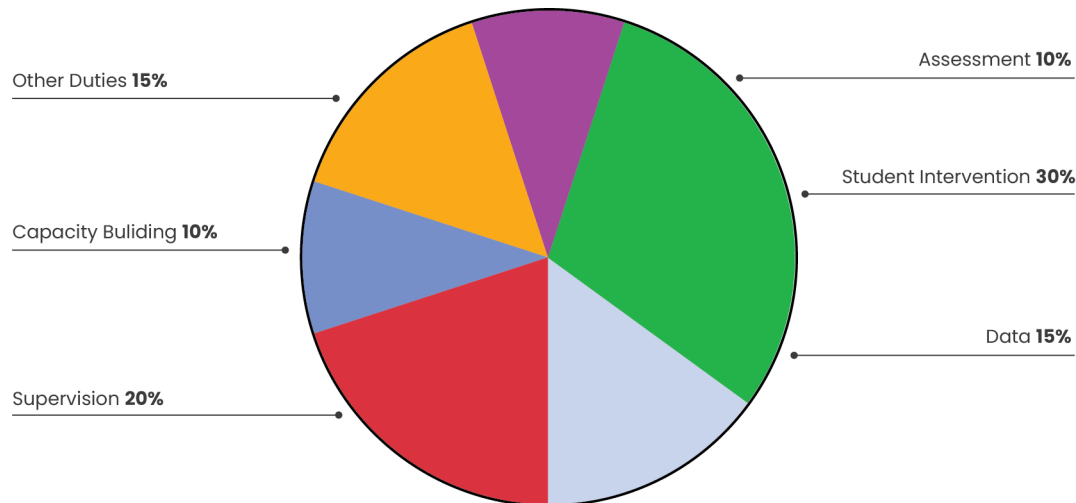
While most students in the school are supported indirectly, the BCBA does not have any students supported on an individualized basis.

Example 4: BCBA in District D

In District D, the BCBA oversees three RBTs and supports students who have BCBA support included on their IEPs. For each student they support, the BCBA works collaboratively with the student's team to develop the individualized strategies and interventions needed for the student to access FAPE.

Role (District D)	Specifics
Assessment	The BCBA supports the team in relevant assessments for each student. Because of the size of the BCBA's caseload, the BCBA supports the team in assessing but does not lead the assessment process.
Individualized Student Intervention	The BCBA supports the team in creating BIPs that help each student succeed. In this category, the BCBA also attends PPT and other team meetings and connects with parents.
Data Collection and Analysis	The BCBA supports data systems for each student. The RBTs help with data collection and entry.
Supervision	The BCBA supervises at least 5% of each RBT's time, including individual meetings with each RBT, group supervision, observations, and delegating the RBTs' roles and responsibilities.
Capacity Building	The BCBA supports the creation of a training plan for each team. The RBT helps implement the training plan.
Other School Duties	Non-student-related meetings, and other school duties.

Distribution of Roles in Example 4: District D



Number of Students Supported by the BCBA: 15

What Are the Roles of Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) and Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts (BCaBAs) in Schools?

What Do I Need to Know About the Role of RBTs in Schools?

The Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) is an entry-level credential awarded by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) upon completion of a specific set of requirements. The RBT assists in delivering behavior analytic services to students **under the close supervision** of a BCBA or a BCaBA and is not considered an independent practitioner (BACB, 2022b). In addition, BACB has created an *RBT Task List* (2nd Ed., [BACB, 2018](#)) and an *RBT Ethics Code* (2.0) ([BACB, 2021](#)) that outline the scope of practice and ethical guidelines, respectively, to which all RBTs are responsible to adhere. Consistent with the *RBT Task List*, there are several tasks RBTs are qualified to implement in the school setting, including but not limited to:

- Record and enter student academic and/or behavioral **data**.
- Conduct preference assessments and assist in the delivery of other types of **student assessment**.
- Implement **behavior-based instructional strategies**.
- Implement behavior intervention plans (BIPs) and other **behavior-based interventions** to support students by reducing interfering behavior and teaching prosocial replacement behavior.
- Complete **treatment fidelity** checklists.
- Assist in **training and modeling** for staff.
- **Work directly with students** during instructional activities and in crisis management situations to support effective outcomes.

RBTs should not be given responsibilities that are outside their scope of training (e.g., independently conducting FBAs or creating behavior programming).

What Does RBT Supervision Entail?

To practice as an RBT in any setting, the RBT must have on record with the BACB an RBT supervisor and/or an RBT requirements coordinator. Any BCBA or BCaBA responsible for supervising RBTs must have completed an eight-hour training on the [BACB Supervision Training Curriculum Outline 2.0](#) to be considered qualified to supervise. BCBAs or BCaBAs who have not taken the training based on this training curriculum **may not supervise RBTs** in any setting. Since an RBT cannot be unsupervised at any time, each RBT is responsible for following the steps outlined by the BACB to inactivate their RBT credential if they do not have a qualified supervisor. Schools must ensure that each RBT has a qualified BCBA or BCaBA to provide ongoing supervision.

An RBT supervisor is a BCBA or BCaBA who is responsible for the services provided by an RBT. An RBT requirements coordinator is a BCBA who is responsible for ensuring that required ongoing supervision for all RBTs within an organization or school is met. An RBT requirements coordinator may also function as an RBT supervisor and may directly supervise one or more RBTs ([BACB, 2022b](#)).

All RBTs must receive supervision from a BCBA or BCaBA for a minimum of **5% of the total number of hours** they spend each month providing behavior analytic services. For example, if an RBT works a total of six hours per day five days a week providing behavior analytic services in December, the minimum number of total supervision hours the RBT must receive in December is equal to six hours.

6 hours x 5 days = 30 hours of behavior analytic work per week

30 hours x 4 weeks = 120 hours of behavior analytic work per month

120 x .05 = 6 hours of supervision per month

RBT supervision activities should take place only during the approved workday and must be consistent with the RBT scope of practice as outlined in the RBT Task List (2nd Ed., [BACB, 2018](#)). RBT supervision may be conducted one-to-one or in small groups (no more than 50% of total supervision time each month) in situations with the supervisor observing the RBT's work performance in the classroom and offering feedback. Both the RBT and supervisor are responsible for recording and maintaining basic supervision records to account for the provision of all required RBT supervision. If an RBT wishes to continue maintaining their RBT certification, a BCBA or BCaBA must complete an annual **Renewal RBT Competency Assessment** with the RBT to ensure they continue to meet the BACB's minimum competency standards for RBTs. Each RBT is responsible for carrying out the process to maintain their certification without lapse.

What happens if an RBT is not properly supervised? Like BCBAs, RBTs can be subject to auditing from the BACB. If the RBT is found to be substantially noncompliant with supervision requirements, their certification **may be terminated**.

What do I need to know about the RBT Ethics Code? Besides adhering to the "Professional Responsibility for Educator Guidelines," RBTs must also adhere to the *RBT Ethics Code*. Relevant for schools, RBTs must only provide supports that are within their role and overseen by their supervisor.

What is the difference between an RBT and a paraeducator? An RBT and paraeducator both assist in the delivery of instructional and related services to students, and, in both roles, the ultimate responsibility for student programs lies with the certified and licensed staff ([Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students Birth to 21, CSDE, 2012](#)). The table below summarizes the differences between a paraeducator and an RBT.

Paraeducator	RBT
Connecticut does not require specific certification to become a paraeducator.	RBTs must be certified with the BACB to practice as an RBT.
Paraeducators report to and are evaluated by educators. Their duties are aligned with the needs of the educator overseeing them.*	An RBT's behavior analytic work must be overseen and evaluated by a BCBA or BCaBA. Their duties are aligned with the <i>RBT Task List</i> and behavior analysis.
All paraeducators are evaluated by their school district in six specific areas, though each district may have its own methods of evaluation.	RBTs are evaluated by their BCBAs once per year using a specific competency exam that is based on the <i>RBT Task List</i> .

*Note: A paraeducator may be assigned to provide one-to-one support for a student who accesses services from a BCBA. In such cases, while the paraeducator still reports to their assigned supervisor, a BCBA may provide behavioral training and feedback to the paraeducator in collaboration with the student's case manager. Clear and frequent communication must occur between a paraeducator, the case manager, and the BCBA to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear.

What Do I Need to Know About the Role of BCaBAs in Schools?

According to the BCaBA handbook ([BACB, 2022a](#)), a Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst is an undergraduate-level certification in behavior analysis. Professionals certified at the BCaBA level provide behavior-analytic services **under the supervision of a BCBA**. BCaBAs have a bachelor's degree or higher with specific behavior-analytic coursework and have completed supervised fieldwork in behavior analysis (1,000 hours or more). BCaBAs follow the same ethics code as BCBAs, but they follow their own task list ([BCaBA Task List, 5th Ed., BACB, 2020a](#)) that defines their scope of practice. Relevant to schools, BCaBAs can engage in the following non-exhaustive list, under the supervision of a BCBA:

- Design, implement, and analyze various **data collection systems**.
- Determine and conduct **student behavior assessment**.

- Develop and implement **behavior-based instructional strategies**.
- Develop and implement BIPs and other **behavior-based interventions** to support students by reducing interfering behavior and teaching prosocial replacement behavior.
- **Work directly with students** during instructional activities and in crisis management situations to support effective outcomes.
- **Supervise and train** others in behavior analytic supports.

BCaBAs' roles/responsibilities in schools should align with their scope of training.

What does BCaBA supervision entail? To practice as a BCaBA in any setting, the BCaBA must have a BCBA supervisor on record with the BACB. Any BCBA responsible for supervising BCaBAs must have completed an eight-hour training on the **BACB Supervision Training Curriculum Outline 2.0** to be considered qualified to supervise. BCBAs who have not taken the training based on this training curriculum **may not supervise BCaBAs** in any setting. Schools must ensure that for every BCaBA, there exists a BCBA to provide ongoing supervision.

All BCaBAs must receive supervision from a BCBA for a minimum of 2% of the total number of hours they spend each month providing behavior analytic services. They must meet at least once every month and the BCBA supervisor should be available for consultation between supervision interactions. BCaBA supervision activities must be consistent with the BCaBA scope of practice as outlined in the *BCaBA Task List* (BACB, 2020a). Both the BCaBA and supervisor are responsible for recording and maintaining basic supervision records to account for the provision of all required supervision.

What happens if a BCaBA is not properly supervised? Like BCBAs and RBTs, BCaBAs can be subject to auditing from the BACB. If the BCaBA is found to be substantially noncompliant with supervision requirements, their certification **may be terminated**.

What Is the Difference Between a BCBA, BCaBA, and RBT?

BCBAs	BCaBAs	RBTs
Practice independently	Practice under the supervision of a BCBA	Practice under the supervision of a BCBA or BCaBA
Can supervise RBTs	Can supervise RBTs	Cannot supervise other RBTs
Must obtain state licensure	No state licensure	No state licensure
Maintain certification by completing CEUs, abiding by BACB requirements, and submitting a renewal application every two years	Maintain certification by completing CEUs, abiding by BACB requirements, meeting supervision requirements, and submitting a renewal application every two years	Maintain certification by abiding by BACB requirements, meeting supervision requirements, and submitting a renewal application every year
Follow the <i>Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts</i>	Follow the <i>Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts</i>	Follow the <i>RBT Ethics Code</i>

When Might a Student Need ABA Services During the School Day?

To determine whether ABA services are needed for a student, it is first important to distinguish between ABA techniques or strategies and ABA services (VDOE, 2020).

ABA/Behavioral Strategies

ABA techniques or strategies are methods used by any practitioner across various fields that align with behavioral principles. For example, it is common for educators and parents to utilize some evidence-based instructional strategies that are behavioral in nature, such as reinforcement, modeling, or prompting. In fact, good instruction and behavior management should include many of these practices.

ABA Services

In contrast, *ABA services* include a framework and approach that should be implemented or overseen by a BCBA or someone who has received sufficient training in ABA. See the section “[What is a BCBA?](#)” for the definition of ABA. The ABA services included in a student’s IEP may include indirect or direct services from a BCBA.

- **Indirect services:** BCBAs often support students with accessing ABA services **without directly working with the student** (i.e., indirectly). This may include conducting functional behavior assessments or other relevant assessments, analyzing data collected by the student’s team, developing a BIP* and instructional programming, training staff members and family members on programming, and monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the plans. The actual services would be implemented by another professional, like a teacher or a paraeducator, under the direction of the BCBA. That said, the BCBA still needs to provide regular oversight to ensure the services are being implemented with fidelity (i.e., as written) and the resulting data from those interventions are reliable and valid. Before a BCBA can provide indirect ABA services for a student, informed consent needs to be obtained and documented.
- **Direct services:** While less common, a BCBA may provide direct services; for instance, the BCBA may **work directly with a student** to implement ABA services, typically including intensive instructional ABA approaches or a comprehensive BIP. A BCBA may provide direct services when student needs warrant ABA services and limited capacity affects the provision of services by another professional (e.g., teacher, paraeducator). Direct ABA services can be provided by any professional who has received the proper training and is being supported or supervised by a BCBA. Like indirect services, informed consent is required before direct services can start, and if the student has an IEP or 504 plan, the specifics around the direct services should be documented. If clarity is necessary regarding the limitations of informed consent as relevant to federal/legal guidelines, school administrators may reach out to their legal counsel for clarification.

*A *behavior intervention plan* considers the results of an FBA to create an individualized plan of action toward changing the interfering behavior. The BIP reflects positive behavior supports and interventions to improve the student’s behavior and promote appropriate behaviors ([CSDE, n.d.b](#)). A *behavior support plan* (BSP) is a term used frequently to describe a collection of positive behavior supports for a student or group of students. A BSP may or may not be informed by an FBA.

ABA techniques/strategies and services may be accessed through an MTSS framework (see “[BCBA and General Education](#)”). A PPT may also consider ABA techniques/strategies and services based on the student’s needs, the environment, and the professionals working with the student. For students with disabilities, the decision to include ABA services in a student’s IEP must **be determined during a PPT meeting. The PPT must determine if ABA is essential for FAPE to be provided to the student.** Common forms of information to help determine the need for or continuation of ABA services include:

- Recommendations from teachers and other staff.
- Evaluative reports.
- Documentation that other methods have been tried and have been unsuccessful.
- Documentation of regression during a time ABA services were paused or removed.

Receiving private ABA services (that may be provided in the student's home, a clinic, or a community setting) does not automatically qualify for ABA services at school. While it is often the case that students who qualify for private ABA services also qualify for ABA services in the school, there may be situations in which ABA services are determined to be a medical necessity by the student's physician and insurance provider but are **not necessary for the provision of FAPE**. It is a school district administrative decision whether to allow a student to access private ABA services during the school day in the school building. The goals identified for private services may differ from the goals identified by the PPT for the school environment. For example, students may engage in behaviors that interfere with their functioning in the home but do not engage in those same behaviors in the school setting, or vice versa. In addition, the school district is responsible for determining who may or may not enter the school building.

When Should a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) Be Considered?

A functional behavior assessment (FBA) is a systematic method of assessment used to gain information about the reasons why a person engages in a certain behavior (Cooper et al., 2020). According to the Connecticut State Department of Education ([CSDE, n.d.a](#)), an FBA is beneficial when a student's behavior **impedes the learning of the student** as well as the learning of their peers. The results of an FBA are used to determine specific interventions that help (a) prevent the occurrence of the behavior; (b) teach new, prosocial behaviors; (c) develop and reinforce functional alternative behavior; and (d) respond to the behavior in a way that will decrease the likelihood of the behavior occurring. These interventions typically make up a student's BIP. The results of the FBA can also guide a student's PPT in making data-based decisions about how to support the student. See below for some commonly asked questions about FBAs in schools:

- **What are the key components of an FBA?** An FBA can consist of *indirect* and *direct/descriptive measures* of the identified behavior. *Indirect measures* are those that do not require observation of the student. They include rating scales or an interview with the purpose of identifying potential functions of the behavior and conditions under which that behavior is likely to occur. Indirect measures are generally considered insufficient in determining the function of the behavior. *Direct/descriptive assessment procedures* include the collection of information on the relevant environmental conditions (e.g., antecedents and consequences) under which the interfering behavior occurs. This is commonly referred to as ABC (antecedent-behavior-consequence) data collection and should be done by trained individuals who can identify these conditions. Lastly, a functional analysis (FA) may be conducted. An FA involves establishing the conditions where behavior is likely to occur. The goal of the FA is to demonstrate the relationship between those conditions and the occurrence of the interfering behavior.
- **Who can conduct an FBA?** A BCBA is qualified to conduct an FBA, but they are not the only members of a school team who can. FBAs may be conducted by **any professional who has received adequate training** in the specific type of data collection and analysis involved in FBAs. This may include, but is not limited to, school psychologists, school social workers, or special education teachers. If a BCBA conducts the FBA, informed consent is required per the BACB ethics code.
- **What are some common reasons FBAs are recommended in schools?** An FBA can be recommended by any member of a student's team at any time in response to a concern regarding a student's behavior. Below are common reasons an FBA may be recommended.
 - » **Manifestation determination:** When a student's misconduct results in a change of placement, and the behavior has been determined to be a manifestation of their disability, the PPT must conduct an FBA and develop a BIP, if one has not yet been conducted.
 - » **IEP development:** A BIP based on an FBA should be considered when developing an IEP if the student's behavior interferes with their learning or the learning of others. The BIP should be reviewed annually and as often as necessary.

- » **Interfering behavior:** An FBA can be requested when it is believed that a student's behavior is interfering with their access to education, and the student is not responding to behavioral interventions through an MTSS framework. Information that may indicate behavior is getting in the way of a student's access to education may be (a) the student spending excessive amounts of time in in-school or out-of-school suspension; (b) being sent home early frequently;¹ (c) being sent out of the classroom frequently; or (d) the behavior poses a risk of harm to the student or others.
- » **Determining eligibility for special education services:** Although an FBA is not a diagnostic tool to be used to determine special education eligibility, an FBA may be recommended in conjunction with a comprehensive evaluation ***if the student's behavior interferes with their learning or the learning of others.***
- **When may an FBA not be warranted?** An FBA is not the only step that can be taken when a student is exhibiting behavior that is interfering with learning, and in some situations, it may not be an appropriate first step. Steps that may be taken prior to conducting an FBA could include (a) team-based and function-based problem solving; (b) documenting and adjusting universal schoolwide behavior strategies, classroom management strategies, and tiered strategies; or (c) allowing time for a new student to acclimate to a new environment. Common situations that may not warrant an immediate FBA include, but are not limited to:
 - » **The interfering behavior is new or has not occurred at a frequent rate:** Through an FBA, the team looks at behavior patterns. If the behavior is new or so infrequent that a pattern cannot be determined, an FBA would not be beneficial.
 - » **Universal or tiered behavior supports have not been monitored or attempted:** Before an FBA is conducted, it should be documented that universal and tiered supports have been implemented with no positive impact. An FBA typically results in recommendations for individualized and function-based interventions. As such, it is in the student's best interest to ensure that less restrictive universal and classroom behavior supports are in place before the FBA is conducted.
 - » **The behavior is not interfering with learning:** There may be requests for FBAs when the behavior is not interfering with the learning of the student or others, but instead may be mildly disruptive, or unrelated to their learning in schools (e.g., a behavior that is occurring at home but not at school).
- **When is informed consent needed for an FBA?** If an FBA is conducted to assess the effectiveness of behavior interventions in the school as a whole, and thus not focusing on the behaviors of an individual student, informed consent is not required (CSDE, n.d.a). However, according to the BACB ethics code (2020b), when a BCBA conducts an FBA for an individual student, informed consent is required.

¹ A partial day exclusion from school, such as sending the student home before the end of the regular school day, is considered a suspension if the student is excluded from school for more than 90 minutes.

Considerations Regarding Personnel Who Provide ABA in Schools

Overview of the Different Types of BCBAs Working in Schools

A BCBA may service student needs and interface with school districts in a variety of ways including being (a) an **employee of the school district**; (b) **contracted by the district** to provide ABA services; or (c) **privately contracted** by the families. As a BCBA is required to also obtain a Connecticut LBA to practice ABA in any setting within the state, the information provided by both the BACB and the Connecticut Department of Public Health applies to all BCBAs regardless of whether they are providing services as employees of public school districts, are contracted by public schools, or are privately contracted by families. Although the scope of practice and licensing requirements for BCBAs practicing in Connecticut may be the same regardless of the employment type or setting, there are some key differences in how BCBAs practice that are context specific. These differences are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: A comparison of types of BCBAs practicing in public schools

	School Employees	Contracted by District	Privately Contracted
Hire and salaried directly by school districts; entitled to district benefits, retirement, paid time off, support services	X	NA	NA
Must adhere to all applicable district/school-specific policies	X	X	X
May work with students in the school setting	X	X	NA
May function as PPT members	X	X	X
May supervise RBTs, BCaBAs and/or BCBA supervisees in the school setting	X ¹	X ¹	NA
Entitled to professional development/ training provided by the district	X	X	PPT decision
May work with students and/or conduct assessments in the home	X ²	X ²	X ²
Can carry out necessary ABA services to ensure FAPE as agreed on by the PPT	X	X	X ³

¹ The BCBA must be a qualified supervisor, as established by BACB requirements. Regarding contracted BCBAs, a contract between the BCBA's agency and the public school district should specifically state that RBT and/or supervisee supervision is to be part of the BCBA's assignment.

² BCBAs must consider any potential conflicts of interest/dual relationship concerns.

³ May also need to fulfill plan of care requirements if services are authorized by a family's insurance; public school districts should ensure provision of quality educational services in accordance with a student's IEP.

What additional training might a school-based BCBA need when providing services in a public school? Since district practices around the hiring of school-based BCBAs vary widely, school-based BCBAs may not have specific training in teaching, pedagogy, special education, and school law. This is especially true in that the educational backgrounds of BCBAs also vary widely; some may have obtained additional mental health or teaching certifications, while others may have obtained a degree, certification, and licensure solely in behavior analysis. For these reasons, districts should consider how the role of the school-based BCBA may be supported by its professional development options. The following is a non-exhaustive list of areas of additional training to consider for school-based BCBAs:

a. *Special education process and law:* BCBAs may need additional training in understanding and navigating the special education process along with laws that affect students with disabilities in school settings. Specific areas of consideration may include:

- ii. Eligibility for special education.
- iii. Specific regulations and/or processes at different levels of schooling (e.g., early intervention/preschool vs. transition-age students).
- iv. The role of the PPT, the purpose of each type of PPT meeting (e.g., annual, review and revise, diagnostic), and potential BCBA contributions to the team.
- v. Relevant provisions of the IDEA and the impact of the Supreme Court's Endrew F. decision on providing FAPE for students with disabilities in school settings.
- vi. Specific training in the Connecticut Special Education Data System (CT SEDS) and IEP development.
- vii. Topics and/or issues that exist at the intersection of education and behavior analysis and how to navigate them in school settings (e.g., clinical vs. legal requirements of BIPs; conducting FBAs that reflect clinical best practice and CSDE guidelines, ethical issues).
- viii. Interdisciplinary collaboration.
- ix. Depending on the district's BCBA job description, training in the carrying out of a "BCBA consult role" vs. direct service provider in practice, and appropriately documenting services on the IEP.
- x. Fading out BCBA educational services when supported by student data.
- xi. Specific review of and/or training in all updates to relevant Connecticut and/or federal education and special education laws and regulations, as they occur.

b. *Procedures of the school district:* All school-based BCBAs hired directly by districts should be given access to and/or training in:

- i. District policies and procedures.
- ii. All required training to be completed by district employees on an annual basis (e.g., mandated reporter training, OSHA, HIPAA/FERPA, bullying, sexual harassment).
- iii. Any platforms the district uses, as appropriate to the BCBA's responsibilities (e.g. PowerSchool, CT SEDS, employee absence management and other human resource platforms/procedures, student instructional/behavior data collection platforms, employee professional development and evaluation platforms).
- iv. Districtwide contact list and contact list(s) for the BCBA's assigned school(s).
- v. Procedures for requesting a change of placement, extended school year (ESY) expectations (as many students requiring BCBA services qualify for ESY), and expectations around the BCBA's participation in school functions that take place outside the workday.
- vi. Specific departmental procedures/expectations if the BCBA will be part of a district BCBA department and/or other department (e.g., pupil personnel, student support services).

What Are Other Questions to Consider when Determining Whether a Contracted ABA Provider Is Necessary?

A critical and central question that districts must ask when considering entering into contracts with providers for ABA services is whether the services are necessary to ensure the student is **receiving FAPE**. Each school district is responsible for carrying out the provisions of a student's IEP as determined by the PPT, including instruction and related services.

Key considerations:

- If a PPT determines that outside services are necessary to ensure a student receives FAPE, it is the district's responsibility to **document agreed-upon ABA services in the IEP** to ensure such services are carried out. In such cases, districts are responsible for payment for the privately contracted BCBA services.
- Connecticut law requires that a contract, with certain provisions, must be in place between the public school district and outside provider for any service(s) the PPT deems necessary for FAPE and, thus, the district is to pay for as a function of its obligation to the student (House Bill #5447). Public school districts should follow their policies and procedures regarding contracting with outside providers to provide special education services.
- "Outside provider" can mean (a) an individual provider who may deliver after-school services recommended by the PPT; (b) a separate school that can offer a recommended service, or service at a particular frequency/duration, that the district does not offer; or (c) a service to take place within the school or other location for a portion of the child's school day.
- In some cases, the public school district may deny a request to provide outside ABA services to a student if the PPT deems the service is unnecessary to provide FAPE. In such a case, the reason(s) for the denial should be made clear to the family and addressed in the prior written notice (PWN; [CSDE, 2021](#)).
- A privately contracted BCBA working within a school may have dual responsibilities: (a) to provide educational ABA services in accordance with a student's IEP; and (b) to fulfill plan of care mandates.

Part 2: BCBA Professional Standards of Practice

While part 1 describes the roles and responsibilities of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) in schools, part 2 summarizes professional standards of practice for BCBAs in schools. The standards discussed below were adapted from the ***Professional Standards for School-Based Behavior Analysts*** by the Virginia Public Schools Behavior Analyst Network and Virginia Department of Education (Layden et al., 2021). Layden and colleagues (2021) developed the standards to form a foundation for school-based BCBAs to create a scope of competence that will support their role in public schools. The standards align with the *BCBA Task List* (5th Ed., 2017), as well as the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* (BACB, 2020b), extending the information in these guiding documents to apply specifically to the school setting. See [Professional Standards for School-Based Behavior Analysts \(Layden et al., 2021\)](#) for more information about the development of the standards, the core principles that guided the development of the standards, and a complete list of the original standards. In collaboration with the Connecticut Association for Behavior Analysts (CTABA) and the CSDE, along with a group of Connecticut-based educators, the standards were adapted to reflect the needs of schools in Connecticut. In addition, a rubric was created as a tool to provide school-based BCBAs with specific feedback about the standards relevant to their role. The rubric is included at the end of part 2.

Five standards of professional practice for school-based BCBAs have been identified. Each standard has sub-standards that specify detailed components and are aligned with the *BCBA Task List* (5th Ed., BACB, 2017) and the ethics code (BACB, 2020b). A BCBA's defined role will dictate which of these standards are relevant for their work in schools. For example, not all BCBAs will be involved in systems capacity building or leadership and policy. A school-based BCBA and their supervisor should consider the standards relevant to the BCBA's role in schools. Figure 1 shows the five standards of professional practice. Each section below describes the standards and sub-standards in detail.

Figure 1: Visual depiction of the five professional standards for school-based behavior analysts (Layden et al., 2021)



Ethics and Educational Law

Standard 1.0 School-based behavior analysts promote ethical and professional practice within their scope of competence, following all applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

All professional activities of BCBAs are guided by the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* (BACB, 2020b), thus promoting ethical practice as it aligns with educational law, regulations, and policies, which are crucial for BCBAs in public schools. All BCBAs are trained in the standards of their ethics code, but BCBAs who are new to working in school settings may need to seek out additional training and support in navigating how the ethics code aligns with the laws, regulations, and policies of their school and district.

BCBAs who violate the requirements set forth by the ethics code or any Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) requirement may be subject to disciplinary action through the BACB. Disciplinary action may include the BCBA's certification being invalidated, revoked, or suspended, practice restrictions, or mandatory disciplinary supervision (BACB, 2019). As such, it is crucial that BCBAs work with their supervisors to ensure that they can fulfill their ethical requirements in addition to school policies and procedures. For more information, see the [BACB code-enforcement procedures](#) (BACB, 2019).

Below is a summary of sub-standards that outline in more detail the ethical and professional expectations of BCBAs in schools.

Standard 1.1a Professionalism: There are three areas to consider regarding professionalism of BCBAs in schools (a) behaving with integrity; (b) establishing interprofessional relationships; and (c) engaging as part of the school community.

- a. **Behaving with integrity:** A core principle of the ethics code highlights behaving with integrity, which includes being honest, not misrepresenting themselves, following through on obligations, and holding themselves accountable for their work. Behaving with integrity for a BCBA also means being knowledgeable about all BACB regulations as they relate to schools and educating others in the school about their ethical requirements.
- b. **Establishing interprofessional relationships:** Working as part of a team is a crucial aspect of working in a school, and as such, BCBAs should establish positive and collaborative relationships with the interprofessional team of educators with whom they work. BCBAs also avoid *multiple relationships* (i.e., relationships that can cause a conflict of interest, such as combining professional and personal relationships with students or colleagues; Ethics Code 1.11) and avoid coercive or exploitative relationships (Ethics Code 1.13).
- c. **Engaging as part of the school community:** BCBAs should engage as part of the school community as any member of the school team would. Examples vary across districts and schools and are subject to the expectations of the BCBA's supervisor.

Standard 1.1b School Role: Because the roles and responsibilities of BCBAs in public schools can vary greatly across districts, it is pivotal that BCBAs work with their supervisors and teams to define and review their professional roles and responsibilities. The role of the BCBA should also be documented in writing (Code 1.04) and clearly communicated with all key personnel on the team.

Standard 1.2 Data-Based Decision-Making: For BCBAs, objective and meaningful data serve as a foundation for making decisions. BCBAs model and promote a culture of data-based decision-making across student-specific goals and interventions, as well as schoolwide support. BCBAs ensure that appropriate data-collection procedures are used and implemented accurately, graphically display that data, and help teams use meaningful data to make decisions (Code 2.17). As part of this sub-standard, BCBAs should also support other key personnel in using data to inform goals and interventions, which may include teaching, training, and guiding others in using data.

Standard 1.3 Personal Scope of Competence: The specific areas of expertise that each BCBA holds varies across individual BCBAs based on their training and experiences. For example, while all BCBAs are trained in the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), not all BCBAs obtain comprehensive training in sup-

porting students with significant self-injurious behavior, like head-banging. As such, **it is critical that BCBAs define their own personal scope of competence and only practice within that scope.** BCBAs should clearly communicate their scope of competence with their supervisor. If a BCBA's role necessitates practicing in a new area or an area outside their scope of competence, the BCBA should seek guidance, professional development opportunities, and collaboration to expand their knowledge and skills.

Standard 1.4 Responsive Practices: BCBAs are ethically responsible for supporting and engaging in practices that are (a) equitable; (b) inclusive; (c) trauma-informed; and (d) linguistically and culturally responsive. BCBAs should continually seek professional development to acquire knowledge and skills in these areas and evaluate their own biases and ability to address the needs of individuals with diverse backgrounds (Code 1.07). It is the responsibility of the BCBA to evaluate the extent to which their practices are equitable and inclusive, trauma-informed, and linguistically and culturally responsive.

Standard 1.5 Laws and Regulations: Along with the ethics code, BCBAs are also responsible for following relevant federal, state, and local laws, as well as the policies of the school and district (Code 1.02). This is an area where BCBAs may need to seek out additional training and guidance if their experience in schools is limited. Examples of laws, terms, and regulations that BCBAs will need to consider include:

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 ([IDEA, 2004](#)).
 - » Free appropriate public education (FAPE).
 - » Least restrictive environment (LRE).
- [Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#).
- [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#).
- Special education law, including laws around a student's individualized education programs (IEPs).
- [Assistive Technology Act](#).
- Laws, regulations, and school policies around assessment, informed consent, and confidentiality.

Standard 1.6 Effective Practices: Based on the ethics code, BCBAs are ethically bound to provide effective treatment (Code 2.01), which is defined as providing services that are (a) behavioral; (b) evidence-based; (c) increase socially significant behavior; and (d) decrease negative outcomes. *Behavioral* practices are practices that align with the science of ABA (see part 1, "[What is a BCBA?](#)" for a definition of ABA). BCBAs also ensure that the behavioral strategies and practices they use are *evidence-based*, integrating the best available research with their own clinical expertise in the context of learners (APA, 2021). The behavioral and evidence-based practices should focus on *socially significant* behaviors, meaning behaviors that improve the lives of learners (Cooper et al., 2020). The practices should also reduce negative outcomes, which in school will likely include reducing disproportionate discipline and the need for crisis intervention.

Standard 1.7 Informed Consent and Assent: The Code of Ethics for Behavior Analysts (BACB, 2020) has specific requirements around informed consent and assent that are relevant to a BCBA's work in schools. Informed consent is a process by which an individual with the legal right to consent gives permission before participating in services. In schools, this often includes the guardians of the students with whom BCBAs work. Informed consent should be obtained before a BCBA conducts assessments, before implementing interventions, when making substantial changes to interventions, and when exchanging or releasing confidential information (Code 2.11). The informed consent process includes thoroughly explaining the purpose and details of the service, allowing the opportunity for questions and the right of the individual to decline the services, and documenting the individual's consent. This means that before a BCBA implements any student-specific ABA service, a complete informed consent process should occur and be documented. An IEP is not sufficient in terms of informed consent documentation.

BCBAs also obtain **assent** from those who are receiving services and who cannot yet legally provide consent (i.e., learners who are under 18 or adults under a conservatorship or guardianship) (Flowers & Dawes, 2023). The ethics code (BACB, 2020b) defines assent as the vocal or nonvocal verbal behavior that can be taken to indicate a willingness to participate in services.

Working Collaboratively

Standard 2.0 School-based behavior analysts collaborate with others to both successfully practice within while also expanding their scope of competence to improve outcomes for students by designing, implementing, and/or evaluating services that are culturally and contextually appropriate to promote socially significant behavior change.

According to the *BCBA Task List* (5th Ed., BACB, 2017), all BCBAs are expected to demonstrate knowledge and skills required to effectively collaborate with individuals who support and/or provide services to learners (H-9). Furthermore, BCBAs are ethically required to “collaborate with colleagues from their own and other professions” (Code 2.10) and involve learners and other partners throughout service provision (Code 2.09). In public schools, BCBAs commonly collaborate with learners, families, school personnel, outside providers, and administrators. Successful collaboration among all relevant partners is critical to the design, implementation, and evaluation of effective, culturally responsive, and contextually appropriate behavior analytic services.

Despite the importance of collaboration, many BCBAs do not receive explicit training in collaboration. Without training, collaboration may be challenging, especially when a collaborator’s recommendations are not behavioral in nature. BCBAs are responsible for providing services that are “conceptually consistent with behavioral principles” and “based on scientific evidence” (Code 2.01). In cases where a collaborator recommends an intervention that is inconsistent with behavioral principles and/or not based on scientific evidence—or when faced with other conflicts—BCBAs take a collaborative approach and prioritize the learner’s best interest (Code 2.10).

The *Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice* can be used as a guide to facilitate effective collaboration between BCBAs and other team members (Interprofessional Education Collaborative Expert Panel, 2011). These competencies include (a) establishing and maintaining a climate of mutual respect and shared values; (b) using the knowledge of one’s own and others’ roles to guide service provision; (c) communicating responsively and responsibly; and (d) building relationships and leveraging principles of team dynamics. BCBAs—especially those who have not received (or received limited) formal training on effective collaboration—should seek professional development to further develop their competency in these areas.

Below is a summary of sub-standards that outline in more detail expectations for collaboration among BCBAs and relevant parties in public schools.

Standard 2.1 Collaboration with Learners: Learners are often the primary recipients of behavior analytic services in public schools. In accordance with their responsibility to involve learners throughout service delivery (Code 2.09) and consider learner preference when selecting, designing, and implementing behavior-change interventions (Code 2.14), BCBAs continuously solicit feedback from learners and adapt programming accordingly, including obtaining learner assent (Code 2.11). Specifically, BCBAs encourage learners to serve as active partners in their own education by working collaboratively with learners to (a) identify shared goals; (b) develop and implement intervention strategies that promote willing learner engagement; and (c) monitor and evaluate progress. BCBAs work to develop trusting, responsive relationships with learners to support their psychological safety and willingness to share honest input. When possible, BCBAs explain to learners the rationale for goals and intervention strategies, ensuring that such rationale extends beyond compliance for the sake of compliance. While collaboration can be more challenging with learners whose language skills are still developing, BCBAs engage in creative problem-solving to design ongoing opportunities to evaluate learner assent and preference.

Standard 2.2 Collaboration with Families: Families are an integral part of a learner’s support system and should be active partners in all behavior analytic programming. BCBAs work to develop trusting, responsive relationships with families to support their psychological safety and willingness to share honest input. BCBAs collaborate with families to learn about (a) their goals and priorities for their learners; (b) their culture; and (c) their learner’s home and community contexts (e.g., previous

experiences, resources, challenges). Then, BCBAs use this information and engage in ongoing conversations with families to design interventions that are likely to produce socially meaningful outcomes across contexts (Code 2.14). Before implementing behavior-change interventions, BCBAs and their teams describe goals, procedures, timelines, and plans for ongoing review with families (Code 2.08, 2.16) and obtain informed consent (Code 2.11).

Standard 2.3 Collaboration with School Personnel: Often, learners are supported by multiple school personnel representing various disciplines. General education teachers, special education teachers, and other classroom staff (e.g., paraeducators, tutors) are critical school collaborators, as they are often primarily responsible for implementing behavior-change interventions with learners. Other relevant school-based collaborators include related service providers (e.g., speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists), school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, and other school-based behavior analysts. BCBAs collaborate with school personnel to (a) understand critical features of the school and classroom environments; (b) identify learner strengths and needs; (c) develop contextually appropriate goals and objectives; (d) develop feasible and contextually appropriate assessment and intervention strategies; (e) develop feasible data collection systems; and (f) monitor learner progress (Code 2.14). Often, BCBAs train and coach classroom staff to implement effective classroom management strategies and student-specific behavior-change interventions. Conversations between BCBAs and school personnel should be ongoing, and BCBAs should continuously modify interventions based on feedback from school personnel. Besides soliciting feedback from school personnel on behavior-change programming, BCBAs may offer input to other school personnel to support the use of effective teaching strategies and data collection systems across skill domains.

Standard 2.4 Collaboration with Outside Providers: Some learners receive services from providers in their homes, communities, and/or other contexts outside the school setting. These providers might include other behavior analysts, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, or medical/psychiatric practitioners. Given their work in non-school settings, outside providers might have a better understanding of learners' home and community contexts. As applicable, BCBAs collaborate with outside providers to develop comprehensive services that support generalization and maintenance of socially meaningful behaviors across settings. Importantly, BCBAs and their teams are responsible for obtaining appropriate informed consent from a learner's parent/legal guardian before engaging in collaboration or consultation with outside providers, as well as ensuring compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and requirements (Code 3.06).

Standard 2.5 Collaboration with Administrators: School administrators and/or central office staff play a large role in establishing the context for school-based service delivery. BCBAs collaborate with building and district administrators to promote an understanding of behavior analytic principles and strategies (as relevant) and contribute to the development and improvement of systems change, programs, and/or services to enhance outcomes for students. BCBAs also collaborate with administrators to help address systemic barriers to effective student-level service delivery (Code 2.19).

Systems Capacity Building

Standard 3.0 School-based behavior analysts build capacity of school personnel and promote sustained systems change using data-informed practices to improve student outcomes and reduce the need for crisis interventions.

BCBAs are trained in principles of ABA that can benefit school systems. Although not all BCBAs have experience or training in specific schoolwide or districtwide initiatives, BCBAs are knowledgeable in a number of concepts that can contribute to building systems capacity within a school. For example, BCBAs can use their skills in defining behaviors and interventions in clear terms and creating data systems to determine whether a school/districtwide intervention has been effective. BCBAs are knowledgeable about ABA interventions that can benefit school systems, including principles of reinforcement, motivation, and teaching that benefit students and staff. Three specific areas of systems capacity building are discussed in this section: (a) schoolwide systems; (b) professional development; and (c) behavior analytic supervision.

Schoolwide Systems

Standard 3.1 MTSS: A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework provides a structure to ensure all students and staff access appropriate levels of evidence-based intervention and support across both academic and social-emotional and behavioral skills ([CSDE, 2020](#)). When an MTSS framework is used in the BCBA's school, BCBAs use and support this framework to provide differentiated intervention. When applicable, BCBAs provide guidance to teachers in practices that can be implemented classwide (i.e., Tier 1), and differentiate strategies and interventions that can be used for students who are not responding to schoolwide or classwide systems (i.e., Tier 2 and 3). BCBAs use data to determine the appropriate level of support needed for students.

Professional Development

Standard 3.2a Provide Professional Development: To build capacity of school personnel, BCBAs are trained in evidence-based professional development (PD) strategies. Because many strategies from the ABA field apply to all learners, including adult learners, BCBAs incorporate evidence-based learning strategies into PD opportunities for school staff, such as modeling, role-play, performance feedback, effective prompts, shaping, and reinforcement. PD provided by BCBAs should be engaging and relevant for school staff.

Standard 3.2b Evaluating Professional Development: BCBAs are also trained in data collection and performance monitoring systems to evaluate the effectiveness of PD opportunities (Code 4.08). These systems can help schools determine areas where additional training or support is needed or help develop improvement plans to address any training needs. Examples of ways BCBAs evaluate the effects of PD may include, but are not limited to, checklists or rating forms to assess the extent to which interventions are being implemented, self-reflection surveys, observation "walk-through" tools, and documentation of feedback delivered. BCBAs incorporate staff input and data to inform the next steps in the PD process.

Behavior Analytic Supervision

Standard 3.3 BACB Supervision: BCBAs play an important role in building capacity by providing behavior-analytic supervision to those who are certified by the BACB (i.e., RBTs and BCaBAs^{*}) and to those who are pursuing BCBA or BCaBA certification. It is the responsibility of a BCBA who agrees to provide behavior-analytic supervision to comply with all the supervision requirements as outlined by the BACB, which will include a specified frequency, duration, and structure depending on the certification of the supervisee (Code 4.01), as well as documentation and monitoring of the supervision practices (Code 4.05 and Code 4.08). BCBAs are accountable for their supervision practices along with the behavior-analytic activities of their supervisees (Code 4.04). While ethical supervision will take up time from a BCBA's responsibilities, it can also lead to more staff engaging in effective behavioral practices and may allow the BCBA to delegate tasks as appropriate.

^{*}Note: RBTs and BCaBAs must obtain ongoing supervision from the appropriate certified behavior analyst in order to practice in a school setting (see [Table 1](#) in part 1).

Instruction

Standard 4.0 School-based behavior analysts improve instructional programs, services and supports by applying their knowledge of applied behavior analysis at the student, classroom, and schoolwide systems levels.

A large part of being a school-based BCBA is using the principles and strategies from the field of ABA to support student outcomes in the school setting. A BCBA's ABA knowledge can be applied across multiple "tiers" (e.g., the individual student, classroom, or school system), and may include conducting assessments, contributing sources of data, creating goals, creating behavior plans and evidence-based interventions, assessing the extent to which plans are implemented, and monitoring progress on goals. The goal of the school-based BCBA is to translate and generalize these ABA principles and techniques into practices that are meaningful and relevant to the school setting. The four sub-standards below provide additional information on how a BCBA can use effective ABA instruction to support meaningful outcomes for students in public schools.

Standard 4.1 Maximize Access to Education: BCBAs use the principles of ABA to support students in accessing learning at school. Common principles of ABA that are relevant to schools include, but are not limited to, (a) incorporating *reinforcement* to increase student motivation for learning; (b) using *antecedent-based interventions* to set students up for success in the classroom; or (c) using principles of *verbal behavior* to support students in communicating their needs. A main purpose of these interventions in schools is to support increased access to instruction at the level appropriate for each individual student, which may include grade-level curriculum and/or specialized instruction.

Standard 4.2 Meaningful Student Goals: BCBAs base their interventions on meaningful, socially significant goals; in other words, goals that are important to the learner, their family, and society. In schools, BCBAs use a variety of methods to co-create student goals that are meaningful for learners and their teams. BCBAs (a) use assessments with a behavior analytic foundation; (b) contribute relevant data; and (c) incorporate input from the learner, their family, and all key personnel. Behavior analytic assessments are selected collaboratively with the diverse needs of the learner and context in mind, and ideally assess both student strengths and areas of need (Code 2.13). BCBAs ensure that the priorities identified from the assessment and data collection process incorporate input from the learner, the learner's family, and the school team (Code 2.09).

Standard 4.3 Increase Positive Behavior and Decrease Interfering Behavior: BCBAs are trained and knowledgeable in function-based interventions that increase or decrease targeted behaviors. In schools, BCBAs will likely be asked to develop strategies and interventions that increase positive learning behaviors (e.g., social skills, coping skills, engagement) and that decrease behaviors that interfere with learning in the educational setting (e.g., property destruction, hitting, leaving the room without permission). The individualized interventions that BCBAs develop to address the specific behavior needs of students are typically based on functional behavior assessments (FBAs) or function-based thinking. In other words, BCBAs use data to hypothesize the purpose or function a behavior serves for the student prior to developing strategies. FBAs inform behavior intervention plans (BIPs) that include the package of strategies recommended for a student, typically, including proactive strategies, teaching strategies, reinforcement strategies, and response strategies. BCBAs also use measures and strategies to support educational staff in implementing a BIP.

Standard 4.4 Design Interventions for Students to Achieve Goals: BCBAs help develop and modify specific evidence-based and assent-based interventions for students to achieve their learning goals. These interventions are based on assessment information, frequent progress monitoring data, and input from the learner and the learner's team.

Leadership and Policy

Standard 5.0 School-based BCBAs are leaders within the school system, modeling and promoting meaningful change through data-informed decision-making and fostering an inclusive, culturally responsive and productive climate at the student, classroom, school, and school system levels.

School-based BCBAs engage within a diverse system of administrators, educators, related services personnel, employees, families, and students. Within a school system, the BCBA promotes an understanding of the uniqueness of the experiences of all key personnel. This requires the BCBA to use methods of assessment and intervention that are responsive to individual behaviors based on valid and reliable data collection systems. Based on the agreed-upon role of the school-based BCBA, BCBAs may apply behavioral principles at a systems level (e.g., district, school, or classroom) that are inclusive of individual differences. Compassionate and assent-based approaches to interventions provide a framework for establishing an inclusive school environment and positive school climate.

Standard 5.1 Develop Policies and Procedures: BCBAs may collaborate with administrators and other key personnel to support the development of policies and procedures that align with district-level needs, values, and goals. Developed procedures should be framed within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) and be comprehensive in addressing areas that benefit student outcomes. The unique contributions of a BCBA's knowledge on behavioral principles and applications can enhance the development of these policies and procedures. The alignment of policies and procedures with the *Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* (BACB, 2020) aids in ensuring the use of meaningful data to assess system-level strengths and needs, and reflecting evidence-based procedures within developed policies.

Standard 5.2 Develop Initiatives: If included as part of their defined role, BCBAs can support the development of initiatives within the district that align with district outcomes for behavioral, social-emotional, and academic progress. Within their scope of practice and scope of competence, behavior analysts can collaboratively support the development of initiatives that include, but are not limited to:

- Tiered interventions for behavior.
- Staff training and implementation of behavioral interventions.
- Instruction around core social and emotional skills.
- Specialized educational programs that address the needs of specific students.

Initiatives should be framed within an MTSS framework that addresses universal, targeted, and intensive interventions. The BCBA uses data to support the need for and effectiveness of proposed initiatives. The BCBA should provide a clear rationale for the initiative, evidence-based practices to address the goals for the initiative, and data collection/data-based decision-making procedures used to continue or modify the initiative as it progresses.

Standard 5.3 Modeling Equitable and Culturally Responsive Practices: Given that an individual's behavior is shaped within the environments in which they participate, the uniqueness of each person is demonstrated in their responses to proposed interventions. Being culturally responsive starts with one's self-reflection of their possible biases as they relate to the diversity of individuals who they will be supporting (e.g., teachers and students) and ongoing professional development regarding the needs of diverse individuals (Code 1.07). Rapport building with those whom the BCBA will be collaborating and supporting aids in identifying important variables to consider as they develop assessment and intervention procedures. Incorporating these variables into the development of procedures supports the social validity of interventions and improves the likelihood that they will be adopted. BCBAs model communication as a speaker and a listener that are respectful and responsive to the audience with whom they are speaking. They model the development and implementation of procedures that respect the preferences and values of those they support. Lastly, they model data collection and decision-making procedures that are responsive to individual differences.

Standard 5.4 Advocating for Continuous Improvement: Data-based decision-making is the hallmark of program development, monitoring, and improvement. The use of valid and reliable data is central to continuous evaluation and improvement. These measures can include the fidelity of implementation for behavioral supports, the performance of schools in achieving benchmarks across domains, and outcome data resulting from developed interventions. BCBAs advocate for improving systems first by ensuring that data collection procedures are implemented and correspond with the goals of interventions. They then make decisions and recommendations to continue, modify, or discontinue procedures based on the corresponding data.

Standard 5.5 Design Systems to Promote Behavioral Practices: Collaboration between key personnel in designing systems of practice is central to the development and implementation of systems promoting behavioral practice. The development of these systems starts with the mission, goals, and values of the school system. Effective behavioral practices include:

- Understanding of behavioral principles that underlie individual performance.
- Application of principles of behavior to program development, training, and implementation.
- Arranging environmental variables to support the ongoing implementation of behavioral practices.

Supporting the implementation of systems to promote behavioral practices requires that the BCBA collaboratively evaluates the conditions under which behavioral practices will be implemented. Effective coaching and professional development start with an understanding of the existing knowledge, skills, and dispositions of those experiencing the training, coaching, and support. Responsive systems of support based on data-based decisions are used to identify areas where additional support may be required. BCBAs use evidence-based training procedures that include instruction, providing a rationale for intervention, modeling, practice, and feedback (i.e., Behavioral Skills Training; DiGennaro Reed et al., 2018). BCBAs are responsible for ensuring that those they train can implement procedures before delegating responsibility for their implementation (Code 4.09). This is particularly relevant for those interventions for which the BCBA is responsible, such as data collection and the implementation of behavior intervention plans (Code 1.03).

Connecticut Professional Standards of Practice Rubric for School-Based BCBAs

For BCBAs to grow professionally in the school setting, they need regular, specific feedback surrounding the professional standards of practice listed above. As such, the professional standards of practice were used to create a rubric with which to provide ongoing feedback to BCBAs working in school settings. Please note this rubric is just one example through which BCBAs can be given feedback on their performance.

The [Connecticut Professional Standards of Practice Rubric](#) consists of two rating options: (a) **a full rubric** with details around how to rate each sub-standard of the five standards of professional practice (i.e., ethical and professional practice, collaboration, systems capacity building, instruction, and leadership and policy); and (b) a **quick rating form** that serves as an abbreviated tool to rate the same sub-standards. Raters should familiarize themselves with the information about the professional standards of practice for school-based BCBAs prior to using the rubric and delivering feedback.

With either version, the rater can choose whether the BCBA's performance on each sub-standard has been **exemplary, proficient, developing, or below**, based on how many markers of the sub-standard the BCBA has shown satisfactory performance. The rater may find they are unable to rate some of the sub-standards based on the outlined role of the BCBA in their setting. For example, if the BCBA's role does not necessitate supervision, the rater would be unable to rate the supervision sub-standard. Besides supporting the delivery of feedback to BCBAs, this rubric can guide and inform the role of the BCBA within the school and identify support necessary for BCBAs to maintain professional standards in school settings. Raters may use this rubric several times a year to support the growth of the BCBA.

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Appendix A

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Appendix B

Additional Resources

[Connecticut State Department of Education \(CSDE\)](#)

[Connecticut Department of Public Health \(CT DPH\)](#)

[Behavior Analyst Certification Board \(BACB\)](#)

[*Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts* \(BACB, 2020\)](#)

[*BCBA Task List* \(5th Ed., BACB, 2017\)](#)

[Interprofessional Education Collaborative \(IPEC\)](#)

