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## Professional Standards for School-Based Behavior Analysts

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It is our hope that school-based behavior analysts and others them find these professional standards informative and valuable in supporting their work in educational settings.



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## Introduction

Public educational settings are unique and complex environments that require specific knowledge and skills for the professionals that work in them. School-based behavior analysts can be a great asset to public schools. However, these professionals must be able to firmly understand and perform the responsibilities of a behavior analyst in collaboration with educators and service providers in a public school setting. The presence of behavior analysts in public schools is relatively new, when compared with other specialized services. Therefore, behavior analysts, teachers, administrators, and others should focus on collaboration to promote the success for all, in particular, the students. The roles of school-based behavior analysts are still evolving and vary across schools and divisions. As such, it is important to have a professional standards foundation for school-based behavior analysts to draw from to craft a scope of competence that allows for effective and efficient implementation of behavior analysis in the applied educational setting.

The Behavior Analysis Certification Board® (BACB®) has designed a comprehensive list of tasks in the Board Certified Behavior Analyst® (BCBA® Task List 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2017) that forms the foundation for all BCBA's. However, the task list is not school-specific. While the Task List is designed to be used in any applied setting, including educational settings, school-based behavior analysts require additional context-driven skills and knowledge to be effective and efficient in their roles.

The professional standards within this document are intended to be an enhanced foundational layer for behavior analysts working specifically in the context of public school settings. The professional standards are aligned with both the BCBA Task List (5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2017) and the Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts (2020). Additionally, development of these standards considered the Advanced Special Education Preparation Standards from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC; 2015), the Professional Standards of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP; 2020) and the Guidelines for the Provision of Behavior Analysis in Public Schools from the Virginia Department of Education (2021) to ensure alignment of expectations for the multi-faceted responsibilities of behavior analysts in school settings.

## Overview

During the development of the professional standards, the team spent time discussing foundational values and goals. These informed both the process of development and resulting standards.

### *Goals*

- To create a set of professional standards outlining the foundational education knowledge for school-based behavior analysts
- To extend current resources (e.g., BACB task list, BACB Code of Ethics, CEC Advanced Preparation Standards) to interweave behavior analysis and education
- To provide a framework to assist school-based behavior analysts in understanding and defining their roles and responsibilities within educational settings
- To assist school division administrators, human resources professionals, and others in understanding the complex and unique roles of school-based behavior analysts

### *Process*

The professional standards were designed to augment current and relevant resources. Thus, these professional standards are aligned with both the BCBA Task List (5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2017) and the Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts (2020). Additionally, development of these standards considered the Advanced Special Education Preparation Standards from the CEC (2015) and the National Educational Leadership Preparation Program Recognition Standards from the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2018; NPBEA) to ensure alignment of expectations for the multi-faceted responsibilities of behavior analysts in school settings.

A team of professionals were recruited by the Executive Director and Advisory Committee members of the Virginia Public Schools Behavior Analyst Network (VAPSBAN) to participate in the development of these professional standards. This team was comprised of individuals who were both BCBAs or BCBA-Ds and either currently or previously worked in public education settings. The team was mindful of the diversity of Virginia encompassing a variety of members. These members represented divisions throughout the state which varied in terms of size, geography, and their use and defined roles of school-based behavior analysts. The team also included representatives from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the VDOE Training and Technical Assistance Centers (T/TAC).

The team reviewed current documents from the BACB, the CEC, NASP, and the NPBEA. During this review, comparisons between documents looking for shared content were completed. The team also drew on their own expertise, experiences, concerns, successes, and journeys in educational settings as a school-based behavior analyst. From this work, themes were developed to create the standards. These standards were defined and refined through multiple reviews.

Once developed, the standards were shared with the VAPSBAN Advisory Committee, which is comprised of behavior analysts throughout Virginia who work in and with public schools. The standards were also shared with stakeholders from across Virginia, including school-based behavior analysts, administrators, and technical assistance providers supported by the Virginia Department of Education. Feedback was gathered from these stakeholders to further refine the

standards to be representative of the varied roles and responsibilities of school-based behavior analysts. To promote collaborative efforts, it is hoped this document is useful to not only school-based behavior analysts but to educators who partner with them as well.

### *Guiding Principles*

In the early stages of development, conversations about school-based behavior analysts, their roles, and the evolution of the field within education led to the recognition of shared values. During the development process, it is important to note the team was guided by specific guiding principles.

- Behavior analysis is effective in educational settings.
- Students and their positive outcomes should be at the center of the work for school-based behavior analysts.
- School-based behavior analysts may engage in a variety of roles within the school setting.
- As the work of school-based behavior analysts varies, working in educational settings requires school-based behavior analysts to define and ensure their own scope of competence.
- School-based behavior analysts must adhere to the BACB Code of Ethics.
- School-based behavior analysts are colleagues and team members in educational settings and collaboration is essential.

## Standards

Five standards were identified encompassing the many facets of work done by school-based behavior analysts. Each standard has specific sub-standards that further describe and explain components of the standard. Additionally, each substandard is aligned with the BACB Task List (5<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2017) and the BACB Code of Ethics (2020). These are listed with each standard in the right-hand column. Some standards have specific tasks or codes associated with them. In the case 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Task List or Ethics Code appear, it indicates these entire documents are relevant to that particular professional standard.



Figure 1. Visual depiction of the five professional standards for school-based behavior analysts.

**Standard 1: Ethical & Professional Practice**

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

School-based behavior analysts will:

#	Standard	BACB 5 <sup>th</sup> Ed. Task List	Ethics Code
1.1	Ensure professionalism by maintaining certification and licensure, establishing interprofessional relationships, engaging as part of the school community, and understanding the roles and responsibilities of public schools and the professionals employed by public school systems	E-2, E-3, E-4, H-9	Full Ethics Code
1.2	Model and cultivate a culture of data-based decision making to create goals and interventions to support safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive schools and improve student outcomes	E-2, E-3, E-4, F-3, H-1-2	2.13-2.19, 3.02
1.3	Define and practice within their own scope of competence and seek guidance and collaboration to expand education knowledge and skills	E-2, E-3, E-4	1.04-1.06, 2.10, 3.01
1.4	Support and engage in equitable, inclusive, and linguistically and culturally responsive practices	E-2-5	1.07-1.10
1.5	Follow federal, state, and local laws, the requirements and ethics code from the BACB, and policies of the school and school division	Full 5th Ed. Task List	1.02, 5.01-5.11, 6.11
1.6	Implement behavioral, evidence-based practices aimed at increasing socially significant behaviors while also reducing disproportionate discipline and the need for crisis intervention	E-4, G-1-10, G-13-14, G-17-22, H-3-4, H-7	1.07-1.10, 2.13, 2.14, 3.01
1.7	Model and promote the use of ethical behavior analytic practice to support and inform students, educators, and families.	E-2-7, H-1-9	Full Ethics Code
1.8	Promote the growth of behavior analysis in education by: a) Effectively implementing behavior analytic principles; b) Educating stakeholders; and c) Providing supervision to RBT, BCaBAs, and those seeking certification	E-2, E-3, E-4, E-5, E-6, H-1-9, I-1-8	2.01, 2.08, 2.09, 2.14-2.19, 3.11, 4.01-4.12

**Standard 2: Collaboration**

2.0 School-based behavior analysts collaborate with stakeholders 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 improve socially significant behavior.

School-based behavior analysts will:

#	Standard	BACB 5 <sup>th</sup> Ed. Task List	Ethics Code
2.1	Collaborate with administrators and/or central office staff to promote understanding of behavior analytic principles and strategies and contribute to the development and improvement of systems change, programs, and/or services to enhance outcomes for students	E-2-4; H-9	2.08, 2.09, 2.10, 3.02
2.2	Collaborate with school personnel including but not limited to teachers, related service providers, school psychologists, school social workers, other school-based behavior analysts, paraprofessionals, and others using behavioral strategies and tactics to teach behavior, academics, communication, social, vocational, and daily living skills which improve the lives of students	E-2-4; H-9	2.08, 2.09, 2.10, 3.02, 3.06
2.3	Collaborate with outside providers, including but not limited to, other behavior analysts, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, or medical/psychiatric practitioners working with the student and family in order to develop culturally responsive and comprehensive support plans that support generalization and maintenance of socially significant behaviors across settings	E-2-4; H-9	2.08, 2.09, 2.10, 3.02, 3.06
2.4	Collaborate with families to provide an understanding of successful behavioral strategies used within the school setting and encourage active partnership in their learner's education	E-2-4; H-9	2.09, 2.10, 3.02

**Standard 3: Systems Capacity Building**

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.

School-based behavior analysts will:

*School Wide Systems*

#	Standard	BACB 5 <sup>th</sup> Ed. Task List	Ethics Code
3.1a	Use and support implementation fidelity of support frameworks for differentiation (e.g., Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) to increase the effectiveness of universal and advanced tiers for academic, social and behavioral instruction	B-4; G-1; G-14; G-16 B-12; G-2 B-13	2.01 2.15 3.12
3.1b	Use and support the development and implementation of policies and procedures to promote sustainability of culturally responsive, evidence-based interventions and supports	E-1 E-2 E-3	1.07 2.01 2.15 3.12

*Professional Development*

#	Standard	BACB 5 <sup>th</sup> Ed. Task List	Ethics Code
3.2a	Provide professional development opportunities, including coaching, to improve staff understanding and performance of behavioral interventions and supports	E-5 G, I-1, I-3, I-5	4.08, 4.10
3.2b	Evaluate effectiveness of professional development and coaching using data to inform practice related to behavioral and systems change initiatives and interventions	H-7 I-5 I-8	4.08, 4.10

*Behavior Analytic Supervision*

#	Standard	BACB 5 <sup>th</sup> Ed. Task List	Ethics Code
3.3	Use data to provide and develop quality supervision opportunities for staff certified under the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (e.g., BCaBA, RBT) and those working to obtain their certification	E-5, I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, I-5, I-6, I-7, I-8	4.01-4.12

**Standard 4: Instruction**

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 school-wide systems levels.

School-based behavior analysts will:

#	Standard	BACB 5 <sup>th</sup> Ed. Task List	Ethics Code
4.1	Support and use behavior analytic professional knowledge (e.g., principles of reinforcement, antecedent-based interventions, verbal behavior, etc.) to increase student access to grade level curriculum as appropriate, support specialized instruction, and improve student success	B, G	1.04, 1.05, 1.06, 2.01, 2.02
4.2	Support and conduct assessments with a behavior analytic foundation and contribute data to general education and special education teams and processes to create meaningful, relevant, and socially significant student goals	F, H	2.09, 2.13, 2.14
4.3	Support and use functional behavior assessments, behavior intervention plans, and fidelity measures to increase positive student learning behaviors and decrease behaviors interfering with learning in the educational setting	F, G, H	2.11, 2.14, 2.15
4.4	Support and use individual student assessments, frequent progress monitoring and evaluation data to design, provide and/or modify evidence-based interventions for students to achieve meaningful, relevant, and socially-significant learning goals	H - 3, H - 6, H - 7, H - 9	2.01, 3.01, 3.06

**Standard 5: Leadership & Policy**

5.0 School-based behavior analysts are leaders within in 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 behavior analysts will:

#	Standard	BACB 5 <sup>th</sup> Ed. Task List	Ethics Code
5.1	Identify system level needs and collaboratively develop policies and processes to support the mission of the school system and improve outcomes for students	C-9-C-11, H-1, H-3, H-7, H-9	2.09, 2.10, 2.17, 3.01, 3.02
5.2	Demonstrate capacity to engage in sound, data-based decision making, communicate findings and rationale, and develop initiatives that support students, educators, and other stakeholders	C-1-C-11, F-2, F-3, H-1, H-3, H-6, H-7, H-8, I-1	2.01, 2.08, 2.13, 2.15, 2.17, 2.18, 3.01, 3.02
5.3	Demonstrate high professional expectations while modeling and supporting the use of effective behavioral practices that are equitable and culturally responsive	F-2, F-3	1.04, 1.05, 1.07, 1.10, 2.19, 3.02
5.4	Promote a culture of continuous improvement through advocating for effective policies and practices	I-5, I-6, I-7	1.03, 2.01
5.5	Collaboratively design, implement, and evaluate systems of support, coaching, and professional development for teachers, school leaders, and other educational professionals that promotes effective behavioral practices	C-8-C-11, H-9, I-4, I-5, I-6, I-7	2.09, 2.10, 3.02

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