

Proposal for a CSDE Special Education Inclusive Endorsement for Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs)

Submitted to: Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board (CEPCB)

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Purpose: This proposal recommends that the CEPCB, in collaboration with the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), consider developing a special education–inclusive CSDE endorsement for Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) who provide applied behavior analysis (ABA) services in public school settings.

The intent is not to create a new certification area, but to explore an endorsement model similar to those held by other school-based related service professionals.

Recognizing the Board’s current regulatory responsibilities, it is recommended that this work begin once those efforts are complete.

Legal and Policy Background

Connecticut General Statutes §10-76ii requires local and regional boards of education to provide ABA services to students with autism. The statute allows these services to be delivered by:

- A BACB-credentialed behavior analyst or assistant behavior analyst;
- A person certified by CSDE; or
- A person licensed by the Department of Public Health.

While the statute recognizes BCBAs as qualified providers, it does not establish a CSDE-issued certification or endorsement for school-based BCBAs. As a result, BCBAs often work in schools without formal inclusion in the CSDE certification framework.

Current Challenges

- **Lack of alignment** between BCBA credentialing and CSDE certification structures.
- **Role ambiguity** for BCBAs who routinely serve students with IEPs and participate on special education teams.
- **Inconsistent district practices** in hiring and supervising BCBAs.
- **Limited pathways** for dual-credentialed professionals, as experience under a BCBA credential cannot advance a teaching certificate under current statutes and regulations.

Comparison to Other CSDE-Endorsed Professionals

CSDE certifies or endorses several non-teaching professionals who provide specialized services to students with disabilities, including:

- School psychologists
- School social workers

- Speech-language pathologists
- School counselors

Like these professionals, BCBAs:

- Provide evidence-based interventions recognized under IDEA;
- Frequently serve students with autism and IEPs;
- Collaborate with multidisciplinary school teams; and
- Directly support access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Despite these similarities, BCBAs lack a comparable endorsement pathway.

Rationale for a Special Education–Inclusive Endorsement

A CT endorsement for school-based BCBAs would:

- Clarify the role of BCBAs within public schools;
- Promote consistency and quality of behavioral services across districts;
- Support effective collaboration with special education teams;
- Acknowledge the rigor and relevance of BCBA training; and
- Reflect the reality that many students receiving ABA services are students with disabilities.
- Provide upward mobility into leadership endorsements
- Assist with shortage areas (Special Education)

Conceptual Framework (For Consideration)

An endorsement model could:

- Apply specifically to school-based practice;
- Require an active BCBA credential;
- Include competency in special education
- Align with existing CSDE endorsement structures for related service providers.

Conclusion

Connecticut law authorizes BCBAs to provide required ABA services in schools, yet the absence of a CT endorsement creates misalignment between statute, practice, and certification structures.

A special education-inclusive CSDE endorsement for BCBAs would strengthen behavioral services for students with disabilities, support districts in meeting their obligations, and bring parity with other school-based related service professionals.

Recognizing the Board’s current regulatory responsibilities, it is recommended that this work begin once those efforts are complete.