



# Staff Credentialing Taskforce Update

Presented on 6/15/2015 at the General Meeting  
California Consortium for Behavior Analysis (CCBA)

<http://sccbainfo.org/>

Northridge, California

Rev 8-21-15

# Consortium Mission

We are dedicated to the science of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and to working collaboratively to achieve professional goals that are unattainable individually.

The Consortium promotes the highest standards of behavior analysis, community awareness, training, research and business practices, and monitors legislation that impacts the practice of ABA.

Members of the Consortium are committed to the utilization of quality behavior analysis programs that have been empirically validated for the betterment of those who receive services, while maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct.

All member agencies are independent in their decision-making and adoption of recommendations made by the Consortium, its committees, or Task Forces.

# Task Force



- Members elected to the Consortium Board of Directors
  - Volunteers with experience in staff training and credentialing
  - Alphabetically Listed:
    - **Scott Cross**, Ph.D., BCBA-D; Chair of Research Committee
    - **Michelle Heid**, M.S., BCBA; Consultant, an appointed member
    - **Stephen Johnson**, Ph.D., BCBA-D; Chair of Education & Training Committee
    - **Ellie Kazemi**, Ph.D., BCBA-D; President
    - **Marla Saltzman**, Ph.D., BCBA-D; Secretary

# Purpose

- CCBA Board recognized that
  - managed care plans and insurance companies soon may require that the paraprofessionals who implement behavioral procedures with clients hold credentials
  - at this time, there are multiple entities seeking to credential paraprofessionals
- The Board identified an immediate need for
  - research of facts regarding the different entities
  - an analysis of the outcomes of the research
  - recommendations based on the information obtained

# Task Force Activities

- Convened April 2015
- Conducted independent literary and website searches
- Corresponded with the following individuals (organizations) to gather remaining facts
  - Matt McAlear ([CaIABA](http://www.calaba.org/); <http://www.calaba.org/>)
  - Gina Green ([APBA](http://www.apbahome.net/); <http://www.apbahome.net/>)
  - Tom McCool and Doug Moes ([QABA](http://www.qababoard.com/m/Registry/Registry); <http://www.qababoard.com/m/Registry/Registry>)
  - Jim Carr ([BACB](http://bacb.com/); <http://bacb.com/>)
- Research concluded June 2015

# Elements of Evaluating Credentials

- Licensure
  - Most stringent type of occupational regulation, operated by state under authority of a law. Requirements are usually set by a governmental entity (licensure board)
- Certification (see [Institute for Credentialing Excellence, 2010](#); ICE)
  - Assessment-based certificate programs
    - Provide training and award certificates to those who meet the performance standards
  - Certificate of Attendance or Participation
    - Provide certificates of completion to those who attended a course or training program
  - Professional or Personnel Certification Programs
    - Assessment is independent of a specific class or training and not designed to evaluate mastery of a specific training program. The certification program must be independent of training program. Individuals are evaluated against a predetermined standard for knowledge, skills, or competencies and given a time-limited credential. To retain credential, they must maintain continued competence. The credential awarded denotes that the participant possess particular skills.

More Robust

# Elements of Evaluating Credentials

- All valid and legitimate professional credentialing programs have several key features (see APBA Reporter, August 2011; Foxhall, 2000)
  - Written examination
    - Professionally developed, psychometrically valid and reliable
  - Requirements for eligibility to take the examination
    - Degrees from accredited institutions, specified coursework in subject matter, training and supervised experience
  - Continuing education for maintaining the credential
  - Ethical and disciplinary standards and enforcement procedures
  - Due process protections (e.g., hearings, appeal procedures) for individuals deemed ineligible

# Elements of Evaluating Credentials continued....

- Systematic, empirical procedures for conducting a job analysis
  - Panels of subject matter experts develop initial descriptions of the knowledge and skills required to practice the profession
  - Psychometrician develops a survey based on description
  - Survey is sent to large numbers of members of the profession (representative sample) who rate importance, skill, and knowledge needed
  - Survey data are compiled and analyzed by psychometrician to establish standards (or task list)
  - Job analysis is repeated at regular intervals, depending on the rate of change in the profession
- An independent nonprofit organization or board that
  - Manages the credential (determines requirements, reviews applications, verifies eligibility, enforces standards, keeps records, communicates with credential holders and others, etc.)
  - Comprises of several professionals who hold the credential and one or more consumer and other representatives
  - If accredited, all decisions regarding standards, instruments, and activities must not be subject to undue influence by any individuals, special interest groups, or other organizations



# Accrediting Bodies


- Valid credentialing programs are accredited by one of two bodies:
  - [American National Standards Institute \(ANSI\)](#)
  - [The National Commission for Certifying Agencies \(NCCA\)](#)
    - Created by the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE)
    - Standards are consistent with The Standards for Education and Psychology Testing (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999)
    - Accredited by ANSI as a developer of American National Standards
- These are external entities that employ standards derived from extensive case law and best practices in professional credentialing
- They provide impartial, third-party validation that the program has met recognized national and international credentialing industry standards

# Therefore, to make our recommendations we...

1. Evaluated the mission and focus of the credential to determine if it was specifically designed for individuals who implement ABA-procedures
2. Used NCCA accreditation (if not accredited, we used the checklist) to evaluate each credentialing program
3. Evaluated transparency with regards to
  - board make-up
    - Elections
  - board activities
  - development of training content
    - Based on empirical evidence
    - Sample demographic and size of surveys
  - standards for reviewing materials (e.g., supervision hours, ethical misconduct procedures)
  - Exam development and psychometric review
4. Outlined costs and feasibility

# Task Force Findings (see the following slides)

- We compiled the information for the General Consortium presentation
- Whenever possible, we provided the sources as hyperlinks or citations
- We will finalize this information into a formal report and attach detailed tables as Appendixes

There are currently several different credentials;  
The Task Force reviewed them using the criteria  
we mentioned on slide 10 of this presentation.  
See the Table beginning on the next slide 

Board Name	Credential/Certificate Title	Specifically Designed for paraprofessionals of ABA-Services	Accreditation
<b>Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB®)</b> <a href="http://www.bacb.com">www.bacb.com</a>	Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA-D™)	No	Yes
	Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA®)	No	Yes
	Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA®)	No	Yes
	Registered Behavior Technician (RBT™)	Yes	Pending
<b>Comprehensive Application of Behavior Analysis To Schooling (CABAS®)</b> <a href="http://www.cabasschools.org">www.cabasschools.org</a>	Research Scientist (Assistant, Associate, and Senior)	No	No
	Behavior Analyst (Assistant, Associate, and Senior)	No	No
	Teacher (Level I, II, and Master)	No	No
<b>International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES)</b> <a href="http://www.IBCCES.org">www.IBCCES.org</a>	Certified Autism Specialist (CAS)	No	No
	Autism Certificate (AC)	No	No
<b>Qualified Applied Behavior Analysis Credentialing Board (QABA®)</b> <a href="http://www.qababoard.com">www.qababoard.com</a>	Qualified Autism Services Practitioner (QASP™)	No	Pending
	Applied Behavior Analysis Technician (ABAT™)	Yes	Pending

Board Name	Credential/Certificate Title	Specifically Designed for Paraprofessionals of ABA-Services	Accreditation
Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB®) <a href="http://www.bacb.com">www.bacb.com</a>	Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA-D™)	No	Yes
	Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA®)	No	Yes
	Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA®)	No	Yes
	Registered Behavior Technician (RBT™)	Yes	Pending
Comprehensive Application of Behavior Analysis To Schooling (CABAS®) <a href="http://www.cabasschools.org">www.cabasschools.org</a>	Research Scientist (Assistant, Associate, and Senior)	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
	Behavior Analyst (Assistant, Associate, and Senior)	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
	Teacher (Level I, II, and Master)	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) <a href="http://www.IBCCES.org">www.IBCCES.org</a>	Certified Autism Specialist (CAS)	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
	Autism Certificate (AC)	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Qualified Applied Behavior Analysis Credentialing Board (QABA©) <a href="http://www.qababoard.com">www.qababoard.com</a>	Qualified Autism Services Practitioner (QASP™)	No	Pending
	Applied Behavior Analysis Technician (ABAT™)	Yes	Pending

Board Name	Credential/Certificate Title	Specifically Designed for paraprofessionals of ABA-Services	Accreditation
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	Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA®)	No	Yes
	Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA®)	No	Yes
	Registered Behavior Technician (RBT™)	Yes	Pending
<b>Comprehensive Application of Behavior Analysis To Schooling (CABAS®)</b> <a href="http://www.cabasschools.org">www.cabasschools.org</a>	Research Scientist (Assistant, Associate, and Senior)	No	No
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<b>Qualified Applied Behavior Analysis Credentialing Board (QABA®)</b> <a href="http://www.qababoard.com">www.qababoard.com</a>	Qualified Autism Services Practitioner (QASP™)	No	Pending
	Applied Behavior Analysis Technician (ABAT™)	Yes	Pending

The only credentials that appeared to apply to paraprofessionals who implement ABA-services were the RBT™ and the ABAT™. Both of the boards for these credentials are seeking accreditation.

Therefore, we focused the rest of our research on these two credentials.



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Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB®) <a href="http://www.bacb.com">www.bacb.com</a>	Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA-D™)	No	Yes
	Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA®)	No	Yes
	Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA®)	No	Yes
	<b>Registered Behavior Technician (RBT™)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Pending</b>
Comprehensive Application of Behavior Analysis To Schooling (CABAS®) <a href="http://www.cabasschools.org">www.cabasschools.org</a>	Research Scientist (Assistant, Associate, and Senior)	No	No
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Qualified Applied Behavior Analysis Credentialing Board (QABA©) <a href="http://www.qababoard.com">www.qababoard.com</a>	Qualified Autism Services Practitioner (QASP™)	No	Pending
	<b>Applied Behavior Analysis Technician (ABAT™)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Pending</b>

# Accreditation

- We used the [NCCA Certification Accreditation Self-Assessment Checklist](#)
  - Scale
    - Have complete evidence to support this criterion
    - Working towards completion of evidence
    - Do not currently have evidence
  - Standards as referenced in the checklist
    - Purpose, Governance, and Stakeholders (Standards 1-4)
    - Responsibilities to Stakeholders (Standards 5-9)
    - Assessment Instruments (Standards 10-18)
    - Recertification (Standards 19-20)
    - Maintaining Accreditation (Standard 21)

# Our Analysis

- Based on the Task Force's review using the NCCA Checklist
  - Registered Behavior Technician (RBT™)
    - Appeared to satisfy all elements of the checklist contingent on:
      - Written examination to begin December 14, 2015, as announced in an E-mail to BACB registrants June 12, 2015 and in the May, 2015 BACB Newsletter
  - Applied Behavior Analysis Technician (ABAT™)
    - There was not enough information available to the Task Force to opine on several checklist items, including:
      - Autonomy in certification decisions and policies
      - Distinct firewall between education and certification; no conflict of interest
      - Governance board is elected without undue influence
      - Policies and procedures for key certification activities are published, applied, reviewed, and updated
      - A job analysis of adequate sample size (representative group across practice areas, work settings, geography, work experience, etc.) was conducted
      - The program has documented the psychometric procedures used to develop, score, interpret and report assessment results

# Closer Examination

		Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) Credential	Qualified Applied Behavior Analysis (QABA) Applied Behavior Analysis Technician (ABAT) Credential
Overview of process to become credentialed		<a href="http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=101118">http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=101118</a>	<a href="http://innovative-learning.com/bh/downloads/qaba/QABA-Candidate-Instructions.pdf">http://innovative-learning.com/bh/downloads/qaba/QABA-Candidate-Instructions.pdf</a>
Ethics, Professionalism, & Discipline	Training Requirements	<p>Minimum of 3 hours of instruction in ethics</p> <p><a href="http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=57">http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=57</a></p>	<p>Minimum of 3 hours of instruction in ethics</p> <p><a href="http://www.qababoard.com/m/mCertification/Code-of-Ethics">http://www.qababoard.com/m/mCertification/Code-of-Ethics</a></p>
	Ethical Guidelines / Code	<p>Paraprofessional follows subset of BACB Guidelines for “Responsible Conduct for Behavior Analysts and Professional Compliance Code” and BACB Disciplinary Complaint process</p> <p><a href="http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=57">http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=57</a></p>	<p>Paraprofessional follows QABA Code of Ethics for “Responsible Conduct of ABA Technician and QASP” and adheres to Innovative Learning’s discrimination and harassment policies</p> <p><a href="http://www.qababoard.com/m/mCertification/Code-of-Ethics">http://www.qababoard.com/m/mCertification/Code-of-Ethics</a></p>

	RBT	ABAT
<p><b>Scope of Ethical Guidelines / Code</b></p>	<p>Includes everything that is included in QABAs Code of Ethics as well as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dual relationships</li> <li>• Conflicts of interest</li> <li>• Data collection</li> <li>• Avoiding harmful reinforcers</li> <li>• Avoiding conflicts with organizations</li> <li>• Ethical violations of behavioral or non-behavioral colleagues</li> <li>• Avoiding false or deceptive statements</li> </ul>	<p>Does not include everything that is included in the BACB Code of Ethics, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dual relationships</li> <li>• Conflicts of interest</li> <li>• Data collection</li> <li>• Avoiding harmful reinforcers</li> <li>• Avoiding conflicts with organizations</li> <li>• Ethical violations of behavioral or non-behavioral colleagues</li> <li>• Avoiding false or deceptive statements</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disciplinary Procedures for Certificants</b></p>	<p>BACB convenes a Review Committee comprised of three current or former BACB Directors to determine if immediate action is needed to address underlying reason for complaint. In rare instances, an immediate and temporary suspension of RBT status may be issued.</p> <p>To the extent practical, all other provisions and procedures as outlined in the <a href="#">Professional Disciplinary and Ethical Standards</a>, including the appeal procedures, shall apply to RBT review.</p> <p>The Review Committee’s decision will be forwarded to the supervisor(s) of record for the case in question. The RBT’s supervisor(s) shall be given notice of any sanction(s).</p> <p><a href="http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=101118">http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=101118</a></p>	<p>None specified on program website</p>

	RBT	ABAT
Training Curriculum	<p>RBT Task List</p> <p><a href="http://bacb.com/Downloadfiles/RBT/RBT_Task_List.pdf">http://bacb.com/Downloadfiles/RBT/RBT_Task_List.pdf</a></p>	<p>ABAT Standards</p> <p><a href="http://www.qababoard.com/m/dAbout/Credenti-aling-Standards">http://www.qababoard.com/m/dAbout/Credenti-aling-Standards</a></p>
Task List / Standards	<p>Measurement Assessment Skill Acquisition Behavior Reduction Documentation and Reporting Professional Conduct and Scope of Practice</p>	<p>Autism Core Knowledge Education, Training, and Self Development Principles of ABA Instructional Interventions Principles of Working with Autism Effectively Treating Individuals with Challenging Behaviors Data Collection and Evaluation Positive Behavior Supports Discrete Trial Training (DTT) Pivotal Response Training (PRT) Person-Centered Planning Functional Analysis Philosophy, Values and Advocacy Legal and Ethical Considerations</p>

	RBT	ABAT
<p><b>Scope of Task List / Standards</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains tasks that are behavioral</li> <li>• Tasks are within the scope of practice of a behavior analyst supervising the paraprofessional.</li> </ul>	<p>Contains standards/competencies that are not behavioral or in scope of practice of behavior analyst supervising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the different types of cards that can be used and the purpose of each</li> <li>• Recalling what needs to be remembered when creating visuals</li> <li>• Explaining impact of sensory challenges</li> <li>• Identifying events that can increase anxiety for people with autism</li> <li>• Evaluate validity of different biomedical approaches</li> <li>• Defining restrictive problem solving</li> <li>• Explaining concept of episodic severity</li> <li>• Identify phases of behavior</li> <li>• Positive behavior support</li> <li>• PRT (as opposed to naturalistic teaching strategies, in general)</li> <li>• Person-centered planning</li> <li>• Self-determination</li> </ul> <p>Does not contain some commonly utilized behavioral procedures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MO/EO and how to modify MOs to treat problem behaviors</li> <li>• Conducting preference assessments</li> <li>• Implementing generalization and maintenance procedures</li> <li>• Implementing differential reinforcement procedures</li> <li>• Implementing extinction procedures</li> <li>• Implementing emergency / crisis procedures</li> </ul>

	RBT	ABAT
<b>Procedures for Task List Standards / Revisions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Task List is developed by subject matter experts and validated through a job analysis that is reviewed by a psychometrician.</li> <li>Task List is revised at regular intervals.</li> </ul>	Information about development and revision of Standards/Competencies was unavailable on program website and the QABA president indicated this information will be available, on the website, once accreditation is approved.
<b>Training Requirements</b>	<p>40 hours of didactic or experiential training and based upon the RBT Task List, provided by a BCBA (recorded, live, online, in person or a combination)</p> <p><a href="http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=101118">http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=101118</a></p>	<p>45 hours of coursework and 50 hours of fieldwork (5 hours of supervision by individual with 2 years' experience or 1 yr experience + 12 units of ABA coursework)</p> <p><a href="http://www.qababoard.com/m/mCertification/ABAT">http://www.qababoard.com/m/mCertification/ABAT</a></p>
<b>Assessment</b>	<p>RBT Competency Assessment conducted by a BCBA and an online multiple-choice 75-item exam through Pearson testing centers to begin December 14, 2015</p> <p><a href="http://www.bacb.com/Downloadfiles/RBT/RBT_Compety_Assessment.pdf">http://www.bacb.com/Downloadfiles/RBT/RBT_Compety_Assessment.pdf</a></p>	<p>Online multiple-choice exam, proctored and video recorded by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party</p> <p><a href="http://www.qababoard.com/accreditation_accrediting_body/154">http://www.qababoard.com/accreditation_accrediting_body/154</a></p>



	RBT	ABAT
<b>Supervisor / Trainer Credentials</b>	<p>BCBA or BCaBA who has received 8 hr training in supervision (including how to conduct BST) as well as BACB online training modules</p> <p><a href="http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=101118">http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=101118</a></p>	<p>Bachelor’s degree and 12 semester units in ABA <u>or</u> 2 years experience administering behavior intervention programs</p> <p><a href="http://www.qababoard.com/m/nSupervision/Supervision-Verification-&amp;-Recommendations">http://www.qababoard.com/m/nSupervision/Supervision-Verification-&amp;-Recommendations</a></p>
<b>Attestation</b>	<p>A Supervisor (BCBA/ BCaBA) attests to criminal records check as well as completion of all RBT training and assessment requirements</p>	<p>Supervisor attests to completion of 50 hours supervised fieldwork.</p> <p>A recommender attests to other ABAT qualities (e.g., implements treatment plans with fidelity, accepts feedback, and demonstrates compliance with mandated reporter laws). Qualifications of recommender are not specified.</p> <p><a href="http://www.qababoard.com/m/nSupervision/Supervision-Verification-&amp;-Recommendations">http://www.qababoard.com/m/nSupervision/Supervision-Verification-&amp;-Recommendations</a></p>
<b>Ongoing Supervision Requirements</b>	<p>Minimum of 5 % with at least two face to face, synchronous supervisor encounters each month including at least 1, one to one supervision encounter</p> <p><a href="http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=101118">http://www.bacb.com/index.php?page=101118</a></p>	<p>Minimum of 1 hour per month from a QAS Practitioner</p> <p>No indication of form of supervision (i.e., group, online, etc.)</p> <p>Guidelines for Responsible Conduct for ABA Technicians/QASPs 1.1 (b)</p> <p><a href="http://www.qababoard.com/m/mCertification/Code-of-Ethics">http://www.qababoard.com/m/mCertification/Code-of-Ethics</a></p>

	RBT	ABAT
<b>Criminal Records check and monitoring</b>	Criminal background check and abuse registry check required to be conducted by agency	Criminal background check and abuse registry check required to be conducted by QABA through a 3 <sup>rd</sup> party (CSS)
<b>Is it Transportable from One Agency to Another</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Accreditation</b>	As of May 2015, BACB announced in their Newsletter that they are pursuing accreditation through NCCA for the RBT credential (BCBA and BCaBA credentials are accredited through NCCA).	As of May 2015, QABA Board President & CEO verbally indicated that they are pursuing accreditation through NCCA for the ABAT and the QASP credential.
<b>Possible Conflicts of Interest</b>	None found as BACB is independent of entities that provide approved coursework	Relationship with Innovative Learning [physical address, phone numbers, & board members (see website)].  QABA President indicated, “Currently there are no conflicts of interests that exist per ANSI or NCCA Accreditation standards.”

	RBT <sup>TM</sup>	ABAT <sup>TM</sup>
	Application Fee \$50 Examination Fee \$45 Annual renewal Fee \$35	Registration Fee \$250 Annual Renewal Fee \$50.00 3-year Recertification Fee \$150.00

# Some Current Concerns

## RBT<sup>TM</sup>

1. Cost of obtaining credentialing for direct staff
2. Requirement of 40h with a BCBA could delay client access to care due to high turnover of paraprofessionals and time frame within which BCBA is available to train
3. Documentation of hours is an additional administrative duty for the RBT and additional cost to agency to ensure it's done
4. 5% supervision seems cumbersome to some ABA providers
5. Online management of RBT on registry restricted to BCBA supervisor(s)

## ABAT<sup>TM</sup>

1. Cost of obtaining credentialing for direct staff
2. Requirement of 40h with a BCBA could delay client access to care due to high turnover of paraprofessionals and time frame within which BCBA is available to train
3. Documentation of hours is an additional administrative duty for the ABAT and additional cost to agency to ensure it's done
4. Supervision dose not adhere to best practice in ABA and may not be sufficient
5. The ABAT standards/competencies
6. Not enough information to make conclusions regarding
  - a) The relationship between Innovative Learning and QABA (potential conflict of interest)
  - b) The job analysis (e.g., demographic of sample, how QABA selected its Standards and Competencies)
  - c) The approved course sequences, outside of an agency, other than through Innovative Learning

As a part of the Task Force's research process, we communicated with each board to share our concerns.

We spoke with Tom McCool with regard to ABAT™ and Jim Carr with regard to RBT™.

# Preliminary Conclusions

- Based on publicly available information and information shared with the Task Force
  - The RBT™ appears to, and there isn't enough information to opine on whether ABAT™ appears to, satisfy the following
    - Transparency
    - Independence from training entities (no conflict of interest)
    - Development and execution of surveys
    - Psychometric analysis of survey results and exam
    - Evidence-based staff training and supervision dose
    - Disciplinary actions (ethical conduct) and hearings
  - At this time, some Consortium members have expressed concerns with adopting either credential (for the stated concerns please see slide 28)
    - Task Force is actively soliciting feedback from the General Membership before making final recommendations

# Additional References

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- Shook, G.L., Johnston, J.M., & Mellichamp, F.H. (2004). Determining essential content for applied behavior analyst practitioners. *The Behavior Analyst*, 27, 67-94.