

# Therapeutic Classroom Implementation Rubric

## Purpose

The purpose of the Therapeutic Classrooms Implementation Rubric is to support schools and districts in implementing a therapeutic classroom program within the requirements of Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Code. The rubric is a self-assessment intended to guide schools through planning and implementing a therapeutic classroom (TC) program.

## Therapeutic Classroom

"Therapeutic classroom" means a program designed for the purpose of providing support for any student, with or without an Individualized Education Program (IEP), whose emotional, social or behavioral needs interfere with the student's ability to be successful in the current educational environment, with or without supports, until the student is able to successfully return to the student's current education environment, with or without supports, including but not limited to the general education classroom.

A therapeutic classroom is a part of a district's or building's tiers of support. The word "classroom" is a descriptor of an educational set of services that create the educational environment that may include but is not required to include a separate physical setting from other students. Therapeutic classrooms include the therapeutic programming students may need to support them across a range of educational settings or learning spaces, or both, and are not necessarily standalone or isolated classrooms. Therapeutic classroom supports are part of a district's tiers of social, emotional and behavioral health (SEBH) supports.

The Therapeutic Classroom(s) do NOT solely consist of any one of the following: calming room/space, single strategy or program without individualization, space/location for disciplinary action, or seclusion room. (see also [Iowa Administrative Code 281-103](#) on seclusion and restraint)

"Social-emotional-behavioral health" or "SEBH" means social, emotional, behavioral and mental well-being that affects how one thinks, feels, communicates, acts and learns. These contribute to resilience and to how one relates to others, responds to stress and emotions and makes choices. [Iowa Administrative Code 281-14](#)

## Aligning Iowa's Frameworks & Process

Therapeutic classrooms (programs) are a part of a district's tiers of social, emotional and behavioral health (SEBH) supports and should follow a continuous improvement process. The Therapeutic Classroom Implementation Rubric aligns as much as possible with the Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation (SAMI) Rubric and Implementation Guide with a focus on SEBH components and Therapeutic Classroom (TC) requirements. Iowa's frameworks and processes to support schools include a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) and continuous improvement process (CIP).

## Multi-Tiered System of Supports

A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a framework that uses data-based decision-making for continuous improvement to enhance academic and social-emotional-behavioral health outcomes for all learners, in order to prepare them for their future at every step of their educational journey.

## Continuous Improvement Process

The continuous improvement process (CIP) is a cyclical process that supports teams in a system to understand current needs, identify goals, prioritize evidence-based ways to improve, develop, implement and evaluate a plan of action in a continuous cycle.

## Getting Started

It is suggested that the Therapeutic Classroom Implementation Rubric is completed by a representative team of school, district and community members with leadership and familiarity with the social, emotional and behavioral health (SEBH) supports within the school, district and community. It is expected that the team completing the rubric may grow and change throughout the continuous improvement cycle.

## Rubric Overview

The table below provides an overview of the rubric components, anchors and alignment to the Therapeutic Classroom (TC) requirements.

Component	Anchors	<i>Therapeutic Classroom Required Components IAC 281—14.13(256)</i>
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multidisciplinary team</li><li>• Knowledge and skills of the team</li><li>• Community, family and student engagement</li></ul>	<i>A multidisciplinary team who collaborates regularly to support design, implementation, and decision-making regarding the therapeutic classroom program</i>  <i>Supports including but not limited to an individual qualified to conduct diagnostic assessments and support SEBH programming for individuals with social-emotional concerns</i>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policies and procedures</li><li>• Learning environment</li><li>• Allocation of time and resources</li></ul>	<i>The TC(s) are operated by and housed in the boundaries of the local education agency</i>  <i>TC(s) include the therapeutic programming students may need to support them across a range of educational settings or learning spaces, or both, and are not necessarily standalone or isolated classrooms. TC supports are part of a district's tiers of SEBH supports</i>

Component	Anchors	Therapeutic Classroom Required Components IAC 281—14.13(256)
Assessment and Data-Based Decision-Making (ADBDM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School/District level</li> <li>Student supports</li> </ul>	<p><i>The TC has to have</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>clear requirements for referral, admission, progress monitoring, and exit that focus on supporting learners to return to their least restrictive environment</i></li> <li><i>regular assessment of competencies with targeted individualized instruction, small group social-emotional instruction, or both</i></li> <li><i>regular engagement of family to review progress and make decisions for more or less restrictive programming</i></li> </ul> <p><i>If/when a general education student receives therapeutic services for 50 percent or more of the school day, a team of qualified professionals, the teacher, and the family review the BIP every 60 days to consider the need for transition to more or less intensive programming</i></p>
Universal Tier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive childhood experiences</li> <li>Local behavioral expectations and skills for learning</li> <li>Structured academic supports</li> </ul>	<p><i>The TC includes practices that enhance positive childhood experiences</i></p> <p><i>The TC has clearly articulated and taught behavioral expectations and routines</i></p> <p><i>The TC(s) follow program standards for the age(s) served and the full extent of the local education agency's comprehensive education program, including those for preschool programs (281—16), preschool-twelfth grade programs (281—12), and programs for students with IEPs (281—41)</i></p>
Supplemental-Intensive Tiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuum of supports</li> <li>Students and staff</li> <li>Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs)</li> <li>Supports matched to student need</li> </ul>	<p><i>TC(s) include the therapeutic programming students may need to support them across a range of educational settings or learning spaces, or both, and are not necessarily standalone or isolated classrooms. Therapeutic classroom supports are part of a district's tiers of SEBH supports.</i></p> <p><i>The TC provides supports for students with and without IEPs and who need therapeutic classroom supports</i></p> <p><i>TC(s) have appropriately licensed and certified teacher(s)</i>  <i>Each student served in a TC has an individualized BIP developed based on FBA and trauma-informed practice</i></p> <p><i>If, at any point, public agencies suspect a disability, the public agencies request consent for a full and individual evaluation for special education from the parent as required by 281—Chapter 41. The TC(s) have supports for generalization and transition to less restrictive supports/settings since a Therapeutic Classroom is a temporary intervention. Supports include opportunities to practice social-emotional skills in natural contexts with similar age/grade peers.</i></p>

## Scoring

The following scoring is used for each component of the rubric. As teams complete the self-assessment, consider each category in relation to implementation of a TC as a part of a continuum of supports. Programs across buildings or districts may consider separate scores for each building/site.

0 Not yet addressed	1 Getting Started	2 Initial Implementation	3 Implementation	4 Sustained Implementation
The component has not yet been addressed	Initial consensus and beginning identification and infrastructure to implement the component	Building consensus, and/or designing the infrastructure and capacity to implement the component	Implementing and actively working to build consistency and integrity of implementation within the component	Embedding with integrity effective implementation and adjustments based on data and input

In the tables below record scores for each anchor within each rubric component. Include evidence and artifacts to support implementation score. The TC requirements are identified in italics in the tables.

## Rubric Components

[Leadership](#)

[Infrastructure](#)

[Assessment and Data-Based Decision-Making](#)

[Universal Tier](#)

[Supplemental-Intensive Tiers](#)

## Leadership

Leadership is essential to a highly functioning system - there must be a central team with the knowledge and skills needed to lead and support implementation of a Therapeutic Classroom within a continuum of social-emotional-behavioral health (SEBH) supports.

Anchor	1 Getting Started	2 Initial Implementation	3 Implementation	4 Sustained Implementation
<i>A <b>multidisciplinary team of professionals and administration collaborate regularly to support design, implementation and decision-making regarding the therapeutic classroom program supports</b></i>	<p>The team has some representation from the following roles/knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administration/Leadership</li> <li>SEBH instruction, assessment and intervention</li> <li>Parents, family, students and community stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p><b>AND</b></p> <p>The team has scheduled meetings to support design, implementation and decision-making including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defined roles</li> <li>Meeting structure</li> <li>Established communication</li> </ul>	The established multidisciplinary team meets regularly to support design, implementation and decision-making	<p>The team reviews and refines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member roles</li> <li>Meeting structure</li> <li>Implementation</li> <li>Decision-making</li> </ul>
<i>The multidisciplinary team has the <b>knowledge and skills</b> to support implementation including but not limited to an individual qualified to conduct diagnostic assessments and support SEBH programming for individuals with social-emotional concerns</i>	<p>The team has some members with the knowledge and skills to support implementation</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Professional learning needed for team members to support implementation has been identified</p>	Team members have the knowledge and skills and/or have received training to support SEBH programming including student and adult SEBH	<p>The team members have the knowledge and skills to support implementation</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>The team has a process to engage additional expertise as needed</p>	<p>The team reviews and refines team member knowledge and skills and engages additional expertise as needed</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Team members receive ongoing professional learning needed to support implementation</p>
<i>The multidisciplinary team supports leadership and school staff in outreach and <b>engagement of community, families and students</b></i>	Community and family engagement and student voice strategies and practices are being identified or developed	<p>Strategies and practices to have been identified or developed</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>The team and school staff know their role and what resources are available to support community and family engagement and student voice</p>	The team and staff implement strategies to engage community, families and students	<p>The team reviews and refines community and family engagement and student voice strategies and practices</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Staff receive ongoing professional learning and support</p>

## Infrastructure

Infrastructure is focused on the major structural pieces that are vital for implementation such as policies/procedures, culture/climate, resources/schedules and professional learning/coaching.

Anchor	1 Getting Started	2 Initial Implementation	3 Implementation	4 Sustained Implementation
<b>Policies and procedures</b> are aligned to and support implementation of a Therapeutic Classroom	<p>Review and revision of policies to align relevant requirements and evidence-based practices include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/family consent and engagement</li> <li>• Community partner agreements</li> <li>• Student privacy</li> </ul>	<p>Policies and procedures are revised to align to and support implementation</p> <p><b>AND</b> Revised policies and procedures are communicated to staff and stakeholders</p>	<p>There is a structure to identify policies and procedures that serve as supports or barriers to implementation and sustainability</p> <p><b>AND</b> Staff effectively implement and support revised policies and procedures</p>	<p>Policies and/or procedures are reviewed and refined</p> <p><b>AND</b> Professional learning around policies and procedures are built into systems and practice coaching</p> <p><b>AND</b> Policies and/or procedures that serve as a support or barrier to implementation of the work are communicated to the district or state, as appropriate</p>
The building learning environment supports the safety and well-being of all students and staff	<p>There is initial consensus around the importance of student and staff well-being and SEBH</p> <p><b>AND</b> There is an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and Crisis Response and Violence Prevention Plan (CRVP)</p>	<p>There is consensus around the importance of student and staff well-being and SEBH</p> <p><b>AND</b> Emergency, response and behavior policies and protocols have been reviewed/revised</p> <p><b>AND</b> Policies and protocols are communicated to staff and stakeholders</p>	<p>Staff, community partners, families and students know their roles and responsibilities to create/maintain a building learning environment that supports the safety and well-being of all students and staff</p> <p><b>AND</b> The foundational content of school-wide positive support/expectations is fully implemented</p>	<p>Frequent and ongoing feedback from staff, community, family and students is used to evaluate and refine an understanding and implementation of a building learning environment that supports the safety and well-being of all students and staff</p>

Anchor	1 Getting Started	2 Initial Implementation	3 Implementation	4 Sustained Implementation
<p><b>Allocation of time and resources</b> support implementation of a TC</p> <p><i>TC(s) include the therapeutic programming students may need to support them across a range of educational settings or learning spaces, or both and are not necessarily standalone or isolated classrooms. TC supports are part of a district's tiers of SEBH supports</i></p>	<p>Schedules and resources that support the implementation of a therapeutic classroom program have been identified</p>	<p>Schedules support staff training and coaching</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Resources are identified and allocated based on data that identify student and staff needs</p>	<p>Schedules and resources support implementation of therapeutic classroom as a part of a school/district SEBH system of supports</p>	<p>Schedules and resources are reviewed and refined as needed using data such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from staff</li> <li>• Implementation fidelity</li> <li>• Documented time</li> </ul>

## Assessment and Data-Based Decision-Making

Assessment and data-based decision-making (ADBDM) is focused on ensuring efficient assessment systems are used to drive effective data-based decisions within continuous improvement

Anchor	1 Getting Started	2 Initial Implementation	3 Implementation	4 Sustained Implementation
<p>There is a data-based decision-making process and system at the <b>school/district level</b></p> <p><i>The TC(s) have clear requirements for referral, admission, progress monitoring, and exit</i></p>	<p>The following data-based processes and resources are being identified for SEBH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessments</li> <li>Referral process</li> <li>Admission, progress monitoring and exit</li> </ul>	<p>There is school-wide SEBH process and system</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>As appropriate, staff have received training on SEBH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessments</li> <li>Referral process</li> <li>Admission, progress monitoring and exit</li> </ul>	<p>Staff implement the building SEBH plan</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>There is a process for data to guide decision-making of the district/building SEBH plan</p>	<p>The SEBH plan and processes are reviewed and revised as needed</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Staff receive ongoing professional learning and support</p>
<p>There is a process in place to collect and analyze intervention implementation fidelity and progress monitoring data including intensification, fading and exit of services/program for <b>student supports</b></p> <p>The TC have regular assessment of competencies with targeted individualized instruction, small group social-emotional instruction, or both</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><i>The TC have regular engagement of family to review progress and make decisions for more or less restrictive programming</i></p>	<p>A process is identified to collect and analyze student progress monitoring data</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>A process is identified to have regular engagement of family to review progress and make decisions for more or less restrictive SEBH supports</p>	<p>A process is in place to monitor the extent to which interventions are implemented with fidelity</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Staff have received training on intervention implementation and progress monitoring</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Staff have the knowledge and resources to regularly engage family to review progress</p>	<p>Student supports are monitored (with input from student and family) and adjusted accordingly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation fidelity</li> <li>Intensification, fading or exit</li> </ul> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><i>If/when a general education student receives therapeutic services for 50 percent or more of the school day, a team of qualified professionals, the teacher, and the family review the BIP every 60 days to consider the need for transition to more or less intensive programming.</i></p>	<p>The process for collecting and analyzing student support data is reviewed and refined;</p> <p>The building has a process to sustain implementation including ongoing professional learning</p>



## Universal Tier

Universal Tier is the evidence-based curriculum, instruction and assessment critical for all learners. Universal instruction aligns with the Iowa's Academic Standards and local behavioral expectations and skills for learning.

Anchor	1 Getting Started	2 Initial Implementation	3 Implementation	4 Sustained Implementation
<p>There is a focus on <b>enhancing positive childhood experiences</b></p> <p><i>The TC includes practices that enhance positive childhood experiences</i></p>	<p>Strategies and practices to increase positive childhood experiences that support local behavioral expectations and skills for learning have been identified</p>	<p>Staff have the knowledge and skills and/or have received training on positive childhood experiences that enhance local behavioral expectations and skills for learning</p>	<p>Staff effectively implement and support practices that enhance positive childhood experience including specific practices that support local behavioral expectations and skills for learning</p>	<p>Strategies and practices are reviewed and revised as needed</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Staff receive ongoing professional learning and support</p>
<p>Staff implement <b>local behavioral expectations and skills for learning</b></p> <p><i>The TC has clearly articulated and taught behavioral expectations and routines</i></p>	<p>Local behavioral expectations are developed in collaboration with staff and students and aligned with school-wide expectations and evidence-based practices for local context</p>	<p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Time and resources have been allocated to support local behavioral expectations and skills for learning</p>	<p>Local behavioral expectations and skills for learning are taught and embedded into teaching practices including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit instruction</li> <li>• Assessment of skills</li> <li>• Reinforcement of skills</li> <li>• Support for generalization</li> </ul>	<p>Behavioral expectations and skills for learning are reviewed and revised as needed</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Staff receive ongoing professional learning and support</p>
<p>All students receive appropriate <b>structured academic supports</b></p> <p><i>The TC(s) follow program standards for the age(s) served and the full extent of the local education agency's comprehensive education program, including those for preschool programs (281—16), preschool-twelfth grade programs (281—12), and programs for students with IEPs (281—41).</i></p>	<p>An agreed upon set of evidence-based instructional practices to facilitate learning and scaffold unfinished learning have been identified</p>	<p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Appropriately qualified staff have the knowledge and skills and/or have received training on evidence-based instructional practices to facilitate learning and scaffold unfinished learning in the Iowa Academic Standards, local behavioral expectations and skills for learning</p>	<p>Staff implement and match the evidence-based instructional practices to the learning of local student needs and differentiate instruction</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>All students have access to appropriate academic instruction and supports</p>	<p>Instructional practices are reviewed and revised as needed</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Staff receive ongoing professional learning and support</p>

## Supplemental-Intensive Tiers

Supplemental-Intensive Tiers are focused on ensuring learners who need additional resources, services, and interventions/support are provided the evidence-based support they need to be successful across academic and social-emotional-behavioral health domains.

Anchor	1 Getting Started	2 Initial Implementation	3 Implementation	4 Sustained Implementation
<p>There is a <b>continuum of collaborative team-based supports</b> for SEBH</p> <p><i>TC(s) include the therapeutic programming students may need to support them across a range of educational settings or learning spaces, or both, and are not necessarily standalone or isolated classrooms. Therapeutic classroom supports are part of a district's tiers of SEBH supports.</i></p>	<p>A continuum of evidence-based, collaborative team-based supports for SEBH have been identified</p>	<p><b>AND</b></p> <p>There are appropriate staff and/or community supports available for a continuum of identified supplemental and intensive interventions</p>	<p>A continuum of supports is consistently available for both supplemental and intensive SEBH interventions including engagement of students and families in a team-based approach</p>	<p>There is an ongoing review and refinement of the continuum of supports to ensure it is aligned to student needs, and that it supports a collaborative team-based approach</p>
<p><b>Students and Staff</b></p> <p><i>The TC(s) provides supports for students with and without IEPs and who need therapeutic classroom supports</i></p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><i>TC(s) have appropriately licensed and certified teacher(s).</i></p>	<p>A process for identifying students with and without IEPs who need therapeutic supports has been identified</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Appropriately licensed and certified staff have been identified</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Training/Hiring is planned</p>	<p>Staff and/or community partners have the needed knowledge, skills and qualifications to implement and support SEBH supplemental and intensive interventions</p>	<p>Appropriately licensed and certified staff and/or community partners provide SEBH support for students who need therapeutic classroom supports</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><i>If, at any point, public agencies suspect a disability, the public agencies request consent for a full and individual evaluation for special education from the parent as required by 281—Chapter 41.</i></p>	<p>Staff qualifications are reviewed and revised as needed</p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p>Staff receive ongoing professional learning and support</p>

Anchor	1 Getting Started	2 Initial Implementation	3 Implementation	4 Sustained Implementation
<p>Individualized Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) are developed and implemented</p> <p><i>Each student served in a TC has an individualized BIP developed based on FBA and trauma-informed practice 281—14.13-14</i></p>	<p>Expertise in BIP development has been identified</p> <p><b>AND/OR</b> Staff training has been identified</p>	<p>Staff have the knowledge, skills and resources to develop BIPs based on Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) and trauma-informed practices including engagement of parents/families and students</p>	<p>Individual BIPs are developed based on FBAs and trauma-informed practice</p> <p><b>AND</b> Individualized BIPs are implemented with fidelity</p>	<p>BIP development and implementation are reviewed and refined as needed with feedback from staff, students and parents/caregivers</p> <p><b>AND</b> Staff receive ongoing training and coaching</p>
<p><b>SEBH supports are matched to student need</b></p> <p>The TC(s) have supports for generalization and transition to less restrictive supports/settings since a TC is a temporary intervention. Supports include opportunities to practice social-emotional skills in natural contexts with similar age/grade peers.</p>	<p>Evidence-based SEBH supplemental and intensive interventions have been identified including opportunities to practice skills in natural contexts</p>	<p>There is a process in place to match SEBH supports aligned to local behavioral expectations and skills for learning with student need</p> <p><b>AND</b> Time and resources have been allocated to supplemental and intensive interventions</p>	<p>SEBH supports are matched to student needs and monitored and adjusted regularly</p> <p><b>AND</b> Processes are in place to engage and support parents and families matched to student SEBH needs</p>	<p>Intervention supports and process are reviewed and revised</p> <p><b>AND</b> Staff receive ongoing professional learning and support</p>