



# YOU'RE A CHARTER SCHOOL BUT YOU STILL HAVE TO...



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Charter schools offer the opportunity for flexibility and innovation, but they are still public schools accountable to the same laws, regulations, and professional standards as other schools.



# SESSION OBJECTIVES

## Curriculum & Assessment

Understand the curriculum and assessment requirements that apply to charter schools under Wisconsin law.



## Special Education

Identify special education requirements for charter schools, including FAPE obligations and LEA status.



## ACT 20 & Curriculum Resources

Explore ACT 20 requirements for all students and IEPs, plus curriculum resources for teachers new to charter schools.



# STRUCTURAL PILLAR OF A CHARTER SCHOOL

## Licensed Teachers

100% of instructional staff must hold a DPI-issued license or permit

## Curriculum

Science of Reading (K-3) & Holocaust education (Gr. 5-12)

## Academic Standards

Mandatory adoption in math, science, reading, writing, geography & history

## State Statutes

Chapters 115-121 WI Statutes generally exempt, unless specifically mandated

## Federal Foundation

Full compliance with IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) & ESEA (Elementary & Secondary Education Act)



# PILLAR 1: CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT

- **State Assessments**

Administer state standardized pupil assessments & civics assessment required for high school graduation. Virtual charter pupils must still participate.

- **Academic Standards & Promotion**

Adopt standards in math, science, reading/writing, geography & history. Grades 5-12 must include Holocaust education. Enforce promotion criteria for 4th→5th and 8th→9th grade.

- **Early Literacy, Progress & Accountability**

Assess early literacy 4K–Grade 3; provide at-risk interventions. Outline pupil progress measurement methods. Participate in DPI accountability reports & statewide student information system.



## PILLAR 2: SPECIAL EDUCATION

### District-Authorized Charter

**LEA Status:**

The authorizing School District serves as the LEA.

**Legal Responsibility:**

The District ultimately holds responsibility for Special Education compliance and FAPE.

**Operations:**

Tied heavily to district Special Ed staffing and resource allocation.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

### Independent Charter

**LEA Status:**

The Charter School functions as its own independent LEA.

**Legal Responsibility:**

The Charter assumes 100% full legal liability for Special Education and FAPE.

**Operations:**

Complete autonomy (and responsibility) over securing and funding Special Ed personnel and resources.

# SPECIAL EDUCATION ENTRY POINT

## The Lottery Mandate

Admissions lotteries must be entirely blind to disability status. Inquiries regarding a student's IEP are strictly prohibited until after admission is confirmed.



## Open Enrollment Nuance

Denials are only permissible if the specific charter lacks the necessary programs/services to fulfill the IEP (subject to authorizer limitations).



## Child Find Obligations

A proactive legal mandate to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with suspected disabilities.

- Includes highly mobile (migrant/homeless) students.
- Includes students advancing grade-to-grade but suspected of a disability.
- Requires a documented written procedure familiar to all licensed staff.



# The IEP is a Legally Binding Document

Charter schools cannot deny admission based on a student's IEP. Once enrolled, the execution of the IEP is absolute.



## **Team Participation:**

General education teachers are legally required members of the IEP Team, alongside parents, Special Ed staff, and an LEA Representative.



## **Mandatory Execution:**

Teachers must implement all specified accommodations and provide Supplementary Aids and Services exactly as written.



## **Documentation Compliance:**

Regular progress reports on goal status are required. Schools must utilize current PI 11 forms to ensure compliance with state disability criteria. Access restricted to only those with "legitimate educational interest."

# The 10-Day Discipline Clock

*Exclusionary discipline for students with disabilities triggers severe federal protections.*



**The Rule:**  
If a student with an IEP is suspended for more than 10 cumulative days in a single school year, it constitutes a legal "Change of Placement."

**The Trigger:**  
Reaching Day 10 forces an immediate halt.

**Manifestation Determination:**  
Within 10 school days of the decision to change placement, the IEP team must convene.

**The Core Question:**  
Was the behavioral infraction caused by, or directly related to, the student's disability?



## PILLAR 3: WISCONSIN ACT 20

- **The Universal Mandate**

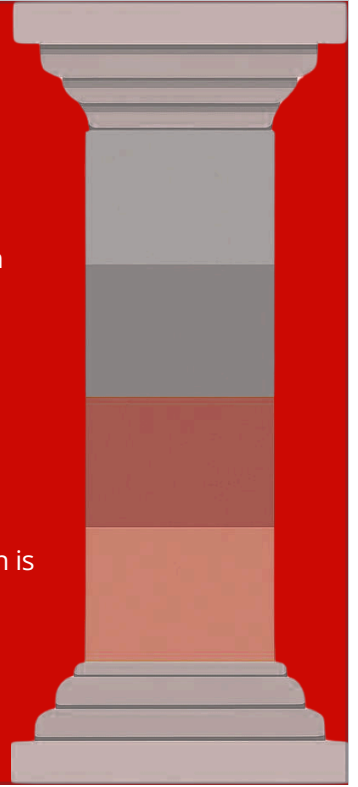
Every single 4K- Grade 3 student in Wisconsin - including those in independent and district-authorized charters, regardless of disability status - must become a proficient reader.

- **The Mechanism**

The systematic application of science-based reading instruction.

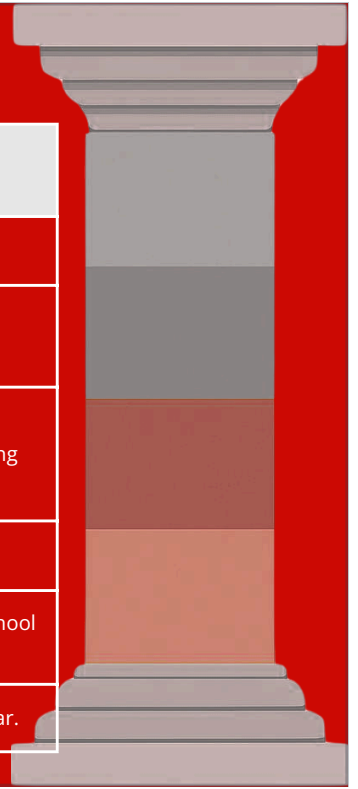
- **The Philosophy**

This is not a 'wait fo fail' model. Proactive, immediate intervention is legally required.

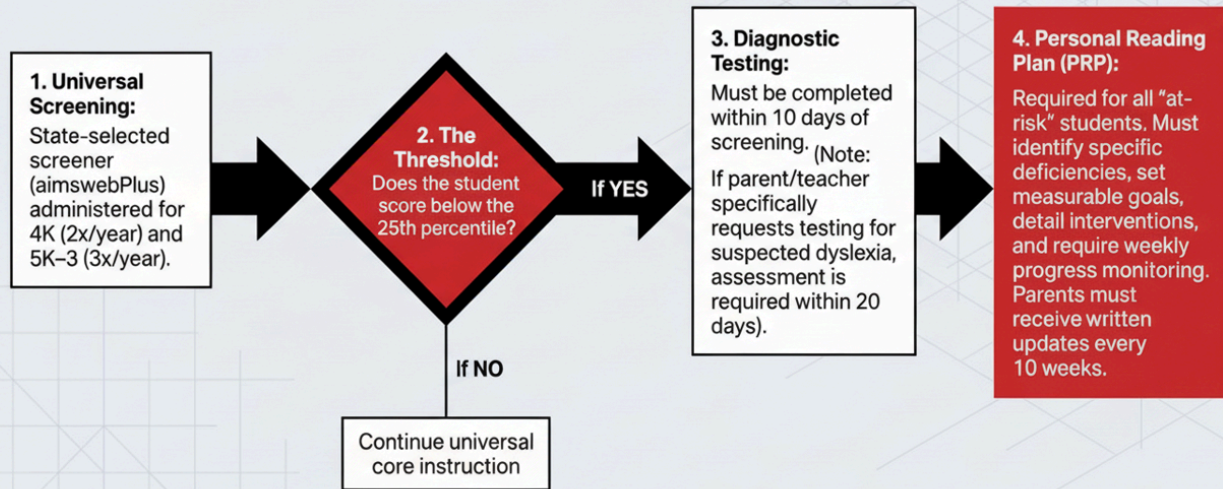


# THE PEDAGOGICAL SHIFT: LITERACY UNDER ACT 20

Prohibited by Law	Mandated by Law
"Three-Cueing" (MSV) Methods.	Systematic and explicit core K-3 instruction.
Encouraging students to guess words using meaning, structure, or visual cues.	Science-based focus: Phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, vocabulary, and fluency.
Waiting for the end of an intervention period to refer for suspected Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD).	Staff Training: K-3 teachers, reading specialists, and principals must begin approved science-based training (e.g., LETRS) by July 1, 2025.
	Adopt a 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade promotion policy by July 1, 2025.
	Publish an Early Literacy Remediation Plan on the school website.
	Submit annual literacy data to DPI by July 15 each year.



# The Assessment & Intervention Workflow



# Looking Ahead: Intensive Summer School

**The requirement:** Charter schools must provide intensive, science-based summer programming for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who have not completed their PRP or scored proficient on the Forward Exam Reading Subtest. Service **MUST** continue each summer the student does **NOT** score proficient on the Reading subtest portion of the text.



## Good Cause Exemptions:



1. **Language:** English Learners with less than 2 years of instruction.
2. **Special Education:** Students with IEPs where state assessments are deemed inappropriate.
3. **Alternate Metrics:** Students scoring proficient on a DPI-approved alternate assessment.
4. **Prior Retention:** Students previously retained for 2 years who have received 2+ years of intensive intervention.

## The Intersection: Act 20 Meets Special Education

Act 20 (Universal)

**The Framework Conflict:** Act 20 dictates that all 4K-3 students must receive highly specific, uniform science-based literacy interventions.

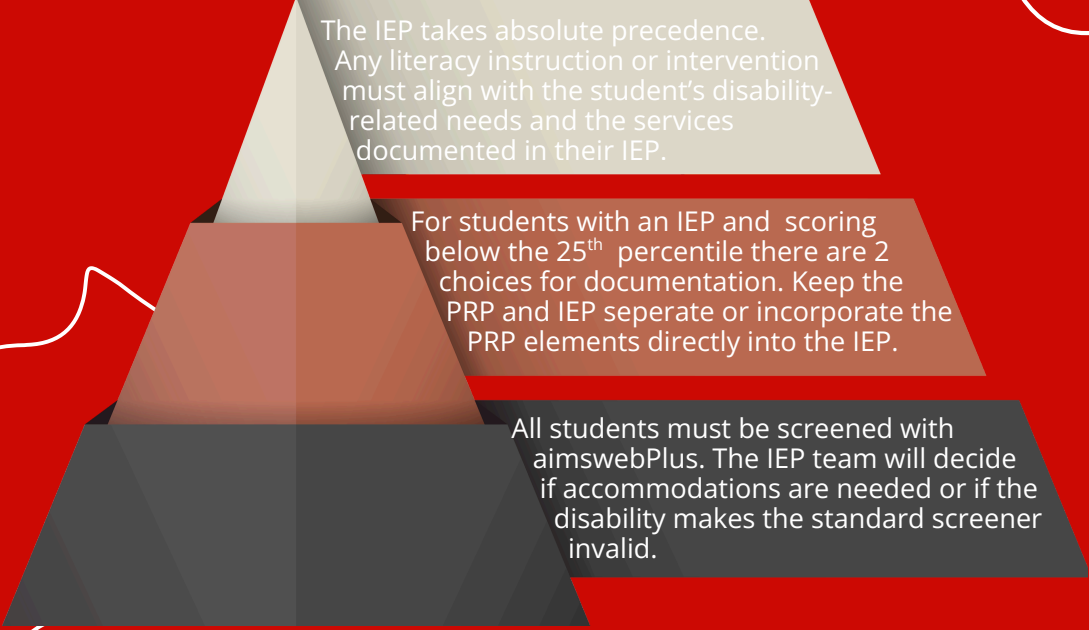
"If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn."  
- Ignacio Estrada

IDEA (Individual)

**IDEA** dictates that students with disabilities require highly individualized programs based solely on their unique needs.

**The Question:** When the rigid mandates of Act 20 collide with the individualized protections of an IEP, which law wins?

# The IEP is the "Controlling Document"



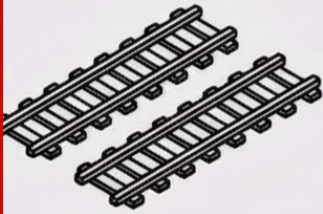
The IEP takes absolute precedence. Any literacy instruction or intervention must align with the student's disability-related needs and the services documented in their IEP.

For students with an IEP and scoring below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile there are 2 choices for documentation. Keep the PRP and IEP separate or incorporate the PRP elements directly into the IEP.

All students must be screened with aimswebPlus. The IEP team will decide if accommodations are needed or if the disability makes the standard screener invalid.

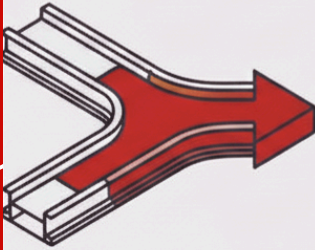
# Integrating the PRP into the IEP

How do we handle Personal Reading Plans for students with disabilities? Two operational paths:



## Path A: Parallel Tracks (Separate Documents)

- Maintain the PRP and IEP as distinct documents.
- Critical Risk: You must ensure the interventions in the PRP do not logically or logistically conflict with the SDI in the IEP.



## Path B: The Unified Track (Integrated Document)

- Embed the required Act 20 PRP elements directly into the IEP's goals, baselines, and band benchmarks.
- DPI Recommendation: This is highly recommended for students requiring Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) in reading, to be delivered by a licensed special educator in the LRE.

# Sealing the Structure: Accountability and Evaluation

## **Educator Effectiveness**

Charter schools must participate in the DPI educator effectiveness evaluation system (or an approved alternative)

## **Data and Reporting**

Annual literacy data submission to DPI by July 15.

Mandatory participation in DPI accountability reports (copies provided to parents) and the statewide student information system.

## **Promotion Milestones**

Strict enforcement of criteria for promotion from:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade
- 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade

# The Completed Vision

**Curriculum  
&  
Assessment**

**Special  
Education**

**ACT 20  
Curriculum  
&  
Resources**



BY BUILDING YOUR SCHOOL ON AN  
UNSHAKEABLE FRAMEWORK OF LEGAL  
COMPLIANCE AND ACADEMIC RIGOR,  
YOU SECURE THE ULTIMATE FREEDOM:

**THE AUTONOMY TO DESIGN A CULTURE  
WHERE EVERY STUDENT THRIVES.**

THANK  
YOU!



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