

# ACT 20 & Students with IEPs in WI Charter Schools

100%

Reading Proficiency for All: Every 4K–3 student, regardless of disability status, will become a proficient reader through the systematic application of science-based instruction.

“If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.”  
– Ignacio Estrada

## Essential Guidance for Charter School Teachers: *Implementing Wisconsin Act 20 for Students with IEPs*

### The IEP is the “Controlling Document”

While Act 20 applies to all students, for a student with a disability, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) takes precedence. Any literacy instruction or intervention must align with the student’s disability-related needs and the services documented in their IEP.

### Act 20 Workflow for Students with IEPs

Act 20 Requirements	Application to Students with IEPs
Universal Screening	All students must be screened (using the state-approved screener, e.g., aimswebPlus). The IEP team should determine if the student needs accommodations for the screener or if the disability makes the standard screener invalid (e.g., for students who are blind or deaf).

Act 20 Requirements	Application to Students with IEPs
Diagnostic Assessment	<p>If a student scores below the 25th percentile, a diagnostic assessment is required to identify specific gaps. A parent or teacher can request a diagnostic assessment at any time. The school must fulfill this request within 20 days.</p>
Personal Reading Plan (PRP)	<p>Any student scoring below the 25th percentile needs a PRP. For students with IEPs, you have two choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Separate documents:</b> Keep the PRP and IEP separate (but ensure they don't conflict)</li> <li>● <b>Integrated document:</b> Incorporate the PRP elements directly into the IEP (DPI recommends this for students requiring Specially Designed Instruction in reading). The following items must be documented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Specific Deficiencies: Identify exactly which literacy skills the student lacks</li> <li>○ Goals &amp; Benchmarks: Create measurable annual goals aligned with the grade-level literacy</li> <li>○ Weekly Progress Monitoring: Act 20 requires weekly monitoring. This data must be shared with parents regularly.</li> <li>○ Science-Based Instruction: Must include instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, building background knowledge, oral language, vocabulary, writing, comprehension, and fluency. Teaching the three-part cueing system is prohibited.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### **Service Delivery & Collaboration**

**Who:** Instruction can be delivered by general education teachers, reading specialists, or special educators.

**What:** Students with IEPs should still have access to the same high-quality reading interventionists as their non-disabled peers. If the reading intervention needs to be significantly more intense, frequent, or specialized than what general education provides, it must be delivered as Specially Designed Instruction by a licensed special educator.

**Where:** Students must be instructed in the LRE (Least Restrictive Environment). Students can not be pulled out of the universal reading block unless the IEP explicitly requires it.

## Act 20 is not a “wait to fail” model

- If a student receiving high-quality Act 20 interventions shows no progress, this data can support a Special Education Referral for a Specific Learning Disability (SLD).

*Importantly, you don't need to wait for the intervention period to end if you suspect a disability.*



### Key Resources on the DPI Website:

- [DPI Act 20: Students with IEPs](#)
- [Wisconsin's Framework for Multi-Level Systems of Supports](#)