College and Career Ready Individualized Education Program (CCR IEP):

Improving Outcomes for Students 3 through 21

Overview Guide

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Tony Evers, PhD, State Superintendent

College and Career Readiness for ALL Students

CCR IEPs are for all students ages 3 through 21 who receive special education services in public school programs.

ALL students in Wisconsin graduate academically prepared and socially and emotionally competent.

CCR IEPs provide a framework for IEP teams to explore beliefs and attitudes, knowledge and skills, and systems and practices which support students, families, and educators.

Wisconsin has been a national leader in education because our values include the importance of a high-quality public education. Our vision is that ALL students, including those with IEPs, will graduate prepared for college and a career.

But what do IEP teams need to know in order to prepare students who are receiving special education services for college and a career? We know that true college and career readiness is about much more than academics. Our graduates must also have the knowledge, skills, and habits that will allow them to succeed in life after high school.

What kind of abilities do students with IEPs need in order to be college and career ready? They should have both the academic and functional proficiencies needed in order to demonstrate independence, self-determination, critical thinking, collaboration, leadership, creativity, responsibility, and persistence.

These abilities are difficult to measure but developing them are an important part of our educational system.

CCR IEPs provide a framework for IEP teams to explore beliefs and attitudes regarding students with disabilities, build knowledge and skills in order to evaluate and plan special education services, and examine systems and practices which support students, families, and educators.

CCR IEP Five Beliefs

1) High Expectations
2) Culturally Responsive Practices
3) Student Relationships
4) Family and Community Engagement
5) Collective Responsibility

CCR IEP Five Step Process

1) Understand Achievement
2) Identify Effect of Disability
3) Develop Goals
4) Align Services
5) Analyze Progress

Guidance on IEPs from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

The primary vehicle for providing FAPE is through an appropriately developed and implemented IEP.

According to OSEP, the cornerstone of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the entitlement of each eligible student with a disability to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet the student's unique needs and prepare the student for further education, employment, and independent living. OSEP also indicates that the primary vehicle for providing FAPE is through an appropriately developed and implemented IEP. Thus, the IEP is not just about documenting compliance. It is a tool for making positive change in the lives of students with disabilities.

IEPs document the student's strengths and needs in relation to grade-level standards, identify disability-related needs, and develop ambitious and achievable IEP goals. They align IEP goals with special education services, such as supplementary aids and services, accommodations, assistive technology, and accessible instructional materials, that provide the student access to the general education environment and instruction. IEP services also provide specially designed instruction, related services, and program modifications and supports for school staff. These services are provided to accelerate the student's access, engagement, and progress in the same universal instruction available to all students.

Shifts to Results Driven Accountability and CCR IEPs

"Ensuring that all children, including children with disabilities, are held to rigorous academic standards and high expectations is a shared responsibility for all of us."

- OSEP

In June 2014, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) announced a shift in the way it monitors the effectiveness of the states' special education programs. OSEP instituted a new accountability system called Results Driven Accountability, or RDA.

The previous accountability system had a heavy emphasis on compliance with IDEA requirements which, although effective at ensuring compliance, did not result in improved outcomes for students with disabilities. The new system puts a focus on improving outcomes, which brings accountability for compliance and results into balance.

Through an extensive stakeholder process that included parents and educators, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) analyzed data and current initiatives to identify the area of greatest need and leverage. Reading was selected because it was the lowest area of performance for students with IEPs and holds the greatest potential for impacting positive outcomes for students. In Wisconsin, we have repurposed "RDA" into Reading Drives Achievement: Success through Literacy (RDA-StL).

CCR IEPs support RDA through the development of revised sample IEP forms, which are aligned with DPI's Procedural Compliance Self-Assessment (PCSA), and content modules that include online presentations, tools, and activities for professional development. It is important to note that the requirements of IDEA have not changed and CCR IEP sample forms and guidance do not add any additional legal requirements.

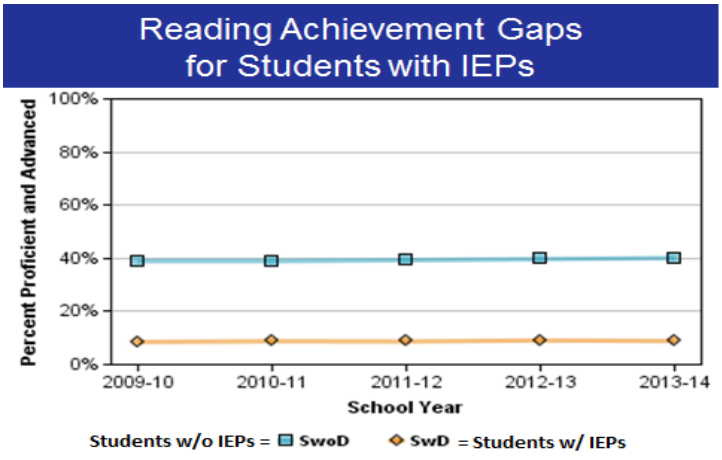
Students with IEPs in the 21st Century

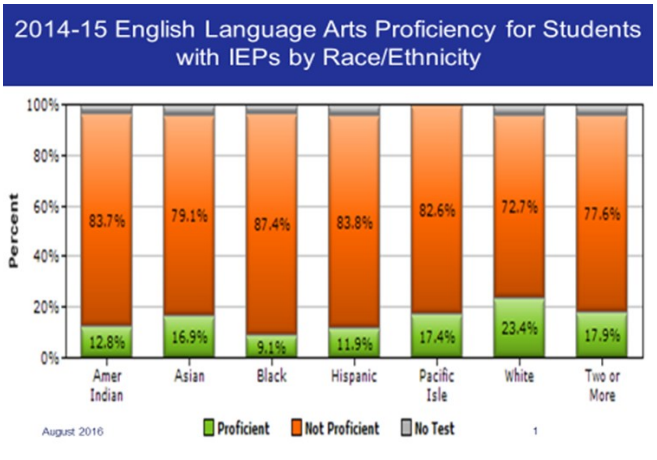
IDEA was first enacted by Congress in 1975 to ensure students with disabilities have the same opportunity to receive a free appropriate public education as all other students. Since then, many new opportunities have arisen. Educational research and practice, which promote access to content and instruction and advances in assistive technology, have provided unprecedented opportunities for students with IEPs . Across the country, practices such as Universal Design for Learning and Personalized Learning have removed barriers in general education classrooms for all students—including those with IEPs. These innovations and changes in how we "think" of students with disabilities is also changing in the workplace and within institutions of higher learning. New programs, such as Think College, provide post-high school educational opportunities to students who may never have had such opportunities in the past.

While opportunities continue to improve for people with disabilities, today's educators face many new challenges. Educators face continual achievement gaps between students of color and white students across socio-economic and geographic lines. Schools are developing new systems to address mental health supports and provide students with social and emotional skills needed to be successful in life after high school. Student-teacher relationships are more important than ever to support the stresses of modern day education. More families are facing socio-economic difficulties, which affect educational outcomes and require new ways of thinking about family engagement. Meanwhile, students must develop life-long skills to be able to navigate using new technologies in work, home, and community. CCR IEPs were developed with these factors in mind to assist IEP teams with rich discussions that help prepare students to have the knowledge, skills, and habits to be independent and successful in the 21st century.

Advances in educational research and technology have allowed college and work place programs to provide accommodations and supports to people with disabilities in new and innovative ways, leading to new college and career opportunities.

Achievement Gaps for Students with IEPs





Students with IEPs have shown consistent achievement gaps in reading compared to students without IEPs. For students with IEPs, these gaps increase for many students of color.

How Are Students with IEPs Able to Meet Grade-Level Standards?

Students with IEPs can make significant academic progress when appropriate instruction, services, and supports are provided.

Low expectations for students with IEPs can lead to students not learning what they need to succeed.

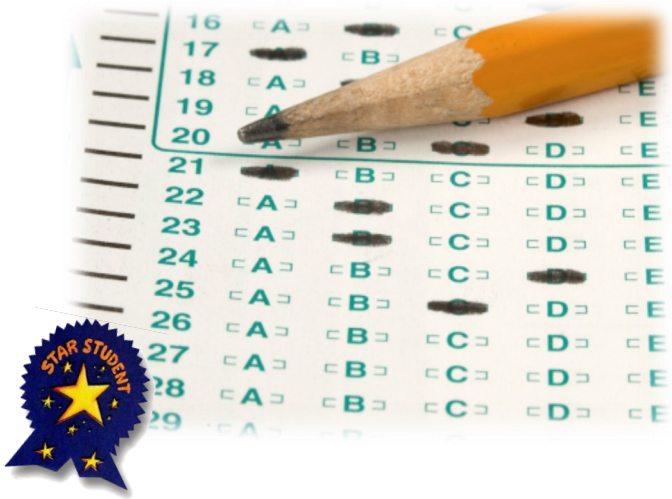
Click here for more information on the US Department of Education's guidance on standards-based IEPs or search online for US Department of Education November Dear Colleague Letter.

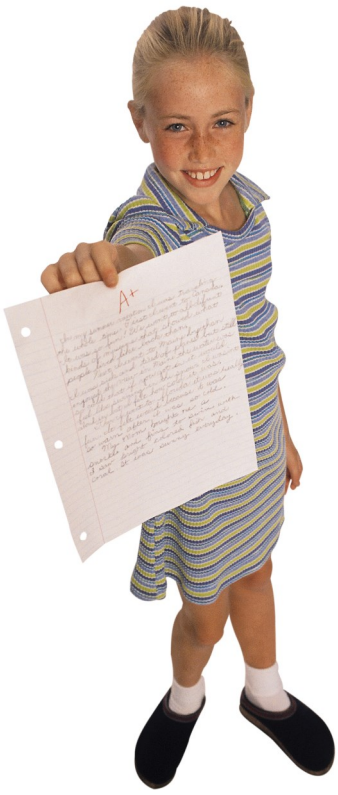
Research has demonstrated that children with IEPs who struggle in reading and mathematics can successfully learn grade-level content and make significant academic progress when appropriate instruction, services, and supports are provided.

Conversely, low expectations can lead to children with disabilities receiving less challenging instruction comprised of below grade-level content standards, resulting in them not learning what they need to succeed at the grade in which they are enrolled or to prepare them for life after high school.

Grade-level standards should allow ALL students to engage, access, and be assessed in ways that fit their strengths, needs, and interests. Furthermore, students with IEPs must be provided specially designed instruction that meets their individual needs. It is expected that each individual student with an IEP will require unique services and supports matched to their strengths and needs in order to close achievement gaps in grade-level standards. Alternate standards are only available for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Recently, the US Department of Education wrote to clarify that an IEP for an eligible child with a disability under the IDEA must be aligned with the states' academic content standards for the grade in which the child is enrolled. And, as stated by OSEP, "Ensuring that all children, including children with disabilities, are held to rigorous academic standards and high expectations is a shared responsibility for all of us."





Shifts in CCR IEP

CCR IEPs support IEP teams by adding a new lens to enhance existing discussions.

CCR IEPs allow IEP teams to determine the supports and services a student will need in order to be successful.

DPI-revised sample IEP forms identify disability-related needs by linking student grade-level strengths and needs, which leads to the alignment of IEP goals and services.

For many IEP teams, the IEP discussion process begins with a conversation about a student's strengths and needs based on assessments for special education eligibility. Although this process identifies the effects of a student's disability, IEP teams may not focus discussions on specific aspects of disability-related needs which identify *how* the student's strengths and needs affect access and participation in general education standards, instruction, and environment or *why* the student is performing at, above, or below grade level.

In order to identify the *hows* and the *whys*, DPI's revised sample forms and guidance shift IEP discussions. CCR IEPs contain all of the same state and federal requirements and sections that exist in previous IEP forms. However, in lieu of adding new sections to the IEP, CCR IEPs provide IEP teams with a new lens to enhance the existing discussions and processes involved in determining a student's strengths, needs, goals, and services. This has led to the development of the CCR IEP **Five Beliefs** and **Five Step Process**.

The CCR IEP **Five Beliefs** identify research-based factors that influence student achievement. These beliefs can be used by IEP teams to know and explore high expectations, student relationships, culturally responsive practices, family and community engagement, and collective responsibility. Systems that address these Five Beliefs support students to prepare for college and a career.

In order to address achievement gaps between students with and without IEPs, as seen on the graphs on page 3, DPI developed the CCR IEP **Five Step Process** to guide IEP discussions to focus on each student's unique learning needs which require individualized goals, services, and supports to accelerate the student's learning toward grade-level standards and expectations.

CCR IEP Five Beliefs

These CCR IEP beliefs are discussed and incorporated throughout the IEP planning process.

1) **High Expectations:** IEP teams ***know*** how high expectations influence academic achievement and post-secondary independence and ***explore*** a shared vision of high expectations for college, career, and community readiness.
2) **Culturally Responsive Practices:** IEP teams ***know*** and respect the unique identity of the student and ***explore*** programs, practices, procedures, and policies that meet the diversity of the student's abilities, race, gender, language, and culture.
3) **Student Relationships**: IEP teams ***know*** the value of relationships that are necessary for learning and ***explore*** strategies that will build relationships between the student, peers, and adults.
4) **Family and Community Engagement**: IEP teams ***know*** how new ways of re-thinking family and community engagement can improve student outcomes and ***explore*** how the school can support the families' hopes, perspectives, culture, insights, and concerns for their child.
5) **Collective Responsibility**: IEP team members ***know*** the power of working together and ***explore*** how each and every member can support the student in accessing grade-level universal instruction to achieve academic standards and functional expectations.

CCR IEP Five Step Process

Step 1: Understand achievement of grade-level academic standards and functional expectations in order to identify the student's strengths and needs.

Based on data, assessments, and other information, the IEP team discusses the student's current level of achievement in relation to grade-level standards and functional expectations. The team includes information that reflects the family and student's voice and point-of-view on strengths, interests, and needs.

These steps were adapted from NASDSE's 7 step process in developing standards-based IEPs.

Step 2: Identify how the student's disability affects academic achievement and functional performance.

After identifying whether the student is performing at, above, or below grade-level, the IEP team identifies the effects of disability and disability-related needs. The IEP team includes information from the student and family and explores the student's current access to grade-level standards, instruction, school activities, and community.

Step 3: Develop ambitious and achievable goals that close achievement gaps and support the unique strengths and needs of the student.

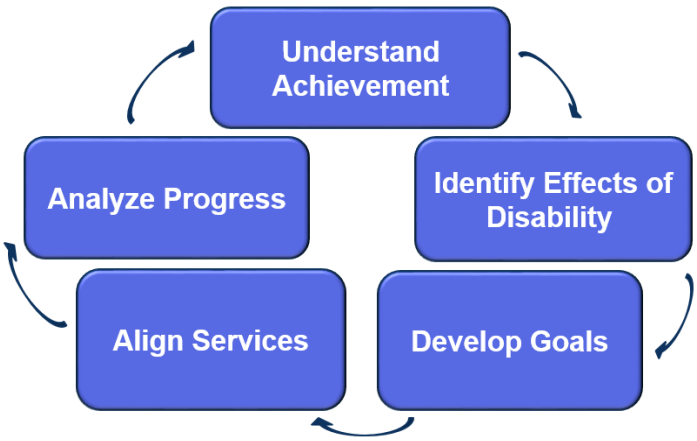
For disability-related need(s), the IEP team develops ambitious and achievable goals that are designed to close the student's achievement gaps in academic achievement and functional expectations. A goal may address more than one disability-related need and all goals ensure alignment among baseline, level of attainment, and progress monitoring.

The CCR IEP Five Step Process is a circular process where ongoing Analysis of Progress becomes a road map for decision making concerning student support in the future.

Step 4: Align specially designed instruction, services, supports, and accommodations needed to support the goals and ensure access to the general curriculum.

The IEP team aligns services that directly support the student's ability to meet IEP goals. IEP services addressing the student's disability-related needs assist the student in accessing grade-level standards and instruction in order to close achievement gaps.

Step 5: Analyze progress toward goals in order to evaluate what works and what is needed to close the student's achievement gaps.



The IEP team analyzes the implementation of the IEP in order to inform future IEP meetings. Progress monitoring and annual review of goals identify what is working and what may need to change in order to support the student in closing gaps in academic achievement and functional expectations.

CCR IEPs Promote

- higher expectations for students leading to ambitious and achievable IEP goals;
- greater access, involvement, and progress in universal instruction, school activities, and school community;
- improved literacy, reading, and other academic outcomes;
- improved resiliency and self-determination that supports independence in the community for life after high school; and
- more students graduating with a regular diploma and the skills needed for college and careers.

Additionally, CCR IEPs align with other required student and educator plans, such as:

- Educator Effectiveness,
- the Academic Career Plan (fall 2017),
- the Postsecondary Transition Plan, and

DPI best practice supports, including:

- Culturally Responsive Multi-Level System of Support (Response to Intervention/Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)
- the Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework,
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Trauma Sensitive Schools, and
- current research and best practice.

Linking the IEP Process to Educational Initiatives

Today's students face increased needs for mental health supports in educational settings. CCR IEPs support the Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework and Trauma Sensitive Schools resources.

In the last several years, there have been many changes in the educational landscape in Wisconsin. This includes school districts adopting common grade-level standards in language arts and mathematics and culturally responsive multi-level systems of support for all students as well as educators developing learning objectives through educator effectiveness and utilizing universal design for learning principles. It also involves the development of Academic Career Plans for students in grades 6 through 12, a focus on improving achievement gaps for students of color, and Wisconsin's RDA-StL, which is an effort by Special Education to improve literacy outcomes for students with IEPs. CCR IEP tools and modules assist students, families, and educators to align the IEP process with these existing initiatives.

Benefits of Adopting Sample CCR IEP Forms

The State's IEP forms are sample forms. They are not required but DPI highly recommends that districts adopt them. IEP forms tend to act as a roadmap for IEP team discussions. The forms promote discussions about improving outcomes for students and also help ensure proper documentation of requirements.

The revised sample IEP forms promote

- improved student outcomes;
- understanding of how disability-related needs affect literacy/reading and other academic areas;
- alignment among student strengths and needs, IEP goals, and IEP services and supports in the IEP;
- greater family engagement in IEP development; and
- documentation of the Reading Drives Achievement: Procedural Compliance Self Assessment (RDA:PCSA) checklist items.

Quotes from Pilot Districts

Eighteen school districts piloted the revised forms during IEP team meetings and provided valuable feedback to assist DPI with further revisions to IEP forms. Below is some of the feedback the Department received.

- "Helps focus the [IEP] discussion on reading"
- "Text boxes throughout with additional information and guidance are a nice touch and necessary"
- "Before developing annual goals, review previous – great idea."
- "Cohesiveness of the Linking Form – flows well"
- "Linkages: needs, goals, services"
- "Includes concerns of the student"
- "Great to have a question about family engagement given how family engagement can improve literacy achievement"

CCR IEP Resources

The following resources are referenced in this article and/or support the CCR IEP Five Step Process and Five Beliefs. Click on the hyperlink or type in the name of the resources in a web browser to learn more.

To receive updates on CCR IEP new modules, resources, and guidance join our Special Education Team Twitter feed or check any of the following DPI Special Education Team pages: IEP, IEP Policies and Procedures, PCSA

DPI CCR IEP Revised Sample Form and RDA:PCSA Resources

CCR IEP Five Beliefs and CCR IEP Five Step Process Handouts
Measurable Annual IEP Goals: Self Check
Highlights of RDA changes to Sample Forms
Detailed Explanation of RDA changes to Sample Forms
Disability-related Need Affecting Reading Definition
Family Engagement and the IEP Guidance
Sample IEP Forms Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Reading Teachers and the Provision of Specially Designed Reading Instruction as Outlined in Students' IEPs

DPI Resources Supporting CCR IEP Five Beliefs and Five Step Process

College and Career Readiness Page and College and Career Readiness Handout
Wisconsin's Reading Drives Achievement: Success through Literacy
Promoting Excellence for All and The Network
Academic and Career Planning (ACP)
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
Institution of Higher Education (IHE) Disability Resource Center Searchable Database
Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness System
Wisconsin School Mental Health Framework
Wisconsin Response to Intervention (RtI) Center
Wisconsin Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Network
Trauma Sensitive Schools
Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System and How to Conduct Friendly and Productive IEP Meetings
Post Secondary Transition Planning and Transition Improvement Grant
Family Engagement in Special Education, WSPEI, WI FACETS, and Family Engagement Support Organizations
Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners
Special Education in Plain Language and Introduction to Special Education

Additional Resources Supporting CCR IEPs

OSEP Policy Guidance on Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) Dear Colleague Letter, November 16, 2015
OSEP Policy Guidance on Ensuring Equity and Providing Behavioral Supports to Students with IEPs Dear Colleague Letter, August 1, 2016
Think College
Let's Get to Work
National Center for Learning Disabilities: Understanding Standards Based IEPs
Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR)
Wisconsin Promise
PACER Center Postsecondary Education Resources
Transition Coalition
Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
Self-Directed IEP: Bridging Values of Diverse Cultures and Secondary Education
Creating Change: Student-Led IEPs & Youth Engagement as a Dispute Resolution Option (CADRE webinar)
Students participate more if they are trained in self-directed IEPS (Educational Research Newsletter & Webinars website)
I'm Determined website (a web resource for self-determination and student led IEP meetings)
"Don't Limit Me!" YouTube video by Megan Bomgaars

This publication is available from:

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEAM
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster Street
Madison, WI 53703
608-266-1781

dpi.wi.gov/sped

© October 2016

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, creed, age, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital status or parental status, sexual orientation, or disability.