UNDERSTANDING IEPs

Adapted from the Hawai‘i DOE website: http://doe.k12.hi.us/specialeducation/iep.htm

What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

* A written statement about the educational program for a student with a disability
* A management tool to make sure needed special education and related services are provided
* An evaluation device to determine progress toward accomplishing projected goals

What must be included in an IEP?

- Present levels of educational performance
- Annual goals, including short-term instructional objectives
- Specific special education and related services to be provided
- Extent of student participation in regular educational programs
- When services might start and how long they expect them to last
- Appropriate criteria and evaluation procedures to assess goals / objectives (minimum review at least once a year)
- Statement of needed transition services (age 16 or earlier if needed)

How often should IEP meetings be held?

* at least annually (depending on the needs and progress)

Who can initiate IEP meetings?

Though usually initiated and conducted by the school, it is appropriate for parents to request an IEP meeting when they believe their child is not progressing satisfactorily or they feel there is a problem with the current IEP.

Does the IEP include only special education and related services or does it describe the total education of the child?

* IEPs are required to address only areas concerned with:
  - providing special education and related services
  - the extent that the student can participate in regular education programs

Each student’s abilities are unique; the amount of information in the plan depends on each student’s needs.