Scouting with Special Needs: The ISAP & the IEP

What is the difference between an Individual Scout Advancement Plan (ISAP) and an Individualized Education Program (IEP)? An IEP is a legal document under United States law. It is developed by a team of school personnel familiar with the student, their parent/guardian, and, as applicable, the student themself. There are legal consequences if any part of the contract is not followed. The ISAP, on the other hand, is not legally binding and should not be viewed as such. An ISAP is developed by the BSA leadership familiar with the Scout, their parent/guardian, and, as applicable, the Scout themself. An ISAP should be only about four pages in length, and it should address the specific items listed on the ISAP form and in the Guide to Advancement.

Can the Scout’s IEP be used to develop an alternative plan needed for the Scout’s success? The two documents are not interchangeable. Some of the information and supports contained in the IEP may help to develop the Scout’s ISAP. Some of the services provided to the child at school may help the Scout when working on rank requirements. But it is important to include only the relevant portions. Those who work with Scouts with special needs and are familiar with IEPs can help to develop the Scout’s ISAP. Please contact your district advancement chair for assistance.