



WEBELOS TO BOY SCOUT TRANSITION

FEBRUARY GRADUATION OF SECOND YEAR WEBELOS

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The Rationale and Plan

There are pros and cons to earlier graduation of Webelos into Boy Scouts. However, the central issue is: are we graduating and retaining as many boys as possible into Boy Scouting?

The information in the rationale section below provides a powerful case for February graduation and getting those new Scouts to summer camp their first year. We can only change their lives if we *get them in and keep them in*.

The Rationale

- Seventy to eighty percent (70-80%) of all new Boy Scouts were Webelos first. Therefore, Webelos transition is of critical importance.
- Boy Scouts who attend summer camp are retained in the program much better (300% better) than Scouts who do not attend camp. Therefore, getting them to camp is critical.
- Many (50%) new Boy Scouts drop out during the first year. There is no second chance to get them to camp, and get them committed to the program. Therefore, getting them to summer camp the first summer, immediately after transition, is *absolutely critical*.
- May is “quitting time”. School and school-related activities end. People take a break from programs and commitments to which they are not fully committed. Cub Scouting and Boy Scouts are not one program in most parents’ minds. They are graduating out of one program and “scanning the horizon” for something fun for the summer. If they are not yet comfortable with the troop, leaders, and troop program, it is easy to not join this new and unfamiliar program with new, unfamiliar leaders.
- The patrol method is the number one satisfier that retains Boy Scouts.
- The National *Two-Year Webelos Plan* calls for the boy to get his Arrow of Light in January of his second year.

The Plan

- Scoutmasters and Webelos Leaders meet in November to get acquainted, share the Webelos roster, plan transition, review camp plans and fee schedule, and get a date for Webelos parents’ camp promotion meeting.
- Second year Webelos Dens choose a patrol name, make a flag, wear patrol medallions and elect a patrol leader. This will further ease the transition into the Troop and its patrol method.
- Webelos graduate into Troop in *February*, at the Blue and Gold Banquet, *as a group*, with or without their Arrow of Light. The critically important issue here is that the den friends *stay together* and become a patrol. In this case, peer pressure within the den works for transition. This will also increase Cub Scout parent awareness of Boy Scouting, since this is always a well-attended meeting. The second year Webelos leader’s job description includes acting as an assistant Scoutmaster (patrol advisor) March – June for the new patrol.
- Troop and Webelos leaders make every effort to get every Webelos recruited into the Troop and signed up for camp.

What This Achieves

- This plan assists increased transition and increased camp attendance, both of which should increase long-term Boy Scout membership and impact more boys’ lives.



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- The emphasis at February graduation is: This is the same program with the same, familiar leaders but now with a new program emphasis . . . Boy Scouting outdoor fun and adventure and preparing for camp.
- Hopefully Webelos leaders will enjoy the Troop and become active adult leaders, helping to retain “their” boys.
- February graduation gives new Scouts and parents more time to “plug in” to camp promotion program and fee schedules.
- February graduation gives Scoutmasters time to get to know boys and parents, and train boys for camp. (Some are reluctant to take new, April-graduated Scouts to camp.)
- February graduation gives parents time to get to know troop leaders before they send their son, who perhaps has never been away from home before, to camp. Obviously, parents are more willing to encourage their son to go with a “safe” leader whom they know, as opposed to a stranger they have just met.
- February graduation gives the Scout more time to get to know and be comfortable with older Scouts, so the boy is more willing and excited to go to camp, and better prepared to have a good first experience.
- February graduation of the whole Den keeps boys together with friends. This is probably the single most important point for the new Scouts. It also focuses units, districts and councils on Webelos transitions as a major event, like Scout Night.
- February graduation “fits” with the two-year plan of Webelos receiving their Arrow of Light in *January*.
- Webelos Dens ready to graduate in February could elect to start their own, new troop, with leader and parent support, if a satisfactory troop is not available. If they do, they have time to get ready for camp, and have their leaders trained.
- The *overall emphasis* is that second-year Webelos begin their second year in April. The next February they become Scouts, and in May, they are oriented Boy Scouts, familiar with troop and leaders, and sign up for camp. This should happen as a smooth flowing, continuous plan.
- As much attention at regional, council, district and unit levels should be given to Webelos transition as is given to School Night. Webelos are our best prospects for new Boy Scouts.
- This emphasis does not decrease the continuing emphasis on starting new troops or recruiting non-Webelos new members. It does address improving the transition, recruitment and retention for our *best prospects*.