

Webelos to Scout



Transition Handbook

Hiawatha Seaway Council

Introduction

We don't have transition plans for other phases within the program, so why do we need a transition plan from Webelos to Boy Scouts?

Even though we all think of Cub Scouts, Webelos, and Boy Scouts as Scouting, the fact remains that most Scouters view Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts as separate programs. Statistics show us that every year approximately 35% of all Webelos Scouts do not 'Bridge' on to a Boy Scout Troop. There are many factors that contribute to this:

- **Increased competition from other activities**

When boys are in the first grade and ready for Tiger Cubs, there are not many activities to compete with Scouting for a boy's time and attention. As he gets older, more activities become available to him and compete for his time. When a boy is ready to move on from Cub Scouts, he is faced with many choices. We need to make sure that he has as much exposure to what's ahead in Scouting as he has to other activities, such as baseball, soccer, basketball, football, etc.

- **Misunderstandings between parents and Troop Leaders**

The Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs are fundamentally different in that Cub Scouting is a program put on by and run by the adult volunteers. Boy Scouting on the other hand, is designed to be a boy planned and run program with guidance and supervision from the adult volunteers. Due mostly to poor communication, enthusiastic parents of Webelos sometimes feel shut out by Boy Scout Troop leaders. Once the parent is disillusioned with their worth or involvement in a new unit, the child soon follows. Webelos parents needs to be educated on the differences between the programs and led toward an understanding of the Boy Scout program.

- **Program Differences**

Cub Scouting is an adult led, activity based program whereas Boy Scouting is a boy led, outdoor oriented program. The change in program activities can be intimidating to some boys. Sometimes, those that haven't had outdoor experiences need to be eased into the program and their parents, particularly mothers, need to have assurance that their little boy (because that is still what he is) is going to be okay.

- **Improper assimilation into a troop**

When the boys were Cubs, they were all pretty much on an equal level, in terms of maturity. A Scout Troop contains a much wider and diverse spectrum of levels of maturity. You have the young new Scouts, and you also have the mature Scouts, who, in reality, are not boys anymore but are young men ready for transitions of their own. A young Webelos thrust into a troop of much older boys will many times be intimidated and may be easily lost if not properly handled.

- **Lack of Interest from Troops**

Sadly, many Troops do not actively recruit Cub Scouts. If a Troop doesn't take an active role in the Webelos program, many boys will move on to other activities that have shown interest in them (For the most part, they won't come looking for you). Boy Scout leaders can't assume that everyone will automatically look to move on to Scouting. You are getting those that do already; we want the ones who don't. In addition, boys will almost always follow their friends. If the Troop is not actively pursuing these boys, a single boy will be very reluctant to go where he doesn't know anyone.

Where do we go from here?

The key to success in any activity in Scouting is preparation and planning:

"Be Prepared"

We must therefore prepare and plan for the transition well before it occurs. This means that we must start our plan when a boy "becomes" a Webelos, not when he is ready to Bridge over. In essence, the Webelos' transition will begin long before he realizes or recognizes it.

Everyone has a role to play

- Webelos Den Leader
- Webelos Den Chief
- Scoutmaster
- Unit Commissioner
- Parents
- Boy

Webelos Den Leader's Role

- Most influential in the boy's preparation
- Should have the Webelos function as a patrol
- Should insure that the boys attend summer camp
- Should verify the presence of the necessary Scout skills
- Should attend Roundtables and get to know the Scoutmasters
- Attend a Troop meeting and recruit a Den Chief
- Plan the Bridging ceremony and promote Troop summer activities.
- Verify the transfer of documents (the boy's records)

WEBELOS TO SCOUT TRANSITION

5TH Grade (Second Year) WEBELOS Leader's Role

TARGET DATE	TASK
Sept./Oct	Have your den select a Scout patrol name, get patrol patches to wear, make a patrol Flag, and elect a patrol leader. (Check the Scout Handbook for ideas).
October	Complete and return your Webelos roster (tracking sheet) to your Unit Commissioner or Pack Committee Chairman by October 30th. This is very important so that Troops can send you Webelos information and invite them to orientation and camp promotion meetings.
	Meet with the local Scoutmaster(s) for transition planning
Oct./Nov	Take your Webelos and their parents to visit (several) Troop meeting. A new Scout- Parent informational meeting at the Troop should include summer camp plans.
	Ask the Troop to appoint a Webelos Den Chief. This will aid the new Scouts with their transition into the Troop.
December	Encourage your Webelos to make the final decision on joining a Troop
	Assist the Cubmaster in planning a top-notch, personalized "Bridging" for the February pack meeting.
February	Bridge your Webelos into Boy Scouts. Have them complete a Scout application and register with the Troop. New Scouts should have the Scout Handbook at this time.
	Webelos should attend Winter Camporee/Klondike Derby with their selected new Troop.
Feb./Mar.	Be sure the new Scouts have a schedule and begin attending Troop activities. Encourage parents to get involved with the Troop Committee.
	Talk to the Scoutmaster about continuing to work with the new Scouts as a Patrol Advisor. This will help boys become comfortable in the new Troop.
	Help as needed with any final details for summer camp preparedness.
	Follow up with any of your Webelos as to why they did not yet join a Troop.

Webelos Den Chief's Role

- Act as a resource for Scout skills
- Help for the patrol and Scout spirit
- Help operate the patrol
- Assist in the Arrow of Light and Bridging/Cross Over ceremonies
- This fulfills a requirement for leadership

Scoutmaster's Role

- Include the Webelos in summer camp reservations
- Discuss program differences with Webelos' parents
- Discuss camp and Troop activity costs with Webelos' parents
- Have Webelos and their parents attend Troop meetings
- Become a part of the Webelos Bridging ceremony
- Assist in finding Den Chiefs for Webelos Dens
- Ensure all forms are completed
- Invite the Webelos Den Leader to become a part of the Troop
- Hold a pre-summer camp orientation for Scout skills

Scoutmaster's Role Schedule of Events

TARGET DATE	TASK
October	Choose and make reservations for your Troop's long-term, summer camp.
	Meet with your Unit Commissioner and let him/her know your desires for increasing the Troop size.
	Appoint good Scouts to be Webelos Den Chiefs to help get Webelos in nearby Packs interested in joining your Troop.
	Identify a Webelos Resource Chairman for the troop to help with nearby Packs.
November	Invite Webelos to visit a Troop meeting.
	Hold a Webelos parents' night to promote the Troop's summer camp plans and get Webelos ready to participate. Give them an information sheet with schedule, fees, and general camp information.
December	Plan to be a part of the Pack's February Blue and Gold Banquet, and Webelos' Bridging.
February	Attend the Pack's Blue and Gold Banquet in February and help conduct the Webelos Bridging ceremony.
	Webelos should register as scouts with your Troop
Mar./Apr	Invite the Webelos Leader(s) to be the new Scout's Patrol Advisor. This will help the new boys get adjusted and provides an excellent prospect for a new Assistant or Committee Member for the Troop.
	Be sure all new Scouts have the Troop schedule so that they can begin participating in the Troop activities
	Hold a spring campout for the Troop emphasizing basic Scout skills for new boys (e.g. cooking, camping, and patrol methods). This will build confidence in new Scouts and help prepare them for summer camp.
	Have a Troop parent's meeting for final details on summer camp.
	Encourage new parents to join the Troop committee.

NOTE:

For information on Packs in your area to recruit new boys from, ask your Unit Commissioner or District Executive, or attend Roundtables.

A list of Webelos leaders and/or Cubmasters, and/or Pack Committee Chairman can be provided to you.

ALSO: You should receive a list of eligible Webelos in November/December to invite to your Troop. If you do not, contact your Unit Commissioner or District Executive.

The Unit Commissioner's Role

- Determine which Troops can accommodate more Scouts
- Work with the District Executive to create more units where necessary
- Ensure Bridging Ceremonies are planned
- Track transitioning Webelos and ensure they get registered as Boy Scouts
- Attend Bridging Ceremonies
- Try and determine causes behind why particular Webelos do not join a Troop (be tactful and discreet)

Unit Commissioner's Schedule of events

TARGET DATE	TASK
Oct./Nov.	Ensure that Webelos leaders complete and return their 5th grade 'Webelos To Scout Transition Tracking List' to you, or the District Executive, no later than the November Roundtable. Please forward the list if given to you.
	Determine if your Troop(s) can accommodate more Scouts. Some Troops feel they are big enough. If not, contact your Dist. Exec. immediately and help Webelos parents form a new Troop to start activities in February.
	Arrange a phone contact or meeting between Webelos leaders and Scoutmasters to work the plan
	Assist in planning a Webelos visit to a quality Troop meeting, including camp promotion information for new parents. You should attend this Troop meeting, and ensure that invitations are telephoned to the parents beforehand.
Dec./Jan	Help plan a top-notch Bridging for Webelos at their February Pack Blue and Gold Banquet.
February	Attend Bridging ceremony. Be sure new Scouts complete a Boy Scout application and know the Troop's program and meeting schedule.
	Assist the Troop to turn in applications and Webelos transition reports to the Scout Service Center.
March	Begin to follow up with boys who have not joined. Get them invited to visit another Troop.

You're the Unit's Best Friend

Although the unit leader can get help from many places, it's special when it comes from you. Being there in person, you're the first one to offer personal support.

Troops Need Boys

Many Boy Scout Troops have eight boys or less. Even the larger Troops may find recruiting difficult. Though many Webelos Scouts leave their den when reaching Scouting age, they're not sure about going into the Troop.

You Have the Answer

With little effort, you can be the key person helping both the Boy Scout Troop and the Cub Scout Pack to fulfill their needs.

More than 84 % of transitioning Webelos Scouts join troops when the Webelos-to- Scout transition program is used. Leaders can do it themselves when someone gets them started ... and you're that someone. Do you want to know how it's done? What's In It For You?

HOW THE TRANSITION PLAN HELPS THE BOY

Many Webelos Scouts will go on into Scouting with no help at all. But, at least half of them need to know more about their opportunities for fun and adventure in the Scout Troop.

That's really the purpose of the Webelos-to-Scout transition plan: to give the Webelos Scout a sampling of the Troop program, Troop leadership, personal advancement, training and learning experience and an appreciation of Troop organization and relationships.

It will be the boy's (and his family's) decision so we owe it to them to demonstrate some of the fun experiences and to let him know that he is wanted. Certain key Scout Leaders are better able to show the Webelos Scouts the various elements of Scouting. So we need to

include everyone, starting with the Webelos Scouts themselves. That makes the transition plan an unlimited opportunity.

The boy's Webelos badge and Arrow of Light Award reach into the requirements bordering on Scouting skills, giving him a view of Scouting advancement. He sees boy leadership at work and senses his own potential as a junior leader. He becomes more confident and enthusiastic about the patrol method, a District Camporee, summer camp, and maybe even a National Jamboree.

In short, the boy's desire for Troop membership is the result of this gradual change in appetite for Troop-oriented activities.

HOW THE TRANSITION PLAN HELPS LEADERS

For the Scoutmaster, it means more boys. Boys already versed in Boy Scout and the Tenderfoot requirements and boys whose families have been supporting them in Pack activities.

For the Webelos den leader, it means fulfillment. It means direct help with advancement requirements, father/son overnights, as well as a pleasant association with the Troop. The time spent with a boy is productive as seen in the boy's desire to continue Scouting.

To the Cubmaster, it means assurance of a stable Webelos Den, more Bridging's and better ceremonies, the ready access to Den Chiefs and Pack meetings that feature a lively Webelos Den and Boy Scout Troop guests.

We can only instill the values of Boy Scouting into the lives of Boys who become Boy Scouts.

The Transition Plan

Every transitioning Webelos Scout deserves the opportunity to continue his Scouting experience as a member of a Boy Scout Troop. Your help can make a difference.

Here's a plan that 'Bridges' the gap between Webelos Scouting and Boy Scouting. It results in better prepared and more enthusiastic new members for the Troop, a strong feeling of success for the Pack, and-most important of all - an outstanding new Scouting experience for the boys.

Many Webelos Scouts go on to Boy Scouting with no help at all, but a lot of them need to know more about their opportunities for fun and adventure in the Troop.

That's the purpose of the Webelos-to-Scout transition plan: to give every Webelos Scout a sampling of the Troop program, Troop leadership, advancement opportunities, and the fun and excitement of Boy Scouting. We also must let him know that he is wanted.

The boy's progress toward the Webelos badge and the Arrow of Light Award introduces him to some of the basic elements of Boy Scouting, and gives him an early taste of Scouting skills and the Boy Scout advancement program. He learns more about the Troop through joint Den/Troop activities, which lets him see boy leadership at work and sense his own potential as a leader. He becomes more confident and enthusiastic about his Scouting future as he becomes more familiar with the boys and adult leaders of the troop he will be joining.

Here's How It Works

The Webelos-to-Scout transition plan offers a clear path into Boy Scouting for every Webelos Scout, beginning early in his fifth grade year. By linking his Webelos Den and a Boy Scout Troop in a transition partnership, he is provided an opportunity, through joint activities, to sample the fun of Boy Scouting. As his Webelos advancement plan helps him prepare for Boy Scout advancement, he might also learn more about Boy Scouting through Council and District activities designed to support the transition plan.

In the early spring, after he has earned the Arrow of Light, he 'Bridges' with the other members of his Den into the Troop.

The Den/Troop Partnership

The key factor in the transition process is the establishment of a working partnership between the Webelos Den and the Boy Scout Troop that most of the Webelos Scouts will join. This partnership should be firmly in place by the start of the Webelos Scouts' fifth grade year. Every fifth grade Webelos Den should be linked to a Troop, and every Troop should have one or more Webelos dens as partners. Of course, in many cases these partnerships already exist, and have been effective for many years. But some Webelos Dens are not linked to Troops, and need help from their District in establishing a partnership. Similarly, Troops with no 'feeder' Webelos Dens might need help.

No Webelos Scout should start his fifth grade year without a clear path ahead of him that leads to a Boy Scout Troop.

Joint Activities

The partner Troop may provide Webelos Den Chiefs for the Pack, as well as assistance in Planning and conducting outdoor activities, but the most important result of the Den/Troop partnership is the experience of joint activities.

The fifth-grade Webelos Den and the Troop should hold several activities together, including one or two joint campouts. The Den could also join the Troop in a Court of Honor, campfire program, day hike, field trip, or joint Good Turn for the Chartered Organization or community. Visiting a camporee or other District or Council Boy Scout event as guests of the Troop might also be included.

Through these joint activities, Webelos Scouts not only learn of the fun of Boy Scouting, they also get acquainted with the individual Scouts in the Troop. When the time comes to move into Boy Scouting, it is no longer a leap into the unknown, but a step into an already familiar and friendly situation.

Webelos Scout Advancement

The Webelos Scout advancement pattern has been developed to lead naturally to earning the Webelos badge in the fourth grade year and the Arrow of Light Award in the fifth grade year, but still allows boys who join the Webelos den as fifth-graders (or 10-year-olds) to earn both ranks. By following the pattern detailed in the *Webelos Scout Program Helps* (Webelos Activity Badge Schedule - BSA recommendations), the Webelos Den leader will ensure that most Webelos Scouts will earn the Webelos badge in January of their fourth-grade year and the Arrow of Light Award in January or February of the fifth-grade year.

Early Spring Bridging Ceremony

Summer camp is a vital part of the Boy Scout experience, particularly for the new Scout. The expanded Webelos Scout program gives us a great opportunity to guarantee that graduating Webelos Scouts participate in summer camp by getting them into the Troop in time to prepare for Boy Scout camp.

Webelos Scouts may become Boy Scouts as soon as they have earned the Arrow of Light Award. For most Webelos Scouts, this happens in January or February of their fifth-grade year.

From Den to Patrol

Webelos Scouting and Boy Scouting have been designed to neatly dovetail together, and the Webelos Den can move right into the Troop as a new Scout Patrol. When the whole Den moves into Boy Scouting together, they continue to provide friendship and support to each other, which allows each boy to make a smooth transition with his friends into the Troop.

Council and District Support

There are several ways that the Council and the District can help Packs and Troops with the Webelos-to-Scout transition process:

Webelos tracking. Our District needs to have a system to identify and track each fifth-grade Webelos Scout to ensure that he has the opportunity to continue his Scouting experience as a Boy Scout. Follow-up should be planned to maintain contact with each boy until he is enrolled in a Troop. This is assigned as a responsibility of the Commissioner Staff and Membership Committee.

In Summary

The Webelos-to-Scout transition plan links fifth-grade Webelos Dens and Boy Scout Troops together, encourages joint activities, introduces Webelos Scouts to Boy Scouting and ensures the 'Bridging' of the Webelos den into the Troop in mid March this will coincide with the re-chartering process. The MO-CA District's goal: Every Webelos Scout continues his Scouting experience as a Boy Scout.

Key Leaders in the Transition Plan

The Webelos Den Leader works with the Scoutmaster and the Assistant Scoutmaster responsible for new boys to provide an introduction to Boy Scouting for every fifth-grade Webelos Scout. This is done through the Webelos advancement program, visits and joint activities with the Troop, and an impressive Bridging Ceremony with the entire fifth-grade Den moving into the Troop as a new Scout Patrol.

The Webelos Den Chief is a registered Boy Scout, active in the Troop and selected by the Scoutmaster to serve as a program assistant to the Webelos Den Leader. He should be skilled in conducting ceremonies, leading songs, teaching skills, giving demonstrations, leading games, and helping to prepare the Webelos Scouts for the Troop experience ahead. By his example, he may be the single most important person in influencing Webelos Scouts to join the Troop.

The Scoutmaster, as the primary leader of the Troop directs the establishment of a cooperative link between the Troop and the Pack. He or she selects and appoints the Webelos Den Chief. The Scoutmaster encourages joint activities and the graduation of Webelos

into the Troop. Through the Troop's junior leaders, he or she sets the tone for welcoming new members.

The Assistant Scoutmaster, (for Webelos to Scout Transition) in addition to guiding the new Scout Patrol in the Troop, serves as liaison between the Troop and Webelos Den. He or she, along with the Webelos Den Leader, helps plan joint activities, including an exciting Bridging Ceremony. The assistant Scoutmaster also is principally responsible for the smooth transition of Webelos Scouts into the Troop by working closely with the Webelos Den Chief, Webelos Den Leader, Webelos Den leader Coach, and the Scoutmaster

The Unit Commissioner provides continuing program support to the Packs and Troops, and helps establish working relationships between the Troop and the fifth grade, Webelos Dens of the Pack. He or she also encourages and supports joint activities as well as Bridging, and promotes participation in District and Council transition.

Webelos to Scout Transition
Sample letter of introduction from Boy Scout Troop to 2nd year
Webelos
(To be mailed in September)

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Date

Dear _____:

My name is _____ and I am the Scoutmaster for Troop #_____. Over the next few months, you will be transitioning from the Cub Scout program into the Boy Scout program. This is an exciting time, for many new fun and exciting adventures that lay ahead.

As a Troop we go camping (*How often do you go camping*)? This year we are planning to (*use this paragraph to briefly describe your annual program plan. Tell the Webelos what you are doing: canoeing, climbing and repelling, backpacking, fishing, etc.*)

Our Troop meets weekly (*time/date/location*). At these meetings, we have skills instruction time where we work on advancements. Our goal is that you would reach 1st class (*Time you expect to complete*) of joining our Troop. We also have time for your patrol to get together to plan for upcoming campouts and time for inter-patrol activities.

This summer, we are planning to attend Camp (*Name and Location*) on (*date*). Activities at this camp include canoeing, rowing, swimming, nature programs, sports programs, .22 shooting, archery shooting, and much more.

We would like you to consider joining our Troop. To aid in this transition, we would like to invite you, your parents, and your entire Den to a campout on October (*date*). Our theme is Athletics and will play softball, volleyball, Frisbee golf, and have a bicycle race. Food and tents will be provided. All you will need to bring is personal gear (clothes, toiletries, sleeping bag, and or blankets) and your bicycle. We will be meeting at (*location at time*). Please let your Webelos Leader know by (*date*) if you are able to attend.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Scoutmaster, Troop # _____