

Webelos Transition Program Does it Work?

**A Growth Project Requirement
For the
Doctor of Commissioner Science Degree**

**Duane Betteen
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Introduction

This Growth Project takes a general view of the Webelos Transition Program and if the program is working within the units. The following information contain within this document are results from an online survey and handouts. The intent of the information contain in this document is to help identify problems so correct action can be taken to solve the problems.

WEBELOS TRANSITION PROGRAM

The Webelos Transition Program¹ is a program design to help the Webelos Scout in eighteen months transition into the Boy Scout Program without too many problems. The Cub Scout Program differs in many ways from the Boy Scout Program, so the transition program was developed to help merge the two programs so that the Scout could move on into Boy Scouts with little or no drop outs. To understand the Transition Program one would have to look at some similarities between the two programs.

Boy Scouts

Merit Badges

Outdoor Program

Merit Badge Councilors
Councilors

Webelos Scout

Activity Pins

Overnighters

Can Use Activity Pin

Webelos program can be looked at as being a Boy Scout program for fourth and fifth grade boys. As a Cub Scout, the Webelos rank is the final step before they can join a Boy Scout troop at or around the age of 11. Through such events as a Webelos Woods, Fall and Spring Camporees, and other troop

¹ See Appendix for Information on the Webelos Plan and Transition Program.

sponsored events, the Webelos Scout becomes familiar with the Boy Scout program. Many of these joint events are supported by the Council and Local District and also the Unit Commissioners who help to arrange many of the joint events.

The question of does this Webelos Transition Program work? There are many answers to this question. Through this Growth Project, the attempt will be made to answer the question. An 18 question online survey was developed to gather data. To understand the data, one will first have to look at where the responses came from as not to taint the data and to show that the data is just not local. Figure 1 shows an illustration of the United States with all of the responses marked on the image.

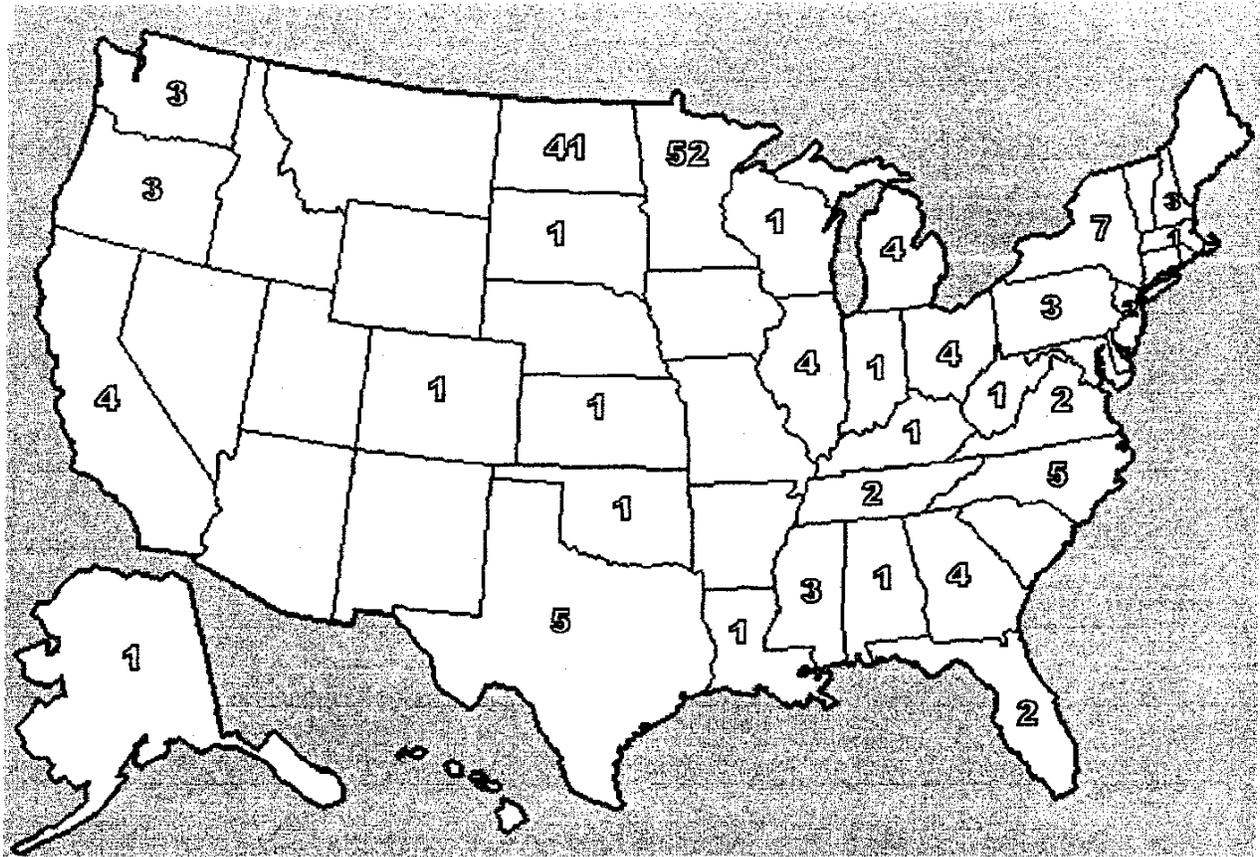


FIGURE I

The above illustration represents the area for which the samples of the survey² were received from. The numbers represent the number of samples. Missing from the illustration is the one sample received from Japan.

The samples are:

Alabama	1	Alaska	1	California	4
Colorado	1	Florida	2	Georgia	4
Illinois	4	Indiana	1	Iowa	2
Japan	1	Kansas	1	Kentucky	1
Louisiana	1	Maryland	2	Michigan	4

²See Appendix for Complete Version of the Survey

Minnesota	52	Missouri	3	New York	8
North Carolina	5	North Dakota	41	Ohio	4
Oklahoma	1	Oregon	3	Pennsylvania	3
South Dakota	1	Tennessee	2	Texas	4
Virginia	2	Washington	3	West Virginia	1
Wisconsin	1				

The following pages will be a breakdown of the survey questions by question and the percentage of response followed by a view point.

Webelos Transition Program Survey³

Q1. Please list your Council, District, Pack or Troop, City, and State.

This was put into the survey so one has the idea of where the responder is from and what affiliation of pack or troop involvement. Without this statement it would have meant that the data would have to be look at as being local only.

Q2. How soon are the Webelos Scouts introduced to the Outdoor Program?

- Right after joining the Webelos Den/Patrol. 69.3%
- After Webelos Badge is earned. 6.1%
- End of the first Year. 14.1%
- Only during the second year. 10.4%

³ See Appendix for Complete Version of the Survey.

The majorities of the Webelos Scout (69.3%) are being introduced to the Outdoor program and have started to learn scout skills. It is the 10.4% of the Webelos who are missing out on the experience of the Outdoor Program and will be behind in skills upon entering the Boy Scouts as compared to the to the majority.

Q3. Are the Webelos Scouts attending Webelos Resident Camp?

Yes 74.5%
No 25.5%

With the majority of the Yes (74.5%) responding, this shows that the Webelos Scouts are benefiting from the Webelos program through their 18 month tenure before crossing over to Boy Scouts. It is the No minority that are suffering from the shorten program because of lack of promotion of how important the resident camping is to the scout learning the necessary skills. The Unit Commissioner along with key scouters are needed to step in and promote the importance of the Resident Camps and the Outdoor Program in the life of the Webelos Scout.

Q4. Is the Webelos Den/Patrol participating in Webelos Overnights?

Yes 76.6%
No 23.4%

The importance of the Webelos Overnights is that it gives the chance for family interaction. The Webelos Scout along with a Parent/ Guardian, work as a

team to make the Overnighter a success. The Unit Commissioner, Cubmaster, and Webelos Den Leader should work together to assure that the Overnighter event is fun, exciting, and educational. These trio of leaders should also explain to the Parent or Guardian the importance of the skills learned as the Webelos Scout moves closer to becoming a Boy Scout. The 23.4% represents close to a quarter of the respondents who answered the question and this is a disturbing number since it means that there are Webelos Scout who are or have not benefited from an Overnight event. The Webelos Overnighter is also a requirement for the highest rank in Cub Scouting a Webelos can attain before moving into Boy Scouts, 'Arrow of Light Rank'.

Q5. Applying the Webelos Transition Program should the Webelos be considered to be a Den or Patrol?

Yes 59.3%

No 40.7%

To try to answer this question about how a unit of Webelos Scout should be designated, we would have to look at the Cub Scout Program as a whole. In the Cub Scouts there exist three separate programs. The Tiger Cubs have one program made up of activities that are appropriate for their age groups. Now the actual Cub Scout program starts, this is made up of the Bobcat, Wolf, and Bear ranks. The latter three ranks can be considered as the true Cub Scouts.

The Webelos unit is the rank group which is made up of fourth and fifth grade boys. The Webelos have their own program which differs greatly from the other rank groups in the Cub Scouts. Looking at the Webelos Handbook, one would notice how closely the handbook parallels the Boy Scout Handbook.

Some of the examples to support this are:

Activity Pins vs. Merit Badges -- both of these have requirements that have to be fulfilled before being awarded.

First Class Scout Badge -- have to know the meaning of the badge as a Webelos Scout.

Scout Oath and Law -- has to learn the oath and law and know the meaning of these verses as a Webelos Scout.

Uniform -- can wear the same uniform as the Boy Scouts with the exception of the shoulder loop color and the badge.

Webelos Badge vs. Scout Badge -- same size and shape, worn on the same pocket.

These are but a few of the examples the list goes on as you page through the two handbooks. If we are training the Webelos Scout to be a Boy Scout then they should also be made to feel like a Boy Scout and this would also mean giving the unit a designation of being a Patrol. Another example that supports this statement is the fact that the Cub Scout Ranks, Tigers, Bobcat, Wolf, and

Bears all have animal designations of which all have dens, but the Webelos were separated from this ideology and given their own identity when the Lion Rank was dropped in 1967 and replaced with what we now know as the Webelos. With the percentages almost even on this subject it is then left up to the unit to define who and what they are.

Q6. Have had the training for the Webelos Den Leader position?

Yes 70.2%
No 29.8%

Here we are asking if the leader has had training for this specific position. As the numbers show that the majority of the respondents have had training for the Webelos Den Leader position. This still leaves almost a third of the respondents who have not. Training in Scouting is very important so that a quality program can be delivered to the youth. An adult who takes on the responsibility of leadership should have training for the specific position that he or she has agreed to volunteer for. This is where the Unit Commissioner has a responsibility to arrange a training date and see that the volunteers get trained for their respective position so a quality program can be delivered. Another note to this is that the Unit Commissioner should also have had training in all the position so as to be able to serve the units they are charged with.

Q7. Attend monthly Roundtables?

Yes 75.3%

No 24.7%

Monthly Roundtables are a great gathering place for all leaders. These roundtables are design to help leaders provide a great program for the youth. This is also a chance for the Webelos Den Leader to attend not only a Cub Scout Roundtable but also a Boy Scout Roundtable where they can get advance training in the way of the Boy Scouts and bring this knowledge back to their units. Roundtables should also be attended by the Commissioners staff so the leaders get a chance to meet their commissioner and communicate to them their needs and ask for any help that maybe needed.

Q8. Have had Youth Protection Training?

Yes 98.3%

No 1.7%

Protecting our youth from any kind of harm should be of the utmost importance to any unit. Though the percentage number is high on the side of the respondents who have had the training, it is still alarming when you see any percentage numbers for those who have not had the training. The Unit Commissioner and the units committees should see to it that all volunteers have the Youth Protection Training and are kept up to date on this training. The

parents of the youths should also have this training since the Cub Scout Units have to require parents to attend most events of these younger scouts. The Scouts in the scouting program deserve the best program that can be delivered and also the best protection from harm that can be delivered.

Q9. Does the Webelos Den/Patrol have a Den Chief?

Yes 49.7%

No 50.3%

One of the most important connections between the Cub Scout Pak and the Boy Scout Troop is the Den Chief. A Den Chief, usually an older Boy Scout, is not only there to assist the Den Leader but can also provide insight into the Boy Scouts so that the Webelos Scout will know what is expected upon crossing over into a Troop. Even though the numbers are split on the use of Den Chiefs from the respondents the Unit Commissioner should encourage the use of Den Chiefs among the Cub Scout Packs. This would help in the transition into the Boy Scouts from the Cub Scouts and also help with Scout retention during the first year in Boy Scouts.

Q10. Do the Parents participate?

Yes 89.5%

No 10.5%

Q11. Have the Parents of the Webelos Scouts had the Transition Program explained to them and also differences between the Cub Scouts and the Boy Scouts?

Yes 73.1%
No 26.9%

Because of the nature of the two questions I view them closely related. In the scouting program the most important person in the scout life is the Parent/Guardian. Without even minimal participation, the chances of the scout dropping out are greater. This is why the parent/guardian needs as much information about scouting as can be provided to them. The transition program is not only important to the Webelos Scout but also to the parent/guardian so all know what is expected as the scout pass through the Webelos rank on into the Boy Scouts. The percentages for the explanation of the Webelos Transition Program are of a positive nature but the feedback in the survey would suggest otherwise.

"I am a Cubmaster and a Bear Den Leader. I have never heard of the *"Webelos Transition Program"* and I don't know if my other Webelos leaders have either."

"There needs to be more education of the parents about what to expect" "Pack 62 knows nothing about the Webelos Transition Program."

"I am not very informed about this program."

These are but a few quotes from the feedback that came with the survey. The Commissioners along with the District and Council need to promote this program amongst the Units.

Q12. Is the use of an Activity Pin Counselor being used in the Webelos Program at to familiarize the Webelos Scouts to the Merit Badge Program?

Yes 29.9%
No 70.1%

The use of an Activity Pin Counselor is not a requirement in the Webelos rank but should be used for the transition program to lessen the chance of the Webelos Scout dropping out in his first year of Boy Scouts.

The following is an insert from a presentation given at Philmont Training Center. The Session was 'Webelos Scout to First Class Scout'. The insert address the fact about the young scouts learning ability during his first year in Boy Scouts. Notice the fact that the concentration is not on Merit Badges but on Rank during the first year.

Goal - Skills



Grade - Age	Scout Rank	Skill Instruction		
		Scoutcraft	Merit Badges	Leadership
5 th 11	Tenderfoot 	<i>New Scout Program</i> 		
6 th 12	Second Class  First Class 	<i>Trail to First Class</i>		Den Chief Training
7 th 13	Star 	<i>Scouts Teaching Scouts</i>	<i>Merit Badge Program</i>	Position Specific
8 th 14	Life 	<i>Advanced Scoutcraft & High Adventure</i>		Troop JLT
9 th 15	Eagle  Eagle Palms			Council NYLT
10 th 16				Philmont & OA Training
11 th 17				<i>Scouts Teaching Scouts</i>
12 th 18				

FIGURE 2

Upon entering the Boy Scouts, the scout has the right to start working on Merit Badges as soon as he crosses over. This is why the importance of the use of an Activity Pin Counselor is important, makes for a smoother transition into the Merit Badge Program and does not stress the young scout right away.

Q13. Do the Webelos Scouts attend or visit a Troop during their tenure?

0-2 Times	45.1%
3-5 Times	43.4%
6-10 Times	3.5%
More	1.2%
Once Only	4.6%
Never	2.3%

During the tenure as a Webelos Scout the scout should visit with a troop as often as possible. This gives the scout a chance to become familiar with the troop environment. If there is more than one troop in area he should visit as many as possible so when it comes time to cross over he can make the choice of which troop he wants to become a member of. Unit Commissioners play a role in this part of the transition program by helping to make arrangements for the visit and overseeing that the visit turn out to be productive. The more a Webelos Scout becomes familiar with how the troop works the easier the transition will be. The numbers from this question in the survey suggest that the Unit Commissioner should take a more active role and suggest more visit are needed and also stress the fact that the older youth in the troop can help with the instruction of the Webelos Scout

Q14. Are the Webelos Scout doing activities with a Troop?

Yes 72.7%
No 27.3%

The majority of the numbers suggest that Webelos Scout are involved with activities on the troop level. Activities such as campouts and camporees are excellent activities for the Webelos Scout. These types of events help to peak

the interest of the Webelos Scout in scouting. Along with being exciting and new the activities help to develop the skills the Webelos Scout can use once he joins a Boy Scout Troop. The Scoutmaster, Webelos Den Leader, and Unit Commissioner, need to work together to assure that the Webelos Scout gets a chance to attend these events and activities.

Q15. As a Webelos Leader have you been invited to be part of a Troop?

Yes 76.8%

No 23.2%

The above percentages show that the majority of the respondents have been invited to become part of the leadership in a troop. If the Webelos Den/Patrol is a feeder for the troop then the Webelos Leader will have the familiarity of the troop and this tends to make the transition into that troop smoother. The Webelos Leader needs to have a high level of training compared to their counterparts in the rest of the Cub Scout Pack Leadership.

Joining a troop leadership will give a better understanding of the Webelos Transition Program and what is to be expected from the Webelos Scout as he makes the transition from Webelos to Boy Scouts. The experience of leadership in the troop will also help the Webelos Leader to also transition into a troop leadership role if the desire is to continue as a leader. The

Commissioners Staff should be in favor of this and should be encouraging and promoting the dual membership.

Q16. Is the Scoutmaster of a Troop invited regularly to the den/patrol meeting?

Yes 27.4%

No 72.6%

The percentages here show that the Webelos Leadership is not using one of the greatest resources available. The Scoutmaster attending these meetings brings with him a high level of leadership skills and scout skills in which to help train the Webelos Scout. This also allows the Webelos Scout to become familiar with how the leadership works in a troop and gives the scout a familiar person to connect to when they transition into the Boy Scout Troop.

Q16. Does the District support the Transition Program with resources and program information?

Yes 72.8%

No 27.2%

Q17. Does the Council support the Transition Program with resources and program information?

Yes 71.3%

No 28.7%

Support for the Webelos Transition Program is crucial on both the District and Council levels. The fact remains the most Cub Scout Pack to not have the resources or funds to develop programs needed to support the Webelos Scouts through the transition process. This is where the District and the Council need to work together to develop programs that are strictly for Webelos and to be of a more high adventure nature with a Boy Scout overtone to them.

Q18. On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest, how would you rate the Webelos Transition Program in your area?

1	4.2%
2	4.8%
3	12.0%
4	7.8%
5	16.2
6	9.6%
7	13.8%
8	22.8%
9	5.4%
10	3.6%

The number here would suggest that the Webelos Transition Program is working fairly well. Still with the low numbers this would suggest that there is room for improvement of the program. The numbers here also suggest that there is a lack of understanding of just what the program is about, this can be read in the feedback comments⁴ of this survey (see comments in appendix).

⁴ See Appendix for Feedback Comments.

SUMMARY

After reviewing the data collected from the survey one would have to assume that the Webelos Transition Program is working fairly well. All this depends on area of the country one lives in and the economics of the area. There is also a need for education of the Webelos Leaders, Cub Scout Leadership, Scoutmasters, and Commissioners as to what the Transition Program is about and how to implement it. There appears to be a need for more communication between Webelos Leaders and Scoutmasters, Pack Committees, and Troop Committees. The Commissioners need to be more involved into overseeing that the communications happens. Commissioners need to work with the District and Council to develop programs and events that are Webelos specific and Boy Scout in nature. Events that start teaching scout skills with a high adventure overtone. The parents/guardians of the Webelos Scout also need to be educated on what the Transition Program is about and also about the Boy Scout program and what is expected from both parent/guardian and scout.

The Commissioners need to take an active role in the Transition Program to make sure that it is being implemented to the best of the abilities of the Leaders involved. To help with communications, problem solving, information,

and resources to make the transition easier for all the parties involved with the evolution of the Webelos Scout to a Boy Scout. But in the end of all this we still have to remember that the Webelos Scout is still just a 10-11 year old youth who has not matured enough yet to take on all of the responsibilities that it takes to be a Boy Scout. Through education, fun, exciting events, and patience the Webelos Scout transition into Boy Scouts should be a smooth transition.