

Facts and suggestions on leading effective boards of review

By Mark Ray

From the November-December 2013 issue of *Scouting* magazine

Few parts of the advancement program confuse Boy Scout and Varsity Scout leaders more than the board of review. Here's a primer on keeping a key step in the advancement process from becoming a stumbling block.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE BOARD OF REVIEW? To determine the quality of the Scout's experience and decide if he is qualified to advance to the next rank. Boards of review are also used when awarding Eagle Palms.

WHEN IS THE BOARD OF REVIEW HELD? When a Scout believes he has completed all the requirements for a rank or Palm, he must be granted a board of review. Ideally, boards should be scheduled at least monthly so Scouts aren't delayed in beginning time-oriented requirements for their next rank. A unit leader can't "defer" a board for a Scout he or she thinks isn't ready, nor can he or she ask a Scout to perform beyond the requirements in order to be granted a board.

WHO SITS ON THE BOARD? The board consists of three to six unit committee members (or, for the Eagle Scout rank, three to six adults who understand the rank, purpose and importance of the review). A candidate's unit leader, assistant unit leaders and parents or guardians may not sit on his board, although the unit leader may attend as an observer. If three or fewer unit committee members are available, the unit may use knowledgeable parents or other adults who understand Scouting's aims — but this must be the exception, not the rule.

HOW LONG SHOULD IT LAST? For Tenderfoot through Life, approximately 15 minutes but no longer than 30 minutes; for Eagle, 30 to 45 minutes.

CAN THE BOARD RETEST? The board should ensure that the candidate has completed the requirements, but members may not retest him. It is not acceptable, for example, to ask a candidate to tie knots.

SO WHAT CAN MEMBERS ASK? Members might ask the candidate where he learned his skills, who taught him and what he gained from fulfilling the requirements. Other good questions would explore how he has lived the Scout Oath and Scout Law in his home, unit, school and community. *The Troop Committee Guidebook*, No. 34505, has examples of appropriate questions.



DOES THE SCOUT HAVE TO APPEAR IN UNIFORM? Full field uniform is preferred. However, if appearing in uniform is impractical, the candidate should be clean and neat in his appearance.

HOW DOES THE BOARD MAKE ITS DECISION? Typically, the board will ask the candidate to leave the room at the end of the meeting while they discuss his responses. It is appropriate to call the candidate back if additional questions may provide clarification. After discussion, the board takes a formal or informal vote. The board must agree unanimously. To approve awarding a rank or Palm, the board must agree unanimously.

WHAT ABOUT APPEALS? *The Guide to Advancement* (No. 33088) outlines the process by which a Scout or his parent or guardian may appeal the decision of the board of review. Only adverse decisions for Star, Life and Eagle may be appealed. The local council handles Star and Life appeals; the National Council handles Eagle.

HOW DO EAGLE BOARDS DIFFER? In addition to the slight differences noted here, the council advancement committee determines whether Eagle boards are held at the unit, district or council level. (If held at the unit level, at least one district or council representative must serve on the board.) Also, an Eagle board may not be held until after the council has verified the candidate's application with the national office.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, see the *2013 Guide to Advancement* (No. 33088), which is available online at bit.ly/guidetoadvancement.

This entry was posted in [Advancement & Awards](#), [Advancement FAQs](#), [Boy Scout Leadership](#), [Boy Scouts](#), [Eagle Palms](#), [Eagle Scout](#), [Leaders](#), [Magazine](#), [Merit Badges](#) and tagged [Advancement FAQs](#), [Boards of Review](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).