

# PANNING FOR GOLD

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As we move forward into Scouting's second century, the mission of its commissioners remains constant: helping units succeed. But just as the BSA is changing rapidly to remain relevant while maintaining its core values, commissioners are finding that new tools and techniques are needed to deliver "second-century service" to our units. Journey to Excellence, with its focus on continuous improvement, is just one of those. Our administrative commissioners (council commissioners, assistant council commissioners, district commissioners and assistant district commissioners) are finding new approaches are needed to lead unit commissioners effectively. Clearly setting expectations, measuring what really matters and walking the talk can help our commissioners deliver service that will enable our units to serve more kids better. Improved unit service will not only improve unit retention; it will also enable commissioners to experience success and that will cause many to extend their commitment to unit service.

## SET EXPECTATIONS:

Three clear messages must be regularly and consistently communicated to the corps:

1. Retaining units *and* kids requires:
  - a. Trained leaders
  - b. Great program
  - c. Effective unit service
2. We must have an adequate number of commissioners to serve our units.
  - a. 3.0 : 1 is a reasonable benchmark, but it's only a benchmark.
  - b. Individual skills, experience, and schedules require adjustments.
  - c. The new-unit retention process will drive us towards a lower ratio.
3. Our commissioners must be fully engaged with the units they serve.
  - a. Just achieving the ratio is meaningless.
  - b. Our only measures of engagement are unit health assessments and unit visit reports.
4. Training never ends.
  - a. Our core values are constant.
  - b. Everything else changes to maintain relevance.
  - c. Training taken in the past doesn't meet the needs of today.

## MEASURE WHAT MATTERS:

1. Ratio of units to commissioners
  - a. A reliable reference point (starting point) on corps membership is essential.
    - i. ScoutNET rosters may not serve that need (cut-off, process, and other issues may distort accuracy).
    - ii. District commissioners will almost invariably have a reliable email roster of current commissioners.
    - iii. Continuously cross-reference email and ScoutNET rosters to drive to greater accuracy.

- b. Access to our Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS) is an invaluable by-product of ScoutNET providing an accurate basis for calculating the current ratio.
- 2. % of units with health assessments completed in January and July.
  - a. Record unit health assessments in UVTS.
    - i. Increases familiarity with the tool.
    - ii. Facilitates access to information.
  - b. Cross-reference unit health assessments and dropped units following recharter.
    - i. Identifies opportunities for improvement.
    - ii. Reinforces value tool and technique.
- 3. Number and % of units with visits reported monthly in UVTS
  - a. UVTS offers the potential of data that can be mined to improve unit service
    - i. Utilization within commissioner corps
    - ii. Share with district operations committee to improve allocation of resources
  - b. Celebrate and build upon initial success by using data as it becomes available
- 4. Participation in council-sponsored commissioner events.
  - a. Quarterly commissioner meetings.
  - b. College of Commissioner Science.
  - c. Annual Conference.
- 5. Incorporate use of current tools and techniques and continuous training in recognition criteria.

## **WALK THE TALK:**

- 1. Transparency
  - a. Routinely report on performance *across the entire corps*.
  - b. Celebrate successes **and** acknowledge opportunities for improvement.
- 2. Demonstrate familiarity with the data
  - a. Incorporate references in communications.
  - b. Include references in casual conversations with professionals and volunteers.
- 3. Execute district recharter timely and accurately
  - a. Essential for accurate data to calculate ratio.
  - b. Critical for uninterrupted access to UVTS
  - c. Reinforces behaviors needed for successful unit recharter.
- 4. Execute unit recharter timely and accurately
  - a. Essential for accurate data to calculate ratio.
  - b. Temporarily dropped units distort UVTS data (unit visits also dropped until unit is rechartered)
- 5. Use the data
  - a. Coordinated utilization by volunteers in unit service **and** in district operations.
  - b. Coordinated utilization by volunteers **and** professionals.
  - c. Demonstrates value of new tools and techniques.
  - d. Reinforces that utilization can help units succeed.