It's official: The resolution to move to one Oath and Law for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Varsity, Sea Scouts, and Venturing was approved on October 17th by the Boy Scouts of America's Executive Board.

Essentially, this means every Scout of any age will use the Scout Oath and Law instead of reciting separate, program-specific sayings. Cub Scouts will recite the Scout Oath and Law instead of the Cub Scout Promise and Law of the Pack. Similarly, Venturers will no longer use the Venturing Oath and Venturing Code.

Because it will take time to transition into this new approach, the changes are not immediate. The Venturing change will not happen until late 2013 or early 2014; the Cub Scout change will take effect in mid-2015. Additionally, the newly adopted resolution replaces the full-hand Venturing sign and salute with the three-finger Boy Scout sign and salute.

Frequently asked questions

Here are the BSA's answers to some questions already received.

Q: *What, specifically, is being changing?*

A: Cub Scouts:

- Adopt the Scout Oath and Law for use in the Cub Scout program, retiring the Cub Scout Promise.
- Revise the Core Values of Cub Scouts to align exactly with the 12 points of the Scout Law.
- Retire the Law of the Pack, while maintaining the concept of “Akela” as leader.
- Maintain the current Cub Scout motto, sign, salute, and handshake.

A: Venturing:

- Retire the Venturing Oath, Code, sign and salute
- Adopt the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout sign, and Scout salute
- Engage the task force and National Youth Cabinet to determine whether Venturing should have a differentiating motto/slogan or adopt “Be Prepared”

Q: *Why are these changes happening?*

A: Each of our programs is designed to help instill the goals of the BSA mission in its members’ daily lives. As the BSA strives to operate as one organization, build continuity of membership over a person’s life, and deliver its mission, considering one Oath and Law as a tool to unify our membership is appropriate. Additionally, the earlier and longer a member is exposed to the values of the Scout Oath and Law, the better the opportunity is that they will be able to live those values in their lives.

Q: *How did these recommendations come to be?*

A: Two separate task forces have worked on the deliberations leading to the recommendations – the Strategic Plan Goal 411 Task Force and the Venturing Task Force. Each of these is volunteer-led and staffed (approximately 50 and 25 volunteers, respectively).

These task forces made the initial deliberations and recommendations beginning in 2011 and early 2012 respectively.

In the case of the Cub Scout, the 411 task force consulted with cognitive and child development specialists and educational practitioners involved in Scouting. Specifically, these professional and scouters were asked to consider age & developmental appropriateness of the current Cub Scout Promise and Law of the Pack versus the Scout Oath and Law. The outcome of this study suggested that comprehension difficulty is high for both but not materially higher for the Scout Oath. Further the study group concluded that Cub Scouts could understand the Scout Law just as well as the Cub Scout Promise with appropriate support and guidance. Additionally, research among parents (62% favorable) and Cub Scout leaders (59% favorable) was also supportive. Cub Scouts would not be asked to memorize or recite the Scout Law at early ages.

With respect to Venturing, the primary discussion points centered around the length and lack of use of the current Venturing Code, the desire to support a seamless set of value statements between Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Venturing (one program) and a desire to align Venturing's value statements with those used for similar age programs worldwide.

Q: *Isn't the Scout Oath and Law much more difficult for Cub Scout age boys to memorize and understand?*

A: This was an initial concern of the task force. To address this concern, the task force recruited a group of individuals with experience in child development and linguistics and a group of educational practitioners. All of these individuals are Scouters. After study, the group's conclusions were:

- Both sets of value statements contain complex concepts requiring support and guidance for the user to fully understand and learn to live buy.
- Both sets of values statements are written at a relatively high reading level, but the Scout Oath is not significantly more difficult to read and comprehend than the Cub Scout Promise.

- The Law of the Pack is significantly more difficult for Cub Scout age boys to understand

than either the Cub Scout Promise or the Scout Oath and contains concepts for which younger Cub Scouts are not developmentally prepared.

- Cub Scout age boys will be able to learn and comprehend the Scout Oath with support and guidance similar to that currently provided when learning the Cub Scout Promise (cards as prompts, guided discussion on meaning, etc.).
- Cub Scouts in early ranks should not be expected to memorize the Scout Law but are developmentally ready to begin exposure to the words of the Law and are ready to begin building understanding of the concepts with help.

Q: *Cub Scouts is not Boy Scouts. If Cub Scouts use the Scout Oath and Law, what will separate the programs, what will the boys look forward to?*

A: Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts are separate programs. Cub Scouts preparing to move to Boy Scouts will continue to anticipate the new uniform, the increase in independence and leadership growth of the patrol method, the enhanced opportunities for fun and adventure thru age appropriate troop activities they could not do as Cub Scouts and the Boy Scout advancement program and other opportunities. Use of the same Oath and Law will unify them with their older “brothers” but will not make them Boy Scouts.

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