

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

By the time you read this, you've probably already seen references to the BEST (**B**uilding **E**vidence in **S**couting **T**ogether) Study through a variety of communications channels including our commissioner website and social media channels. It's worth reading about more than once.

Since 2016, the BSA has been working with the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. foundation to investigate Scouting's impact on positive youth development. The Bechtel Foundation was impressed by the performance of the BSA and research team during the first phase of the project, resulting in support of a second phase. The external research team from Montclair State University and the American Institutes for Research has real independence in decision making and research design. The BSA will have access only to anonymized data. Initial findings from the first phase are beginning to be published.

Phase I developed two pathway models that describe:

1. What occurs with adult volunteers who become long-term, well-trained volunteers who embrace the larger vision of Scouting,
2. What happens to Scouts BSA youth who experience the identity development; moral, ethical, and character development; and social and emotional skills development that Scouting enables.

Key take aways from Phase I include:

1. Scouting is a positive youth development program; it can be implied that Scouting develops character and leadership,
2. Scouting provides the critical conditions to help youth mature in a healthy, functional manner,
3. *Those units that execute the program using Scouting BSA's eight methods are likely to deliver positive youth development.*

For long-term Scouting volunteers, the key take aways aren't news; they've long believed those are Scouting's impact on youth when the program is delivered as intended. The significance of the BEST Study is that it provides *objective* data confirming that belief.

Why is this important to commissioners?

1. Our *Simple & Unified* approach to Unit Service is designed to enable commissioners help units deliver Scouting's program as intended by
 - a. Eliminating *anything* that prevents commissioners from focusing on five things (Supporting unit growth & retention, Contacting units, Linking unit needs to resources, Supporting timely charter renewals, and Supporting unit leaders)
 - b. Recognizing that no volunteer can be an expert in everything; we must unify the efforts of commissioners and district operating committee members to address unit needs
2. The key tools and techniques commissioners use (relationship development, collaboratively assessing unit strengths and needs, and developing unit service plans to address them) are designed to help commissioners help units deliver Scouting's programs as intended
3. Commissioners, just like unit leaders, invest time in Scouting to have an impact on youth – to enable positive youth development. *Our investment in Scouting is a direct investment in youth.*

Why do we do what we do? To have an impact on youth.

The BEST Study is validating your efforts as commissioners. Using our *Simple & Unified* approach, you help ensure units are delivering Scouting's programs as intended. As a result, you help ensure that Scouting continues to provide positive youth development that develops character and leadership.

Go help some kids!