

## Some FAQs about the Scouts BSA board of review

The Scouts BSA board of review aims to determine the quality of the Scout's experience and decide whether the requirements to achieve the Scout's next rank have been fulfilled.

It is not, notes Scouts BSA national program chair Angelique Minett, a [job interview](#), retest or examination, or any other kind of challenge of the Scout's knowledge.

"It should be a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere," Minett said during the most recent episode of [#TroopTalkLive](#). "You shouldn't be sitting there trying to grill the Scout."

You can watch our entire discussion below or read on for the details.

Embed: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lh7a2\\_mV4F4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lh7a2_mV4F4)

### **Q: What is a board of review?**

A: A board of review aims to determine the quality of a Scout's experience through a conversation between the Scouts and 3-6 members of the troop committee (GTA 8.0.0.1 and 8.0.0.3). It should be viewed as a chance to talk with the Scout about what they've done, what they've learned, and how they enjoy the program. It's required for every rank in Scouts BSA from Tenderfoot to Eagle Scout and should happen after the Scoutmaster conference.

"The board of review is not a retest of any sort," Minett says. "It's supposed to be more of a check-in time, [asking them how things are going](#)." (GTA 8.0.1.1)

The whole thing should take 15-30 minutes (GTA 8.0.2.0). At the end, the Scout leaves the room while the board deliberates. If the board unanimously agrees that the Scout is ready to advance, the Scout is called back and congratulated (GTA 8.0.1.4).

### **Q: How is it different from a Scoutmaster conference?**

A: The Scoutmaster conference is a meeting with the Scoutmaster to ensure the Scout has completed the requirements. It's also a chance for the Scoutmaster to review the Scout's understanding of Scouting's ideals and how the Scout can apply those ideals to their daily life, along with a chance to review the requirements for the Scout's next rank.

The Scoutmaster conference — not the board of review — is where the rank requirement check should happen. If something slipped through the cracks, this would be the time to catch it. (GTA 4.2.3.5)

### **Q: Can a Scout fail a board of review?**

A: Technically, yes. However, if that happens, it really means that something went wrong much earlier.

"If you get to a board of review and the Scout hasn't completed what they were supposed to for that rank, then you've done your job as an adult wrong because you should catch that before it gets to the board of review," says Minett.

A Scout cannot fail a board of review for something like not wearing their uniform or forgetting their Handbook. The only reason a Scout might not pass a board of review would be if they did not complete the requirements as written — no more, no less. (GTA 8.0.1.4 and 8.0.1.5)

### **Q: What does a Scout get from a board of review?**

A: It's called "adult association," and it's one of the methods of the Scouts BSA program.

"A board of review is an opportunity for Scouts to practice some of those social skills with adults," Minett says. "It's our job as adults to guide them in the conversation. We're not there to judge or

grade them on how well they talk to adults. We're there to allow them to get comfortable speaking with adults.” (GTA 8.0.1.2)

**Q: If you do realize a specific requirement hasn't been met, can you pause a board of review and pick it up later?**

A: Yes.

“Perhaps the Scout has admitted, ‘Yeah, I didn't do that 10-mile hike like I said did, even though it's marked off.’” Minett says. “That might be where you give the opportunity to the Scout to put this on pause and then come back.”

In this situation, you would adjourn the board of review so the Scout can complete the requirement. Then, you'd have the same people back to complete the board of review at a later date.

“They're not failing it,” Minett says. “The Scout is choosing to adjourn it to complete the requirement and then come back.” (GTA 8.0.1.5)

**Q: Are there any adults who should *not* be part of a Scout's board of review?**

A: Yes. The Scoutmaster (and any assistant Scoutmasters) should not participate in a board of review. (GTA 8.0.0.3)

“The board of review happens with members of the committee because this is a chance for the committee to see how the program is operating,” says Minett. “This is an opportunity for the Scouts to give feedback. It's an opportunity for the Scouts to have adult associations with other adults besides their Scoutmaster. It's a little checks-and-balances system, and it's really important that we have it that way.”

Also, the Scout's parents should not participate, though they could observe under the right conditions.

“Parents can sometimes get uneasy because boards of review sound really serious and really important, and they get nervous for their children,” Minett says.

Parents are discouraged from coming to a board of review because it can affect how the Scout answers questions and whether they speak candidly.

“Usually,” says Minett, “what I have found is once we explain to the parent that we've set the kids up for success and we've made sure they're going to pass ahead of time and that we are doing everything to help this be a comfortable and enjoyable experience for them, most parents are very comfortable saying, ‘OK I'm happy to let them have this experience.’”