



This edition of *Realignment News* will introduce you to the team of demographers that has been hired by GSUSA to solicit your input in building the agenda for the late February Board Chair/CEO Work Session, and to provide answers to some of the questions we have received from you.

Looking ahead to the holidays, there will not be an issue of *Realignment News* distributed on December 26. Your next edition will arrive on January 3 and will focus on some of the human resources questions that have been raised.

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### ITEMS OF INTEREST

GSUSA has engaged two demographers who will work in partnership to develop the first-ever map of Girl Scout councils drawn from a demographic perspective. The map they present will be based on criteria that is currently being prioritized by councils. It will be introduced at the Board Chair/CEO Work Session in Orlando and will serve as the starting point for our next round of discussions. Our demographers are energized by the opportunity to support this first, important step toward implementation of our Core Business Strategy.

#### **Meet our demographers**

Dr. Jeanne Gobalet is Vice President and Principal of Lapkoff & Gobalet Demographic Research, Inc. Her professional qualifications and her love of Girl Scouts makes this a perfect match. She is an expert user of Census data, highly skilled in the use of GIS (Geographic Information System) software, and is a talented quantitative analyst. Her recognized work with political redistricting and school attendance boundary-realignment, which in many ways resembles the task of drawing Girl Scout council boundaries, gives Dr. Gobalet a unique perspective on our project. Having traveled to 49 of the 50 states, she brings both statistical expertise and an understanding of regional identities to the project.

Peter Francese is widely recognized as both a demographics and marketing expert. He founded *American Demographics* Magazine as well as the National Planning Data Corporation, one of the first demographic information firms in the country. He also served as Director of Market Analysis for the *Wall Street Journal*. Peter speaks and writes frequently on the demographics of consumer trends and customer behavior. He has authored three books; his most recent one, [Marketing Insights to Help Your Business Grow](#), was published in May.

A self-described “demographic journalist,” Peter uses statistical data and trends to create pictures of the future.

Jeanne and Peter will be in Orlando to present their map along with all the data points that contributed to their initial thoughts. They will continue to work with us as boundaries are adjusted and changed through discussions with councils.

### **A Look Ahead at the Chair/CEO Work Session**

The Board Chair/CEO Work Session is fast approaching. Rather than convene a planning committee for this meeting, we have decided to open the discussion to include all of you. Listed below are items currently planned for the agenda – please let us know what additional subjects you would like included.

**Focus:** Strategic Realignment of Council Boundaries

**Topics:**

- Change Leadership (outside presenter)
- Presentation/Discussion of map by GSUSA demographers
- Presentation/Discussion of maps by some councils
- Meetings by council groups/regions to discuss mapping
- Introduction of support strategies for council realignment
- Discussion of planning calendar for implementation
- Updates on other elements of the Core Business Strategy

The agenda will be finalized by mid-January. Your thoughts for additional topics are welcome at [worksession@girlscouts.org](mailto:worksession@girlscouts.org). Thank you!

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**1. What is contiguous coverage? Answer:** The principle of contiguous coverage was established in the 1940s to assure that every section of the United States was “covered” by a Girl Scout council. Councils were then chartered to make Girl Scouting available to all girls in their jurisdiction, which meant that every girl in the United States could have access to our program. As we realign council boundaries we need to ensure that there is full (contiguous) council coverage. For all practical purposes, it is also important that council boundaries cover a contiguous area, which means that all areas served by a council are connected.

**2. Can you share some structures with us that work in larger council jurisdictions? Answer:** Absolutely. We are currently working on models that will be available to all of you in the months ahead. We are fortunate to have many successful councils that serve thousands of girls in both concentrated areas and in vast jurisdictions. We hope to tap the successful experience that many of you have, to develop these models.

**3. There is a large metropolitan area in a neighboring state that “spills over the border” into the state I am in. If we propose a statewide council, it will divide the metro area. What should we do? Answer:** Without getting into specifics, we would generally advise that metropolitan areas remain together. These population centers are often tied to an area’s regional identity, funding sources, and media markets.

Jurisdictions need to be drawn in a way that capitalizes on the energy and resources that are created by these population centers.

**4. Can we submit more than one map? Answer:** Yes. Several state/regional groups have found that there are multiple ways to “organize” boundaries. If you can’t settle on a favorite – or if there are multiple options – one possible strategy is to keep the multiple possibilities on the table. Remember that the discussion in each region will be further enriched at the Board Chair/CEO Work Session when the GSUSA Demographer Team presents their findings.

**5. Our proposed map is done, what do we do now? Answer:** We are delighted with the progress that is being made and thank all of you for the investment of time and energy in this important process. With your map(s) completed, this is a good time to step back, to reflect, and to continue the important work in your council. We have learned that some of you have taken proposed jurisdictions to your boards; this is most prevalent among those council groups who want to be considered as “early adopters.” As the process moves forward, we need to remember that councils cannot proceed with the work of forming a new jurisdiction until all parties (councils and GSUSA) have agreed with the proposal. The boundaries you have developed are an important first step in building a new national map.

**6. We appreciated all of the maps that GSUSA provided for our meetings, but understand there is an additional data source that could be helpful to us. Can you help? Answer:** The Census Bureau’s website provides simple and detailed data for many different geographical units, including states, counties, cities, Census tracts, and ZIP codes. Maps are also available. American FactFinder is the Bureau’s tool for generating tables and maps. Free information is available at the following web link:

<http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>

**7. Has GSUSA already established the number of councils that will exist when this project is complete? Answer:** No, we have not established “a number,” but we do know that this process will lead to fewer councils.

**8. If the only change we are making is expanding our boundaries to include a small area that would be better served by a neighboring jurisdiction and everyone is in agreement, will we have to go through the full “merger” exercise? Answer:** Probably not. We know that some jurisdictional changes will be larger than others and that different implementation processes will be needed, depending on the scope of the realignment. GSUSA is preparing to support all degrees of jurisdictional change, regardless of the scope.

**9. If you submit a map by February 7, does that automatically make you an early adopter? Answer:** Submitting a map by February 7 does not automatically make you an “early adopter.” To be considered an “early adopter,” your proposed map must be

closely aligned with the map developed by the GSUSA demographer team. Additionally, all affected councils must agree with the proposal. “Early adopters” will be selected from the pool of submissions that meets these criteria.

**10. If you don’t want to be an early adopter, is there any reason to submit a map by the February 7 date? Answer:** All maps submitted by February 7 will be used in some way at the Chair/CEO meeting in Orlando. With the exception of early adopters, there is no special advantage to early map submission beyond their potential use at the Orlando meeting. If you have developed various maps, but aren’t ready to send them in, we encourage you to bring your suggestions to Orlando, where the discussion about boundary options will continue.

**11. What if a submitted map includes our current jurisdiction and we don’t agree with the proposal? Answer:** Map submissions should indicate the level of support the proposed map received from the councils involved. If your map has already been submitted and did not include this information, please send that information to Vicki Wright ([vwright@girlscouts.org](mailto:vwright@girlscouts.org)).