

TEXAS BOYS STATE 2020 (VIRTUAL)

AFTER ACTION REVIEW | COUNSELOR SURVEY SNIPPET
AS OF 29 JUNE 2020

TOP 2 FAVORITE EXPERIENCES & WHY?

- Listening to the statesman truly bonding with one another even though it was a virtual connection.
- They said it couldn't be done. My favorite experience by far is just being part of the pioneering movement to make virtual TXBS a reality. Truly inspiring as I was also a skeptic, but the fact that we had a pretty normal TXBS is a major- astronomical- success in my book.
- Seeing certain posts innovate to have statesmen gather to attend program at their facility.
- Mentoring the Statesmen and the election process.
- Executing Virtual TBS. What a learning experience that I can carry forward. I have been changed forever.
- Seeing my city statesmen discuss policy in a way I have never seen before. Amazing.
- Above all seeing the bonding experience between the young men despite the circumstances laid before them.
- Being able to moderate the College fair discussion. Lots of good learning opportunities.
- I enjoyed the variety of guest speakers this year.
- Being able to see how the statesmen strategized this year the best I've ever seen - by uniting cities/counties behind one candidate and pushing them to the top.
- The thing that was motivational for me was the absolute vigor that came from the counselors that was trickled down to the statesmen. That is the lifeblood of this program and it shows. The sort of can-do attitude that I saw from everyone makes me proud to be part of this unique group of men.
- I enjoyed the fact that the students seemed to come out of their shells more with the program being virtual.
- Having a conversation with the Statesmen in my City about racism and discrimination in this country. It was incredibly inspiring to see these student leaders discuss issues after gaining new perspectives, and I was glad to see that students were engaging with the ideas presented by Mr. Eagleton rather than being dismissive.
- Listening in on my Statesmen's virtual conversation about policy in their precinct convention was interesting, especially since they were meeting each other for the first time and talking about complicated policy issues. It felt very civil and there was a lot of ideas hashed out, making me feel confident about our next generation of discourse.
- The interaction of the Statesmen. It was a real learning experience watch them first come into the program, the interaction and how courteous they acted with each other. It got better as the week went on.
- Being able to go from 'room' to 'room.' I was able to interact and watch more of my city quicker. I could assign one of my counselors to go with one of the parties then go back and forth to see how my city was interacting more readily.
- The 24/7 communications for committees and congress allowed for more work.

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- Watching the statesmen discuss politics in an extremely organized manor online. Typically these conversations would be held during meals or recreation when counselors are not monitoring them. In the Virtual Boys State much of the politicking was done in front of us.
- City closing meetings reflecting the keynote speakers. The Statesmen's attitude and perspective changes after every speaker. This was most likely the biggest take-away for the week.
- Working with my Associate Counselors. Such phenomenal men.
- Being able to adapt and continue this program.
- Having excellent, thought provoking speakers that lead to great conversation amongst statesmen.
- Utilizing technology for campaigns and seeing video involved.
- Additional ways for individuals to testify for senate.
- The digital Band – seeing how all of it came together.
- Digital Visiting Dignitary Program. This allowed us to move faster and the people we had speak were amazing.
- Camden and Zee's band compilations demonstrated that we have high-caliber, high-capacity counselors in our ranks just waiting to be given an opportunity.
- My favorite would be listening to the different speeches the [Statesmen] gave when running.
- Sitting in on precinct meetings, what is typically a bland segment of the program was a daily treat as my statesmen worked through complex policy issues with respect and intelligence.
- Public Hearings in the House and Senate. It was cool to see people who would normally just be bored in a gallery give input on the legislative process for the week.
- Watching social media campaign the Nationalists ran evolve over time. I think this is a large reason why the Nats swept, it was a very impressive use of available tools.
- Facilitating precinct and city meetings was my favorite experience! It was good to get to listen to the larger meetings (e.g. state party meetings), but I was simply passively observing. It was great to empower the statesmen to run successful precinct and city meetings by providing instruction and support when needed! Actively helping the smaller group settings made me feel that I was contributing to something bigger than myself.
- Listening to the engaging and inspiring visiting dignitaries and keynote speakers was amazing. I am always impressed with the high caliber of individuals that are invited to speak each year.
- It was really easy to communicate and move from room to room.
- Honestly the state party conventions went so smoothly. In years past the boos and cheers would drown out the speakers and I feel that the guys were much more respectful this year to the overall process of state party conventions.
- The late night talks after our general assembly speakers. There were great conversations being had. I always have those types of convos with my guys but it was nice we were still able to do so.

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- Working with Mr. Gary Flenniken and Mr. Samuel Simmons was great because we were able to split up and use our talents to best work with the city. Since Mr. Flenniken had so much experience, he was able to show us JACs how to effectively work with the statesmen.
- So many challenges came up and I love being tested like that and showing my adaptability and then teaching that to my counselors.
- Working with the statesmen was the other great part. How they learned the process and how they made and discussed policy was amazing. They were go-getters and really bonded as a city, and I think they may continue to stay in contact.
- The relative speed of movement afforded by being online.
- Watching the debates and speeches during the party conventions from county to state level.
- The overall program coming together within a virtual environment because I didn't believe it could happen.
- Getting to direct and bring the very first Texas Boys State Band online.
- It was interesting to see the Congress conduct virtual hearings. It was a new experience that was beneficial to the learning by doing aspect of our program.
- The general assembly speakers, they were arguably the best I have seen in my time here, and each one of them got better than the one before them!
- Seeing how the statesmen conducted themselves online and figured out how to thrive in an online political environment was super interesting. Really awesome set of statesmen this year.
- Seeing the statesmen have more meaningful discussions about policy since there is usually very little policy discussion especially at the state party conventions which usually just devolve into shouting matches.
- Having a speaker speak about an issue that is prevalent in our society today because since we are an organization that aims to teach civil discourse, I think it's extremely important that we have speakers to speak on the issues that affect our society.
- Being able to run the Boys State Band - WOW this was one of the most difficult projects I've taken on in 3 months, but also the most rewarding. I crave this environment where we are all collectively working towards a greater goal than ourselves.
- Online camaraderie - to echo off of Ben Feinstein's closing point, it was nice that only one person could speak at a time. This made debates much more civil since we all had to listen until the one presenting an idea had finished. I don't miss the usual in-person interruptions the come from individuals with big voices that have little direction. I had one statesman in particular, Amar Siddiqui, who was shy and quiet at first, but I felt he was able to better articulate his thoughts since statesman were more directly engaged.
- Having the ability to see most if not all aspects of Boys State at a push of a button - going to the senate/house rooms, city, general assembly. You could be everywhere with ease.