

CASE STUDY

A Winning Campaign: Arkansas Boys State Adds Merit To Its Media Relations Strategy



Arkansas Boys State

Little Rock, Arkansas

Institution

Arkansas Boys State

Location

Little Rock, Arkansas

Established

1940

Merit Partner Since

2022



Discover why hundreds of institutions rely on Merit

800-552-2194

hello@meritpages.com

www.meritpages.com



A Winning Campaign: Arkansas Boys State Adds Merit To Its Media Relations Strategy

Welcome to Arkansas Boys State, a week-long immersive civics education program for junior boys in High School. Accepted applicants experience a mock government where they are assigned a political party, city, and county and, over the course of the week, run for office, draft and pass legislation, solve municipal challenges, and engage constituents.

Kaleb Turner, the Media Relations Coordinator of the program, is responsible for sharing updates during the program with media, parents, the boys and high schools. What he struggled with in years past was getting stories

out to these audiences on time in an effort to expand the program's sphere of influence, bolster recruitment and engage local community members.

During the program, multiple events are happening daily, providing Kaleb with a pool of content to share but very little time to execute. What often limited his ability to share the program's success was having to duplicate his work for each media outlet he wanted to publish to.

What's more, the program is entirely operated by a group of volunteers. While this makes the program unique, it is also difficult to get the program's board to approve budgets for different teams and departments.

A group of people, mostly men, are seen from behind, wearing bright orange t-shirts. They are standing on a green lawn. In the background, there is a tall flagpole with an American flag, and several large, leafy trees. The scene is outdoors, possibly at a school or university event. The overall lighting is somewhat dim, suggesting it might be late afternoon or early morning.

A Vote Of Approval

A Vote Of Approval

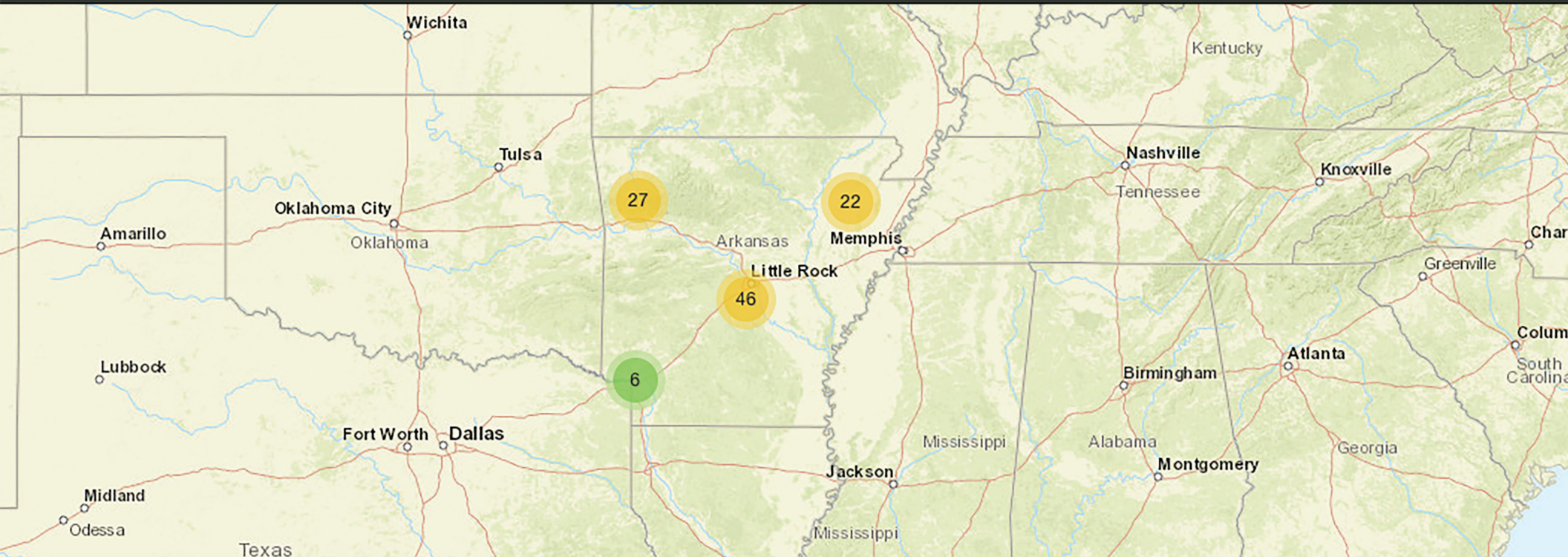
Kaleb was introduced to Merit as a possible solution to his struggle. With the help of Merit's team, he was able to get approval from the board to try Merit for the 2022 season.

Kaleb was on-boarded and trained not only on how to use Merit but also given strategic recommendations for stories to publish and how to get the most stories out with the limited time he had each day to publish.

With Merit, Kaleb was able to eliminate duplicate work. He could write and publish one story that was automatically shared with all of the audiences he wanted to reach: local media, government reps, high schools, parents and

the attending boys. Each participant also received a personalized version of the stories he published that they were able to share across their networks and social media. Over the course of the 1 week period the program ran, Kaleb published 8 merit achievements which generated 1,234 personalized member stories.

Kaleb also was able to use Merit's media monitoring tool to stay up to date on the successes graduated students achieve in their academic careers after completing the program. This was something that Arkansas Boys State never had the ability to do at such a large scale with classes of 425-700 students each year.



YOUR RECENT STORIES

Local students complete Arkansas Boys State 2022

June 06, 2022 by Kaleb Turner

More than 400 of the state's brightest young men attended Arkansas Boys State, an immersive leadership and civic engagement experience sponsored by the American Legion. This summer's 81st annual session ran May 29 through June 3 at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway. These students join a global network of program alumni spanning success in public service, business, education, healthcare and more. During their week at Arkansas Boys State,

TASKS

Notifications	0
Merit A.I. discoveries	10
Mentions to review	248

[New Achievement](#)[Member Import](#)

<input type="checkbox"/>	News Source	Story			Date
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Mountaineer Echo Online	Brodsky appointed to AR Boys State leadership - Mountaineer Echo LITTLE ROCK - Arkansas Boys State has named Andrew Brodsky as Director of Staff for the program...		3	Sep 21
<input type="checkbox"/>	Log Cabin Democrat	Brodsky appointed to Arkansas Boys State leadership News thecabin.net Arkansas Boys State has named Andrew Brodsky as Director of Staff for the program...		2	Sep 21
<input type="checkbox"/>	Webringnet.net	Brodsky appointed to Arkansas Boys State Leader - webringnet Arkansas Boys State has appointed Andrew Brodsky as Director of Personnel for the...		4	Sep 20
<input type="checkbox"/>	Magnoliabannernews.com	Brodsky appointed to Arkansas Boys State Leader - webringnet Arkansas Boys State has appointed Andrew Brodsky as Director of Personnel for the...		1	Sep 20
<input type="checkbox"/>	Magnoliabannernews.com	Brodsky appointed to Arkansas Boys State Leadership Arkansas Boys State has appointed Andrew Brodsky as Director of Personnel for the...		0	Sep 20
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arkansastechnews.com	ATU Alumnus Named Obama Foundation Scholar ...for this. It's an accumulation of everything I've done from Arkansas Boys State to Arkansas Governor's School to all the things I've done...		0	Sep 19
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arkansas Online	School news: SAU Tech, Graceland, James Madison, UALR ...state office on June 2 as part of the 81st annual session of Arkansas Boys State, where students nuild a mock government structure including...		0	Jul 14

A person is walking away from the camera on a sidewalk. They are wearing a blue t-shirt and blue jeans. They have a large, light-colored backpack on their back and a dark blue duffel bag with orange accents hanging from their left shoulder. They are also carrying a large, patterned blanket or bag over their right shoulder. The background shows a residential street with trees, a brick building, and other people walking. The text "A Winning Campaign" is overlaid in the center of the image.

A Winning Campaign

A Winning Campaign

The very first story Kaleb published resulted in what he excitedly referred to as “impressive numbers:” **4,463 total page views** and **3.3K total actions across social media**, Merit Page updates, and emails (**2.9K social media actions from Facebook alone**).

This story also resulted in three published stories from students’ local media that were a direct copy of the press release that Merit generated.

As Kaleb continued to use Merit throughout the program to share the boys’ successes, Merit made it possible to spread the news and engage each student’s community.

When asked to reflect on his use of Merit during the program, Kaleb shared, “Across the board, it was really successful. It’s hard for me to talk about the program being successful without talking about Merit because it was a big part of it.”

The Arkansas Boys State program saw Facebook page likes increase by **324 in 28 days**. When compared to other programs that average 10-30 page likes, it gave Arkansas Boys State a huge lift in traffic.

Their announced state election results story was the 2nd highest piece of content on their Facebook in terms of performance. Kaleb remarked that, “the page views are insane, and the social actions is an incredible number.”

4,463

Total Page Views

3,300

Social Actions

2,900

Facebook Shares



Noah Likens

[Arkansas Boys State](#), Class of 2022

From Alma

Likens of Alma completes Arkansas Boys State

June 6, 2022

Noah Likens of Alma from Alma High School completed Arkansas Boys State

When asked about his overall media strategy in the past, Kaleb shared that, “my audience is always the parents and the educators.” With Merit, he was able to access this group well beyond what he was capable of reaching in the past. “I loved adding the high schools in on the emails because counselors would get it and forward it on and then the school would post about it. I would get emails saying thank you for including us and do you have a photo of our particular student that you could provide.”

The achievements Kaleb published were often shared directly on the mentioned student’s high school's social media accounts, and this generated a big push for recruitment to the program.



2023 Election Strategy




2023 Election Strategy

Arkansas Boys State now has a tool that allows them to efficiently share the remarkable stories of their students with the audiences that matter most to the program and the attendees. Perhaps more importantly Merit impressed the board. A member of the board messaged Kaleb saying, “looks like we're getting some good news out for our boys state participants...glad we are doing this for the boys.” The major success of Merit will help Kaleb acquire more resources and budget for his department.

Kaleb shared that his plan for the 2023 program is to;

“

“use Merit more during the week. “Mid-week there's a ton more managing and event production I have to handle. There are achievements that we talked about publishing that we just didn't get to but now that we have a handle on it and know the tool well we know we can plan ahead better to publish more next year.”



Results



Stories Published

8

Merit Achievements

1,234

Personalized Member Stories



Audiences Reached

Parents	882
Media	101
Press Releases	342
Outlets Across	101
Postal Codes	800
High Schools	173
Government Reps	147



Top Referring Sites

Facebook	55.2%
Meritpages.com	33.8%
Direct	6.6%



Email Performance¹

Member Emails Sent	1,234
Open Rate	65%
Click-Through Rate	37%
Parent Emails Sent	2,390
Open Rate	79%
Click-Through Rate ²	65%



Engagement and Impressions

Social Actions ³	17.6k
Estimated impressions across Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn	3.62 Million
Government Comments ⁴	117
Page Views ⁵	30,087

¹ Emails are sent to delegates, parents, and schools ² Benchmark click-to-open rate in the education sector is around 12%. With Merit, Arkansas Boys State had a clickto-open rate over 3 times the industry average. ³ Social media shares, reactions, comments, and clicks that referenced your achievements ⁴ Comments and congratulatory messages sent by government officials members ⁵ Number of times someone read a Merit story on arboysstate.org



©Merit Pages. All Rights Reserved.