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Boys State of Kansas Announces Awards, Highlights From 2026 Session

August 19, 2026 — High school students from across the State of Kansas participated in the 2026 session of the [American Legion Boys State of Kansas](#), held May 31 through June 6 at Kansas State University in Manhattan. This was the program's 34th consecutive session at KSU and 88th overall.

The objective of the ALBSK is to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to community, state and nation. Kansas Boys State provides a relevant, interactive, problem-solving experience in leadership and teamwork that develops self-identity, promotes mutual respect and instills civic responsibility. Boys State is a "learning by doing" political exercise that simulates elections, political parties and government at the state, county and local levels, providing opportunities to lead under pressure, showcasing character and working effectively within a team. It's also an opportunity to gain pride and respect for government and the price paid by members of the military to preserve democracy.

Kansas Boys State has announced the following awards and honors from the week (all cities and high schools in Kansas unless noted; for KBS delegates, the year indicated is their year in school for the 2026-27 academic year):

- **Advisor of the Year** — Ian Ediger, McPherson, served as bank advisor. Ediger was a 2014 KBS delegate and 2015 graduate of McPherson High School. Ediger is an information technology associate for Midway Motors in McPherson.
- **Experienced Counselor of the Year** (three or more years on staff) — Drew Bellamy, Olathe, served as county counselor. Bellamy, a 2019 KBS delegate and 2020 graduate of Olathe North High School, earned a bachelor's degree from Kansas State University in 2024. He will be attending Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., seeking a master's degree in education policy after spending the past two years as an English teacher at Junction City High School.
- **New Counselor of the Year** (one or two years on staff) — Andrew Porter, Andover, served as an assistant county counselor. Porter, a 2024 KBS delegate and a 2025 graduate of Wichita Collegiate School, is a sophomore at Southwestern College in Winfield majoring in chemistry and health science.

Just prior to the beginning of the 2026 session, a new Kansas Boys State city was incorporated, naming the city in honor of Tom Wierman. Wierman, a resident of Wichita, was a Kansas Boys State delegate in 1976 from Ransom High School (now Western Plains High School) before graduating there in 1977. He has served KBS in a variety of volunteer positions since 1977, beginning in various counselor roles before ascending to serve in numerous adviser roles from 1986 through 1995. While family and work commitments kept Wierman away from the program on a full-time basis for 15 years, he returned as an adviser in 2010. He served as KBS executive director from 2020-2024 and has held the role of recruiting director the past two years.

Travis Ross, Rush Center, senior at Otis-Bison High School in Otis, was named the American Legion Department of Kansas winner of the Samsung American Legion Scholarship. As the State of Kansas

winner, Ross receives a \$1,250 scholarship, and his application moves on to the national level where he could receive a \$5,000 award as a national runner-up or a \$10,000 award as a national scholar. The national awards are expected to be announced in October.

Oliver Zimmerman, Wichita, senior at Wichita Northwest High School, was named winner of the \$1,000 American Legion Boys State of Kansas Executive Director Scholarship. The winner of the scholarship, as selected by the KBS executive director, is presented to a Kansas Boys State delegate who demonstrated exceptional understanding of the KBS principles. The scholarship is designed to recognize individuals who are committed to applying the knowledge and leadership skills gained from Boys State in their schools and communities.

Nolyn Harker, Olathe, senior at Heritage Christian Academy, who served on the KBS Supreme Court as chief justice, received the William “Bill” F. Stahl Outstanding Justice Award, given to the outstanding member of the Boys State of Kansas Supreme Court as voted on by peers who served roles on the courts throughout Kansas Boys State. The award is presented in recognition of outstanding commitment to justice under the law and dedicated service to the Boys State of Kansas. Stahl, of Junction City, passed away in September 2015 and was a longtime supporter of the ALBSK.

Adrien Caldwell, Overland Park, senior at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, was named the Outstanding Senator, while Yash Parsai, Shawnee, senior at Olathe Northwest High School, was named the Outstanding State Representative.

Recognized as leaders of the KBS Senate and House of Representatives:

- President of the Senate — Aidan Roseberry, Sedgwick, senior at Sedgwick High School
- Speaker of the House — Yash Parsai, Shawnee, senior at Olathe Northwest High School
- Senate Majority Leader — Adrien Caldwell, Overland Park, senior at St. Thomas Aquinas High School
- House Majority Leader — Ryan Iannetto, Olathe, senior at Olathe Northwest High School
- Senate Minority Leader — Maddux Haar, Cheney, junior at Cheney High School
- House Minority Leader — Anthony Orduna, Topeka, senior at Shawnee Heights High School

Recognized as members of the Supreme Court:

- Nolyn Harker, Olathe, senior at Heritage Christian Academy (served as Chief Justice)
- Jace Daugherty, Andover, senior at Andover High School
- Oliver Zimmerman, Wichita, senior at Wichita Northwest High School

Recognized as the Outstanding Citizen of their Kansas Boys State city:

- Ben Brown, Wichita, senior at Wichita Northwest High School (City of Klassen, Eisenhower County)
- Veer Dhillon, Olathe, senior at Olathe Northwest High School (City of Wierman, Powell County)
- Raj Gugnani, Fort Scott, senior at Fort Scott High School (City of Schrag, Kennedy County)
- Liam Hintz, Leavenworth, senior at Leavenworth High School (City of Lindholm, Kennedy County)
- Beau Kalkman, Olathe, senior at DeSoto High School (City of Johnson, Eisenhower County)
- Carter Parise, Derby, junior at Derby High School (City of Chastain, Dole County)
- Wesley Workman, Gardner, junior at Gardner-Edgerton High School (City of Shelton, Powell County)

- Alexis Zamora Reyes, Kansas City, senior at Washington High School (City of Finley, Dole County)

The following were previously announced during the 2026 Kansas Boys State session.

- Elected to state offices (*Originally announced on June 2*):
 - Governor — Bo Barkley, McPherson, senior at McPherson High School
 - Lieutenant Governor — Beckett Romain, Wichita, junior at Kapaun Mt. Carmel Catholic High School
 - Secretary of State — Jackson Roberts, Spring Hill, senior at Spring Hill High School
 - Attorney General — Raj Gugnani, Fort Scott, senior at Fort Scott High School
 - State Treasurer — Baron Rodvold, Wichita, senior at Derby High School High School
- Elected to represent Kansas Boys State as senators at Boys Nation, July 17-25 at Marymount University in Arlington, Va. (*Originally announced on June 5*):
 - Burkle Jackson, Concordia, senior at Concordia High School
 - Alexis Zamora Reyes, Kansas City, senior at Washington High School
- Elected as mayors of their Kansas Boys State city (*Originally announced on June 1*):
 - Alden Deady, Overland Park, senior at Blue Valley West High School
 - Joey Hurla, Russell, senior at Russell High School
 - Beau Kalkman, Olathe, senior at DeSoto High School
 - Talon Pyle, Ellis, junior at Ellis High School
 - Travis Ross, Rush Center, senior at Otis-Bison High School
 - Nico Schober, Wichita, senior at Central Christian Academy
 - Nikon Sublett, Hutchinson, senior at Hutchinson High School
 - Noah Washington, Topeka, junior at Washburn Rural High School

The 89th session of the [American Legion Boys State of Kansas](https://ksbstate.org) is scheduled to be held the week of Sunday, June 6, through Saturday, June 12, 2027, again at Kansas State University (for the 35th consecutive year). For information on becoming a delegate (applications are now open for high school sophomores and juniors during the 2026-27 academic year), nominating a delegate or sponsoring a delegate, visit <https://ksbstate.org>.

The following is a list of this year's ALBSK delegates (listed by zip code/city of residence [all cities and high schools in Kansas unless noted]). Those delegates denoted with a star (*) were elected by their Kansas Boys State city as its outstanding citizen:

(Name, year in school for the upcoming 2026-27 academic year, high school; Kansas Boys State position)

66002 — Atchison

- Hank Pohl, junior, Pleasant Ridge High School, Easton; Department of Health and Safety

66018 — DeSoto

- Hayden Graves, senior, DeSoto High School; Kennedy County Representative

66020 — Easton

- Alex Burris, junior, Pleasant Ridge High School; Powell County Representative

66025 — Eudora

- Rowan Neighbors, senior, DeSoto High School; City of Chastain Councilman

66027 / 66048 — Fort Leavenworth / Leavenworth

- Will Cotter, junior, Orono High School, Long Lake, Minn.; Department of Education, Culture and Tourism
- * Liam Hintz, senior, Leavenworth High School; Kennedy County Representative
- Logan Kincaid, senior, Leavenworth High School; Department of Health and Safety
- Joshua Matcheck, senior, Leavenworth High School; Dole County Representative and Nationalist Party Chair

66030 — Gardner

- Cash Diehl, senior, Gardner-Edgerton High School; Dole County Representative
- * Wesley Workman, junior, Gardner-Edgerton High School; City of Shelton Councilman

66047 / 66049 — Lawrence

- Aidric Bernd, senior, Bishop Seabury Academy; Eisenhower County District Court Official
- Ethan Smith, senior, Bishop Seabury Academy; Dole County Commissioner
- Tyler Urban, senior, Lawrence High School; Eisenhower County Representative

66056 — Mound City

- Tanner Holt, senior, Jayhawk-Linn High School; City of Schrag Councilman

66061 / 66062 — Olathe

- Eli Bretz, senior, Olathe South High School; Eisenhower County Representative
- Levi Der, senior, Vista Heights Academy (home school), Eisenhower County Commissioner
- * Veer Dhillon, senior, Olathe Northwest High School; Department of Commerce and Transportation
- Nolyn Harker, senior, Heritage Christian Academy; Kansas Boys State Supreme Court Chief Justice
- Carter Hayden, senior, The Barstow School, Kansas City, Mo.; Dole County Commissioner
- Ryan Iannetto, senior, Olathe Northwest High School; Kennedy County Representative and House Majority Leader
- * Beau Kalkman, senior, DeSoto High School; City of Johnson Mayor
- Francesco Keuwo, senior, Olathe North High School; Kennedy County Commissioner
- Miles Knapp, junior, Olathe South High School; Department of Natural Resources and Public Utilities
- Noah Taylor, senior, Olathe Northwest High School; Powell County Representative

66067 — Ottawa

- Blake Lyman, senior, Wellsville High School; City of Chastain Councilman

66075 — Pleasanton

- Benson Meik, senior, Pleasanton High School; Department of Commerce and Transportation

66083 — Spring Hill

- Jackson Roberts, senior, Spring Hill High School; Secretary of State

66085 — Overland Park

- Chase Baldwin, senior, Blue Valley West High School; Department of Education, Culture and Tourism
- Alden Deady, senior, Blue Valley West High School; City of Lindholm Mayor

66102 / 66103 / 66104 / 66106 / 66109 / 66111 — Kansas City

- Lucas Curry, junior, Maranatha Christian Academy, Shawnee; City of Shelton Councilman
- Thomas Olson, senior, Piper High School; Eisenhower County Representative
- Ivan Pillado, senior, Washington High School; Kansas Boys State Media
- Layne Taylor, senior, Turner High School; Kansas Boys State Highway Patrol Officer
- Silas Uk, senior, Washington High School; Department of Health and Safety
- * Alexis Zamora Reyes, senior, Washington High School; Dole County Representative, Federalist Party Chair and Boys Nation Senator

66203 / 66218 / 66226 / 66227 — Shawnee

- Rylan Howard, senior, Mill Valley High School; Powell County Senator
- Will Marten, senior, Mill Valley High School; Kennedy County Representative
- Jack Niewohner, senior, Mill Valley High School; City of Johnson Councilman
- Braydon Owens, senior, Shawnee Mission North High School; Kansas Boys State Media
- Yash Parsai, senior, Olathe Northwest High School; Dole County Representative and Speaker of the House (Outstanding Representative)
- Brandon Varguez, senior, Mill Valley High School; Department of Health and Safety
- Ian Velazquez, junior, Shawnee Mission Northwest High School; Department of Commerce and Transportation

66206 / 66209 / 66224 — Leawood

- Van Freeman, senior, Blue Valley North High School; Kansas Boys State Media
- Jordan Head, senior, Shawnee Mission East High School; Dole County Commissioner
- Connor Miller, senior, Blue Valley North High School; Powell County Representative
- Daniel Raschke, senior, Blue Valley North High School; City of Schrag Councilman

66207 — Overland Park / Prairie Village

- Bryan Dodson, senior, Shawnee Mission South High School; Eisenhower County District Court Official
- Adam Eichenberger, junior, Shawnee Mission East High School; Kansas Boys State Highway Patrol Officer

66208 — Prairie Village

- Billy Keane, senior, Shawnee Mission East High School; Powell County Representative

66213 / 66221 / 66223 — Overland Park

- Adrien Caldwell, senior, St. Thomas Aquinas High School; Powell County Senator and Senate Majority Leader (named Outstanding Senator)
- Alexander Caldwell, senior, St. Thomas Aquinas High School; Department of Natural Resources and Public Utilities
- James Callaway, junior, Blue Valley High School; Eisenhower County District Court Official
- James Darr, junior, Blue Valley Northwest High School; Department of Natural Resources and Public Utilities

- Grayden Ferneau, senior, Blue Valley Northwest High School; Department of Education, Culture and Tourism
- Nathan Hansen, senior, Blue Valley West High School; City of Johnson Councilman

66220 / 66227 — Lenexa

- Zach Boschert, junior, Olathe North High School; Department of Education, Culture and Tourism
- Jack Dahlstrand, junior, St. James Academy; Kansas Boys State Highway Patrol Officer
- Merle Dunn, senior, DeSoto High School; Powell County Commissioner
- Leyton Strawder, senior, Olathe Northwest High School; Department of Education, Culture and Tourism
- Blake Wray, senior, Olathe Northwest High School; Department of Commerce and Transportation
- Keaden Yim, senior, Olathe Northwest High School; City of Klassen Councilman

66407 — Berryton

- Caden Kuckelman, senior, Topeka Hayden High School; Powell County Commissioner

66441 — Junction City

- Arthur Seemann, junior, Junction City High School; Dole County Representative
- Matt Zlotow, senior, Chapman High School; Kansas Boys State Highway Patrol Officer

66502 / 66503 — Manhattan

- Gavin Howells, senior, Manhattan High School; Powell County Representative
- Leopold Kane, junior, Manhattan High School; Kennedy County Commissioner
- Mikiyas Nouh, senior, Manhattan High School; Dole County District Court Official
- Jacob Roeser, senior, Junction City High School; Eisenhower County Representative
- Daniel Wei, senior, Manhattan High School; Dole County District Court Official

66536 — Saint Marys

- Ryan Whitehead, senior, Saint Marys Academy; Department of Commerce and Transportation

66605 / 66606 / 66609 / 66611 / 66614 — Topeka

- Cedric Geotz, senior, Washburn Rural High School; Kansas Boys State Media
- A.J. Orduna, senior, Shawnee Heights High School; Powell County Representative and House Minority Leader
- Saul Ortiz, junior, Shawnee Heights High School; City of Lindholm Councilman
- Matthias Ostrowski, senior, St. Michael's Hedge School (home school); Eisenhower County Commissioner
- Sam Stanton, senior, Topeka High School; City of Finley Councilman
- Noah Washington, junior, Washburn Rural High School; City of Chastain Mayor

66701 — Fort Scott

- * Raj Gugnani, senior, Fort Scott High School; Attorney General

66712 — Arma

- Andre Fleury, senior, Northeast High School; Department of Natural Resources and Public Utilities

66749 — Iola

- Alston Nelson, senior, Iola High School; Powell County District Court Official
- Rohan Springer, senior, Iola High School; Kennedy County District Court Official

66783 — Yates Center

- Cooper O'Brien, senior, Yates Center High School; City of Klassen Councilman
- Dalton Swinson, senior, Yates Center High School; City of Finley Councilman

66861 — Marion

- Zayden Janzen, senior, Marion High School; Kansas Boys State Media
- Jordy Raymer, senior, Marion High School; Powell County Representative

66901 — Concordia

- Burkle Jackson, senior, Concordia High School; Powell County District Court Official and Boys Nation Senator
- Brody Knox, junior, Concordia High School; Kansas Boys State Highway Patrol Officer
- Izaak Robbins, senior, Insight School of Kansas, Spring Hill; Kansas Boys State Media

66949 — Jewell

- Blake Fultz, senior, Rock Hills High School, Mankato; Kansas Boys State Media

66956 — Mankato

- Colin Wirth, junior, Rock Hills High School; Department of Education, Culture and Tourism

67002 — Andover

- Jace Daugherty, senior, Andover High School; Supreme Court Justice
- Colin Friend, senior, Andover High School; City of Lindholm Councilman
- Kole Trear, junior, Andover Central High School; Kansas Boys State Media

67005 — Parkerfield

- Zachary Pieper, senior, Arkansas City High School; Kennedy County Commissioner

67025 — Cheney

- Maddux Haar, junior, Cheney High School; Eisenhower County Senator and Senate Minority Leader
- Stratton Young, senior, Cheney High School; City of Chastain Councilman

67031 — Conway Springs

- Jacob Howard, junior, Conway Springs High School; Eisenhower County Representative
- Joe Howard, senior, Conway Springs High School; Dole County Commissioner

67037 — Derby

- Marcus Davy, junior, Derby High School; Department of Health and Safety
- Jackson Farmer, junior, Derby High School; City of Lindholm Councilman
- Will Jacobucci, junior, Derby High School; City of Johnson Councilman
- * Carter Parise, junior, Derby High School; Department of Commerce and Transportation

- Bailey Smith, senior, Kapaun Mt. Carmel High School, Wichita; Eisenhower County Commissioner

67042 — El Dorado

- Lane Eck, senior, El Dorado High School; Dole County Representative

67052 — Goddard

- Benjamin Patterson, senior, Our Lady of Perpetual Help (home school); City of Lindholm Councilman

67110 — Mulvane

- Colton Bauerle, junior, Mulvane High School; Kansas Boys State Media

67114 — Newton

- Dayen Decker, junior, Newton High School; Department of Health and Safety

67135 — Sedgwick

- Aidan Roseberry, senior, Sedgwick High School; Dole County Senator and President of the Senate

67137 — Severy

- Keaton Tyler, junior, West Elk High School; City of Lindholm Councilman

67144 — Towanda

- River Elliott, senior, Circle High School; Kennedy County Commissioner

67147 — Valley Center

- Isaac Anderson, senior, Valley Center High School; Powell County Representative
- Noah Davis, senior, Life Prep Academy, Wichita; Kansas Boys State Highway Patrol Officer
- Nathan Webb, senior, Valley Center High School; Kennedy County Commissioner

67156 — Winfield

- Asher Merritt, senior, Winfield High School; Powell County Commissioner
- Alex Ray, senior, Winfield High School; Kennedy County Representative

67203 / 67206 / 67210 / 67212 / 67230 / 67232 / 67235 — Wichita

- Jarrett Bootsma, senior, Wichita Northwest High School; Powell County Commissioner
- * Ben Brown, senior, Wichita Northwest High School; Eisenhower County Senator
- Charles Howey, senior, Bishop Carroll High School; City of Wierman Councilman
- John Hupp, senior, Andover High School; Department of Natural Resources and Public Utilities
- Gideon Peine, Eisenhower High School, Goddard; Department of Education, Culture and Tourism
- Baron Rodvold, senior, Derby High School; State Treasurer
- Beckett Romain, junior, Kapaun Mt. Carmel High School; Lieutenant Governor
- Niko Schober, senior, Central Christian School, Hutchinson; City of Finley Mayor
- Colby Wise, senior, Bishop Carroll High School; City of Schrag Councilman
- Oliver Zimmerman, senior, Wichita Northwest High School; Supreme Court Justice and American Legion Boys State of Kansas Executive Director Scholarship winner

67220 — Bel Aire

- Phillip Bowers, senior, Wichita Northwest High School; Kennedy County Senator
- Orlando Msaie, senior, Kapaun Mt. Carmel High School; Powell County Commissioner
- Joseph Relph, senior, Spirit Academy (home school); Eisenhower County Commissioner

67301 — Independence

- Asher Arnold, senior, Neodesha High School; Dole County Commissioner

67345 — Elk Falls

- Braxton Wilson, junior, West Elk High School, Howard; City of Johnson Councilman
- Cooper Wilson, junior, West Elk High School, Howard; Cole County Commissioner

67346 — Grenola

- Daryl Carl Metcalf, senior, West Elk High School, Howard; Kansas Boys State Highway Patrol Officer

67349 — Howard

- Landon Chism, junior, Fredonia High School; Department of Commerce and Transportation
- Noah Estrada, senior, West Elk High School; City of Wierman Councilman

67353 — Moline

- Wyatt Lee, junior, West Elk High School, Howard; City of Schrag Councilman
- Welch Murphy, junior, West Elk High School, Howard; Dole County Representative
- Miles Stewart, junior, West Elk High School, Howard; City of Shelton Councilman

67449 — Herington

- Finn Carver, senior, Herington High School; Department of Natural Resources and Public Utilities
- Leland Urban, senior, Herington High School; Department of Health and Safety

67460 — McPherson

- Bo Barkley, senior, McPherson High School; Governor

67483 — Tampa

- Samuel Rziha, senior, Marion High School; Kennedy County Representative

67501 / 67502 — Hutchinson

- Kiron Bradley, senior, Buhler High School; Powell County Commissioner
- Shelby Harriman, senior, Buhler High School; Kennedy County Commissioner
- Aiden Koontz, senior, Hutchinson High School; City of Wierman Councilman
- Gibson Malashchuk, senior, Hutchinson High School; City of Schrag Councilman
- Brendan Ronan, senior, Buhler High School; Dole County Representative
- Nikon Sublett, senior, Hutchinson High School; City of Klassen Mayor
- Jayden Tuchardt, senior, Hutchinson High School; Department of Commerce and Transportation

67522 — Buhler

- Quincy Jensen, senior, Buhler High School; Eisenhower County Representative

67526 — Ellinwood

- Grey Ringwald, senior, Ellinwood High School; Kansas Boys State Highway Patrol Officer

67530 — Great Bend

- Tyler Scheuerman, junior, Great Bend High School; City of Finley Councilman

67561 — Nickerson

- Andy Huggard, senior, Nickerson High School; Department of Health and Safety

67575 — Rush Center

- Travis Ross, senior, Otis-Bison High School, Otis; City of Shelton Mayor and Department of Kansas Samsung American Legion Scholarship winner

67601 — Hays

- Ethan Branaman, senior, Hays High School; Eisenhower County District Court Official
- Sam Krannawitter, senior, Thomas More Prep – Marion High School; Powell County Commissioner
- Camden Luck, senior, Hays High School; Department of Natural Resources and Public Utilities
- Cyler Luck, senior, Hays High School; Department of Health and Safety

67637 — Ellis

- Talon Pyle, junior, Ellis High School; City of Wierman Mayor

67663 — Plainville

- Reid Stamper, junior, Plainville High School; Department of Natural Resources and Public Utilities

67665 — Russell

- Joey Hurla, senior, Russell High School; City of Schrag Mayor

67870 — Satanta

- Deacon Hockett, junior, Satanta High School; City of Klassen Councilman

67951 — Hugoton

- Raymond Lamatsch, junior, Hugoton High School; Eisenhower County Representative

— #KSBoysState —

The American Legion Boys State of Kansas is an interactive simulation that teaches high school seniors-to-be the value of democracy and civic duty. Participants form mock governments and campaign for positions at the city, county and state levels. After the elections, participants find out firsthand the difficult decisions made daily by those in government through a series of challenging simulations. Delegates, nominated to attend by their high school counselors and other influential people in their lives, are sponsored by American Legion posts and various civic organizations from across the state. All delegates demonstrate outstanding leadership qualities in student government, athletics and/or other activities.

The Boys State program was founded by Legionnaires Hayes Kennedy and Harold Card in Illinois in 1935, and was first held in Kansas two years later in Wichita. The Kansas program moved to the University of Kansas in Lawrence in 1963 and remained there until 1991. The following year, it moved to its current location at Kansas State University in Manhattan. For more information about the American Legion Boys State of Kansas, visit ksbstate.org.