

Speaking for public schools



SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH
January 2010

School Board Recognition Month Kit

A resource kit to help recognize
the contributions to public education
by the members of Ohio boards of education

Ohio School Boards Association
8050 North High Street, Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481
(614) 540-4000 ✱ fax (614) 540-4100



January is School Board Recognition Month

As citizens who serve children and represent their communities, individual school board members face complex and demanding challenges. Yet, few people fully understand the scope and far-reaching implications of board members' responsibilities. All Ohioans should recognize the vital contributions of these men and women and focus attention on the crucial role these elected public officials play in the education of our children. They make a difference for students.

Their job is to establish a vision for the education program, design a structure to achieve that vision, assure schools are accountable to the community and strongly advocate continuous improvement in student learning. That job entails an endless string of meetings and school functions to attend; reams of reports, agendas, proposals and other information to read and study; and a host of difficult decisions to make.

School board members come from all walks of life. They are farmers, secretaries, doctors, lawyers, homemakers, teachers, architects, truck drivers, professors, business owners and real estate agents, to name just a few.

While they wear many hats in the workday world, school board members put on a collective hat when they get down to the business of leading their school districts. Board members must pull together as a team toward a common goal – helping students achieve. While they may individually disagree on certain issues, their role as a board is to consistently strive toward that goal.

Board members contribute hundreds and hundreds of hours each year leading their districts. Whether crafting policies, hiring top-notch administrators, listening to staff and student concerns, or recognizing outstanding programs, board members always keep their eyes on the prize of student achievement.

The time spent in board meetings represents just a small fraction of the hours school board members devote to leading their districts. They also work hard at seminars and training sessions to keep abreast of the latest trends in educational leadership, are deeply involved in community activities, and spend many hours in the schools and at extracurricular events.

Their love of learning, and concern and caring for students, staff and the community, drive board members' desire to lead so students can achieve.

To participate in this program, first create a committee to plan and organize appreciation activities. The committee should, in turn, contact school personnel, students and community leaders to schedule or plan events and activities. Some activities may require a serious

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approach, while others can be more lighthearted and entertaining.

One board member, when asked, "What recognition activities mean the most to you?" said, "Anything that comes from the kids." Others said they also appreciate sincere comments from the community and school staff. This kit offers suggestions about what students, parents and the community can do to recognize school board members. Feel free to use and adapt anything in the kit.

Be sure to recognize them in public forums and invite news reporters and editors to attend.

Be creative – actions speak louder than words!

OSBA created a powerful video to promote public schools, "Ohio Public Schools Speak." It was created to be used by school leaders at community events. The video will provide a great kick-off to any board recognition event. The School Board Recognition Month theme, artwork and poster come from the video. The four individuals on the poster are veteran school board members from across the state.

And remember, any event in which there will be a quorum of school board members present is considered an open meeting under Ohio's Sunshine Law.

Please send any photos and information from your celebrations to OSBA's Gary Motz at gmotz@ohioschoolboards.org or 8050 N. High St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43235. Information and photos also can be submitted online at <http://osba-ohio.org/forms/sbrm.php>. The deadline is Feb. 8. OSBA will feature a variety of photos and notes from celebrations around the state in the *Journal* magazine and on its Web site, www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm.

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How to use this School Board Recognition Month Kit

This **School Board Recognition Month Kit** is designed to give you ideas and help you recognize the valuable contributions of your board of education members. This Web-based resource can be used in two ways: either download the entire resource kit and print it out, or download those files you wish to customize yourself.

The kit contains:

School Board Recognition Month tips

These are ideas for administrators, staff, students, parents, community groups, service clubs and businesses. Adapt the activities to your needs.

Sample district activities

Districts have expanded upon ideas in this kit to recognize their school board members. Read what some districts and newspapers have done.

Suggested editorial: Say “thanks!” to our school board members

Personalize and customize this suggested editorial. Then print it on district letterhead and submit it to your community newspaper.

School Board Recognition Month sample proclamation

If you ask your township, village, city or county’s elected officials to proclaim January School Board Recognition Month in your community, here is sample language for them to use.

Sample news release

Send this news release (personalized and retyped on district letterhead) to your community newspapers. If your county has only one newspaper, why not work with all the school districts in the county to submit one news release with all board of education members included?

Sample guest editorial

If your community newspaper accepts guest editorials or publishes opinion pieces, use this language to get started.

Sample newsletter article

Here is your January newsletter cover story. It also could be used as an article in your local newspaper, a letter to the editor or the foundation for a speech.

Sample letter to community groups and service clubs

Use this letter to introduce the program to community groups.

Sample public service announcements

These radio public service announcements (PSAs) can be faxed or e-mailed to radio and TV stations, or you could record them in a pleasant voice and deliver the tapes to the stations. A personal visit and explanation can help get them on the air. If you have a student-run television production studio, create a video with images of the board in action and record the voice over the images.

New poster

OSBA mailed one, 25" by 35", four-color poster to each district. Be creative with the poster to thank your school board. You can add their names in large letters and display it at a board meeting. If you would like an electronic version to use to print additional copies or customize, contact Scott Ebright (see contact information below). Then you can put a number of posters around your school and community. Or use them as greeting cards and have staff and community members sign personal notes on them.

Art

The School Board Recognition Month art was created in FreeHand MX and saved in two formats: jpeg and Adobe Acrobat pdf. Both formats work on both Macintosh and PC. You will find a single- (black) and a four-color version at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm. Other file formats can be provided upon request.

Text version

The entire **School Board Recognition Month Kit** is available in text format at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm. Either copy the text from the pdf file or save the Web page as plain text (go to your browser's file menu and scroll down to save as).

The Trebuchet font family was used in producing these materials.

Please contact Scott Ebright at (614) 635-1900, or sebright@ohioschoolboards.org if you have questions.



School Board Recognition Month tips

Tips for school administrators

- * Host a surprise dinner banquet for board members and invite the school staff, community leaders and members of the news media. Coordinate this activity with the board members' families. Encourage staff to prepare a nice "roast" of each board member.
- * Make bookmarks featuring the school board. Include board member photos; the district name, address and phone number; board meeting dates, times and locations; the district's mission statement; and a brief "thank you" to the board for its support of student reading. Distribute these bookmarks to schools, libraries, boys' and girls' clubs, recreation centers and bookstores.
- * Arrange for a city or county official to proclaim January School Board Recognition Month. A sample proclamation is included in this kit.
- * Feature recent school board accomplishments in the January district and school newsletters, and in the staff bulletin.
- * Profile board members in the January district and school newsletters and staff bulletin. Include information on their families, careers, hobbies and volunteer activities.
- * Add a special school board recognition "thank you" to the district's Internet home page.
- * Design, order and distribute special bumper or window stickers. Include the school district colors and logo in the design. Possible slogans are:
 - Putting the "public" in public schools
 - Celebrate leadership!
 - Elected to work for our kids! Thank you school board
 - January is School Board Recognition Month!
 - Our school board is empowering students to excel
 - Our school board is great!
 - School boards lead, so students achieve!
 - School boards make a powerful difference
 - School boards share because they care!
 - School boards work!
 - School boards: Citizens leading their community's schools
 - School boards: Helping kids climb higher
 - School boards: Leading the way for education!
 - School boards: Making a difference for children
 - School boards: Serving children, representing you
 - School boards: Serving our children

School boards: Working for kids and their communities
Thank a school board member today!

Tips for staff, students and parents

- * Invite board members to a brunch cooked by staff. Encourage board members to invite spouses and other friends or relatives who support them in their roles as board members to this special brunch.
- * Display board appreciation posters, cards and banners in community businesses.
- * Arrange for a student choir to sing to the board at its monthly meeting.
- * Donate a book or set of books to the school library, dedicated to the board, and include board members' names and dates of service on a recognition label within each book.
- * Present a variety of practical appreciation tokens of gratitude. These might include lapel pins, pens, desk accessories, mugs, bumper stickers, etc.
- * Invite board members to a school assembly to entertain them with a student-produced skit demonstrating what a school board does. Give the board members a round of applause.
- * Have students write them notes of appreciation.
- * Have culinary arts, or family and consumer science students bake a cake and serve at a recognition ceremony.
- * Have students assemble a survival kit for the school board. The kit could include such things as a battery (to keep you going and going), tissues (for parents with issues), rubber bands (to stretch the budget), two cotton balls (for those never-ending phone calls), pencils and erasers (to make those little mistakes go away), antacids (for the occasional day that you are up the proverbial creek), adhesive bandages (to fix the minor district problems), sticky notes (to help you remember all those details) a fan (to keep you from overheating) and aspirin (for those headaches caused by the stress of the position).
- * Ask elementary students to draw pictures of what they think school board members do. Mail these to your school board members, post them in the room where the board meets or invite board members to your school to see the art display. This not only shows appreciation, but also usually gives board members a chuckle.
- * Invite board members to a PTA meeting and publicly thank them for their service.
- * Invite board members to a school basketball game and arrange a special ceremony to honor them at halftime.
- * Ask each board member to answer the question, "Why do you serve on the school board?" Then use the quotes in stories or make a poster out of the quote and display during a recognition ceremony.
- * Make board members the guests of honor at a school carnival or festival.

Tips for community groups, service clubs and businesses

- * Feature one or two board members each week of January in the local newspaper. Include a photo of the board member in a school setting, a short biography, and his or her philosophy about school board work and the importance of education. Suggest that the education reporter write a feature story about the person who has served the longest on the school board or a school board member who attended your local schools.
- * Ask your local newspaper to write an editorial recognizing the many volunteer hours school board members give to your community. Provide lots of information for this editorial.
- * Encourage businesses to sponsor radio and TV public service announcements (PSAs) acknowledging the work of the school board and reviewing its responsibilities.

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- * Host a fun and recreational event for board members and their families. A local motel/hotel or recreation center might donate the facilities needed for such an event. This thanks board members' families for their support and acknowledges that serving on a school board takes time away from family activities.
- * Display an appreciation banner across a major street or highway where it will be seen by lots of residents of the school district.
- * Create and place Burma Shave-style board appreciation signs along busy streets or highways entering and exiting the community. Be sure to check with local government agencies about regulations for signs along public roads.
- * Send each board member a certificate for a free cup of special coffee from a local, popular coffee shop. Accompany it with a note that says, "You deserve a break!"
- * Set up a recognition corner or area in the public library to exhibit memorabilia from past school boards.
- * Arrange for a florist to donate a single rose for each board member and put it at his or her place at a board meeting as a thank you for their service.
- * Make service clubs in the area aware that January is School Board Recognition Month, and encourage them to show public appreciation for their members who serve on school boards.



Sample districts activities

Each year, OSBA asks school districts to share their successful board recognition events. Here are a number of ideas that worked throughout Ohio:

- * **Cambridge City** student representatives to the board planned and conducted a recognition program that included a reception following a board meeting in which each board member received a fruit basket and an OSBA certificate to honor their contributions. They also were treated to a cake, and the event was covered with a story and photo in a local newspaper.
- * **Canal Winchester Local (Franklin)** Board of Education members were honored by State Rep. **Marian Harris** (D-Columbus) at a board meeting.
- * **Deer Park Community City**, which in 2008 had students portray board members as superheroes in colorful drawings, took another unique approach for 2009. Students in grades four through six were asked by their art teacher to work in teams to create shadow boxes depicting each board member in a role they have taken to help enhance our schools. They had everything from board President **Donna Farrell** in the role of teaching our students about banking and finances to Vice President **Thomas Griswold** depicted on a track with kids participating in a walk-a-thon done every year in our district. Each board member also received a slide show that she created using photos of the board members working collaboratively alongside photos of students also working as a team. The slide show was accompanied by the song "Thank You," by **Natalie Merchant**.
- * **Elyria City** invited some of its kindergartners from Elyria's full-day Kindergarten Village to recite to the board their "Positive Pledge" (Elyria kindergartners begin each day with the pledge, a message of respect and self-acceptance, and a promise to learn every day). After reciting their pledge, the children presented each board member with their very own "Positive Pledge" signed by the children in attendance and their classmates.
- * **Gahanna-Jefferson City** hosted a Board Appreciation Breakfast at Lincoln High School for its board. Members were entertained by the Lincoln High School String Quartet and the Lincoln High School Chorale. State Rep. **Nancy Garland** (D-Gahanna) attended the breakfast as a special guest.
- * Students from each of **Medina City's** five elementary schools made a poster-size thank-you card for each member. Students from those schools personally thanked a board member while presenting the cards. The district also recognized board members in its newsletter.
- * **Warren County Career Center** board members, along with other board members from across the county, gathered at a Warren County commissioners meeting to be honored for their service to the community. The commissioners issued a School Board Recognition Month

proclamation for each school district. The career center's board members also were recognized with a photo and article in the district newsletter.

✳️ **West Geauga Local (Geauga)** feted its board members at a School Board Recognition Month reception. Students presented board members handmade posters of appreciation, personal bookmarks, homemade cookies and cheers.

✳️ **Allen East Local (Allen)** board members received OSBA certificates and heard a proclamation read by Treasurer **Rhonda Zimmerly** encouraging "all citizens to publicly and privately thank the school board members from all school districts serving this community for their dedicated service to our children."

✳️ **Barberton City** Superintendent **John Hall** recognized members as "an outstanding board of education" that has a synergy, with the board being better than the individual parts, which is the goal of any team. Treasurer **Ryan Pendleton** pointed out that much of the public does not know about all the work board members do behind the scenes and the countless hours and weekends they put in. "I think the Barberton community should commend you for that," Pendleton said. "You've done it for the good of the community and the good of the children."

✳️ **Belpre City** honored board members with certificates, thanks and praise. "These people unselfishly contribute their time and talents toward the advancement of public education," Superintendent **Harry Fleming** said. "Even though we are making a special effort during January to show appreciation to our school board members, we recognize their contributions reflect a year-round commitment on their part."

✳️ **Brown Local (Carroll)** board members were presented with certificates of appreciation and letters of thanks written by fourth-grade students. "The student letters were definitely the most entertaining and enjoyable," Superintendent **Connie Griffin** said.

✳️ **Bucyrus City** Superintendent **Todd Nichols** presented certificates to board members and Bucyrus Mayor **Dan Ross** proclaimed January School Board Recognition Month in Bucyrus. "I urge everyone to thank all school board members in all of our area school districts for their hard work and dedication to our schools," Ross said.

✳️ **Cory-Rawson Local (Hancock)** board members were presented with framed certificates and embroidered Cory-Rawson jackets. Members also received a personal thank you and handshake from Superintendent **Jay Arbaugh**, and photos were taken for the district Web site, newsletter and yearbook.

✳️ **Delaware City** Willis Intermediate School Drama Club students offered dramatic presentations of poems to recognize board members.

✳️ **East Clinton Local (Clinton)** recognized the board with a letter from Superintendent **Gary R. West** on its Web site. "They are dedicated individuals who are committed to the continuing success of our schools and students," West wrote.

✳️ **Fairborn City** board members were given a certificate to honor their service and the district sent press releases to several local newspapers announcing School Board Recognition Month.

✳️ **Fayetteville-Perry Local (Brown)** board members received certificates. Superintendent **Roy Hill** also issued a press release personally thanking the board for its dedicated service.

✳️ **Franklin City** Superintendent **Douglas Lantz** presented plaques to each board member to express appreciation and recognition of their service to the community.

✳️ **Fremont City** staff and students wrote thank-you cards, which were read to board members during a board meeting. Members also received framed portraits of themselves drawn by sixth-graders. Superintendent Dr. **Traci McCaudy** further recognized the board in a letter to the

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community posted on the district's Web site, "I commend our board members for their collaborative efforts in order to make Fremont City Schools an exemplary school district for our children."

* **Georgetown EV** board members received certificates and personal thanks from Superintendent **Tony Dunn**. "I am humbled to work with them," Dunn said. "They are the best board I have ever worked with."

* **Harrison Hills City** district showed its appreciation by presenting each member with a certificate and a combination stadium blanket/carry-all. "We realized how difficult your job can be," Superintendent **Jim Drexler** told the board. "We appreciate all that you do."

* **Highland Local (Medina)** Superintendent **Catherine Aukerman** presented certificates to the board saying, "All the people on this board go above and beyond. It is my pleasure just to say 'thank you.'" Aukerman also wrote a letter to the editor personally recognizing each board member.

* **Indian Valley Local (Tuscarawas)** Superintendent **Randall Cadle** gave members certificates and a small token of gratitude.

* **Licking Valley Local (Licking)** board members were recognized with certificates and an editorial in a local newspaper.

* **North Central Local (Wayne)** board members received recognition at a board meeting, in the local paper and in the staff newsletter. In the newspaper recognition, Superintendent **Larry Acker** wrote, "... I find often times we just need some old-fashioned 'common sense' advice. Their ears are open, their minds are clear and their wisdom from lessons learned in the game of life is invaluable to each of us."

* **Put-in-Bay Local (Ottawa)** board members received certificates, along with thank you cards from faculty and students, and also displayed the OSBA poster, a picture of board members and all the cards at the school entrance. The local newspaper ran an article thanking board members and listing the many positive changes they have brought about in the district.

* **Southern Local (Columbiana)** board received plaques and personal thanks from Superintendent **James Herring**.

* **Springfield Local (Lucas)** Superintendent **Kathryn Hott** and student representative to the board **Dylan Moore** presented certificates. The presentation was featured in a photo in a local newspaper. The board was also honored on the district's Web site.

* **Toronto City** honored board members with certificates and dinner.

* **Wellston City** board was featured in an article and photo in a local newspaper.

* **Westerville City's** Parent Council presented board members with plaques of appreciation for their service to the district and community.

* **Woodmore Local (Sandusky)** board was treated to certificates, snacks and a framed picture. Superintendent **Jane Garling** said that some staff members sent thanks, while others attended the celebration and read notes of appreciation for the board's support and commitment. "I am very fortunate," Garling said. "I have five super members that give of their time freely and always do their homework to be fully prepared. They are here for all students!"

* **Wooster City** board members received certificates and were recognized on the district Web site.

Please note: This information was compiled from articles in the OSBA Journal and school staff mentioned may no longer be in the districts.

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Suggested editorial

Say “thanks!” to our school board members

Boards of education are a mature and tested institution in Ohio. School board members make policy; approve contracts with employees; choose curriculum; adopt budgets; and select a superintendent, treasurer and business manager to administer the district. They do all these tasks with the emphasis on what’s best for the children they serve.

Being an effective school board member is no easy task, particularly in today’s climate of change and challenge. School board members need to be knowledgeable about many complex educational and social issues, and carry out initiatives and directives from both federal and state governments. To face these demands of governing our public schools, they give countless hours of personal time.

A public board of education is a legislative body of citizens elected locally by their communities. Most Ohio school boards consist of five or seven members who serve four-year terms of office. The number of board members for career center boards of education varies. Members usually are appointed for one-year terms representing their “home” districts. As copartners with the General Assembly, which created boards of education, school board members are designated to carry out the constitutional mandate to administer the school system of each district.

Through dedicated, responsible endeavors, school board members serve the public interest in public education – and serve the needs of our kids. They ensure that decisions about public schools are made as close to the needs of our communities as possible. Their public service is an excellent example for young and old alike of the tradition of volunteerism that is a hallmark of American society.

This January, local communities are invited to honor the contributions and dedication of their local school board members – those locally elected citizens who make decisions that affect, influence and direct the education of our youth.

Our school board is just one of 719 such boards across Ohio. Let’s say “thank you” to those who participate in what is perhaps the purest form of grassroots democratic principles upon which our republic was founded.

Our school board members do speak for public schools.



School Board Recognition Month sample proclamation

Ask your township, village, city or county's elected officials to proclaim January School Board Recognition Month in your community.

Take a picture of the signing ceremony, then publicize the issuance of the proclamation. Be sure to let local news media know about the ceremony so they can arrange for a photographer to be present, too.

Copy this proclamation on your district letterhead as a sample or offer to provide information for an original proclamation.

Publicize the proclamation in your district and school newsletters and give copies to parent organizations for their newsletters.

Proclamation

WHEREAS, it shall be the mission of the _____ School District to provide all students with the best possible education; and

WHEREAS, the school board sets the direction for our community's public schools by envisioning the community's education future; and

WHEREAS, the school board sets policies and procedures to govern all aspects of school district operation; and

WHEREAS, the school board keeps attention focused on progress toward the school district's goals and maintains a two-way communications loop with all segments of the community; and

WHEREAS, serving on a school board requires an unselfish devotion of time and service to carry on the mission and business of the school district; and

WHEREAS, the school board must respond on behalf of the community to the educational needs of students; and

WHEREAS, the school board voluntarily accepts the above-mentioned responsibilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, _____, do hereby proclaim January 2010 as School Board Recognition Month in _____. I encourage all citizens to publicly and privately thank the school board members from all school districts serving this community for their dedicated service to our children.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____



Sample news release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 1, 2010

For more information contact:

(Person's Name)

(Phone Number)

January is School Board Recognition Month

COLUMBUS – The Ohio School Boards Association is celebrating School Board Recognition Month in January 2010 to build awareness and understanding of the vital function an elected board of education plays in our society.

School Board Recognition Month honors the members of Ohio's 719 city, exempted village, local and joint vocational boards of education and educational service centers governing boards for their commitment to providing quality public education to Ohio's school children.

Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland has lent his support by declaring the month of January School Board Recognition Month.

The (school district name) School District is joining with other districts throughout the state to recognize the important contributions school board members make to their communities.

"Ohioans benefit every day from the dedicated energies and countless hours devoted by a group of more than 3,400 men and women across the state," said (superintendent's full name). "These public servants are elected to serve by local citizens and receive little compensation for their tireless efforts. These men and women are the local school board members of Ohio.

"These people unselfishly contribute their time and talents toward the advancement of public education. They represent a continuing commitment to local citizen control and decision-making in education. Even though we are making a special effort during January to show appreciation to our school board members, we recognize their contributions reflect a year-round commitment on their part.

"They are dedicated individuals who are committed to the continuing success of our schools and students."

The men and women serving (school district) and their years of service are:

(ADD A PARAGRAPH OR TWO DESCRIBING THE SPECIAL WAYS YOU RECOGNIZED YOUR BOARD MEMBERS DURING SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH.)

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Sample guest editorial

In addition to its use as a guest editorial, this article also can form the basis of a column in your community newsletter, a speech or letter to the editor.

Thank your school board member today

School board members exemplify local citizen control and decision-making in education. They volunteer hundreds of hours and an immeasurable amount of energy to assure that our schools are providing the best education possible for the children of our community. Here are some reasons we are taking this opportunity to show them our appreciation during School Board Recognition Month in January.

School board members are citizens whose decisions affect our children – what they learn, who will teach them and what kinds of facilities house their classrooms.

These are men and women elected to establish the policies that provide the framework for our public schools. They represent you, and they take this responsibility seriously by attending lengthy – sometimes challenging – meetings, conferences and institutes where they broaden their knowledge about education; during numerous conversations about the schools; and sessions before the Ohio General Assembly.

Our school board is one of 719 such boards across the state. These boards enable us to have local control of public schools, meaning that decisions on school programming are made by local, elected representatives who understand the community's unique problems, values, culture and circumstances.

It's a tradition that began nearly 300 years ago. With the advice and counsel of the educational professionals they hire, our school board has an impact on virtually every aspect of our schools. It's a huge responsibility and one that should not be taken lightly.

Too often we neglect to recognize the dedication and hard work of these men and women who represent us. The staff and students of our school district are asking all local citizens to take a moment to tell a school board member "thanks for caring about our children's education."

So, hats off to the dedicated men and women who make it possible for local citizens to have a say about education in our communities. We salute the public servants of (school district) whose dedication and civic responsibility make local control of public schools in our community possible. We applaud them for their vision and voice to help shape a better tomorrow.

LIST NAMES AND YEARS OF SERVICE OF BOARD MEMBERS:

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Sample newsletter article

This article can be adapted for use in your district newsletter, as an article in your local newspaper, as a letter to the editor or as the foundation for a speech. Localize it by adding information about your school board members, details of how they will be honored during January and ways your board has improved education for the students in your district.

Helping our kids climb higher

School board members are ordinary people who have an extraordinary dedication to our public schools. It is time we thanked them for their untiring efforts.

Too often we forget about the personal sacrifices school board members routinely make.

Too often we forget about the important role school board members play in assuring local control over our public schools, control that is in the hands of people we know ... people who are our neighbors.

Too often we forget that, in the tradition of a representative democracy, school board members are our connection to influencing how our public schools are governed.

Too often we are quick to criticize school board members without really knowing all the details that went into any given decision.

Too often the efforts of school board members go unrecognized and unrewarded.

We can begin to correct these oversights this January, which is School Board Recognition Month. This is a time to show our appreciation and to begin to better understand how school board members work together to provide leadership for our schools.

The school board works closely with parents, education professionals and community members to create the educational vision we want for our students. It then formulates goals, defines results and sets the course for an adequate and equitable educational program for all students.

The school board is accountable to the public. It is responsible for assuring the public that the money allocated to the public schools is providing a good return on the investment. Thus, the board oversees regular assessment of the district's students, staff and programs.

The school board also is a strong advocate for public schools and is responsible for communicating the needs of the school district to the public and the public's expectations to the district.

In January, join with others from throughout our district and state to salute the men and women who provide grassroots governance of public schools. Make a special effort to tell each school board member his or her hard work has been noticed and is very much appreciated.

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Sample letter to community groups and service clubs

The following can be personalized for individual community groups and service clubs on your district letterhead. Localize by adding information about your school board members, details of how they will be honored during January and examples of ways your board has improved education for the students in your district.

Dear _____:

I am excited to report that January 2010 is School Board Recognition Month and we are planning a number of activities to honor our (number) school board members. Would (name of group) be interested in joining us?

A couple of events we are planning are: _____

If you are interested, I have some suggestions for things you might do to honor the board of education. You might:

- Sponsor a public service announcement;
- Invite board members to your January meeting to recognize them;
- Feature the board in your January newsletter;
- Sponsor a newspaper advertisement thanking the board for its dedication and service;
- Host a fun event for board members and their families;
- Sponsor an appreciation banner to be hung across a major street or highway;
- Sponsor signs to be distributed to members to display outside their businesses or homes;
- Send each board member a certificate for a free cup of special coffee from a local, popular coffee shop. Accompany it with a note that says, "You deserve a break!"

Please call me at () - . We can discuss this idea further.

Thank you so very much for your support in this much-deserved recognition of our board.

Sincerely,



Sample public service announcements

The best way to succeed with public service announcements (PSAs) is to personally deliver them to someone you know at a radio or television station. Retype on district letterhead with a contact name. If you have public activities planned to recognize your board, you can add that information to the sample PSAs.

15 seconds

JANUARY IS SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH. OUR SCHOOLCHILDREN BENEFIT EVERY DAY FROM THE DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC EDUCATION OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS. LET'S ALL SAY, "THANK YOU" TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVE ON OHIO'S BOARDS OF EDUCATION.

20 seconds

JANUARY IS SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH. (DISTRICT NAME, COUNTY, AREA) SCHOOLCHILDREN BENEFIT EVERY DAY FROM THE DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC EDUCATION OF OUR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS. THEY ALL MAKE PERSONAL SACRIFICES AND SPEND COUNTLESS HOURS TENDING TO BOARD BUSINESS. IT IS OFTEN A THANKLESS JOB, SO LET'S ALL SAY, "THANK YOU!" TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVE ON OHIO'S BOARDS OF EDUCATION.



New poster

OSBA mailed one 35" by 25" poster to each school district (with the OSBA wall calendar). An electronic version is available by contacting Scott Ebright at OSBA (sebright@ohioschoolboards.org). Be creative with the poster to thank your school board. You can add their

names in large letters with white or gold markers, and display one at a board meeting, or put a number of smaller versions around your school and community. Or, use them as greeting cards and have staff and community members sign personal notes on them. You could use one poster per board member.

Another option would be to create your own poster with a

group photograph of your school board members. A template of the above poster without the photographs of school board members is available from OSBA's School Board Recognition Month Web page.

