



**Thank you  
school board members,  
for serving the children in  
our community!**



School Board Recognition Month  
January 2019

## **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

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leaders to schedule or plan events and activities. Some activities may require a serious 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!

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 Crystal Davis at **[cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org)** or 8050 N. High St., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43235. Information/photos also can be submitted to **<http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/84140>**. The deadline is Feb. 15. OSBA will feature a variety of photos from celebrations around the state in our Journal magazine and our website at **<http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/52515>**.

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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 emailed 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 will mail one, 22" by 35", four-color poster to each district. When it arrives, 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 Crystal Davis (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 is saved in two formats: jpeg and Adobe Acrobat pdf. Both formats work on both Macintosh and PC. Once complete, you will find a single (black) and a four-color version at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/52515>. Other file formats can be provided upon request.

### **Text version**

The entire School Board Recognition Month Kit is available as an Acrobat PDF file at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/52515>.

The Tahoma font family was used in producing these materials.

Please contact Crystal Davis at [cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org) or (614) 540-4000, extension 272, 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.
- Arrange for a music recital and ask each board member to give a five-minute speech about themselves and how they want to further public education.
- Invite each board member to visit the district's schools and interact with students depending on age (read to first graders, perform a science experiment with a high school chemistry student).
- Ask board members to share their positive thoughts about the district's students, staff and community and to describe their role on the board. Post these on the school website, include in school newsletter or submit to your local newspaper.
- 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:
  - Public schools make a difference! For every child. Every day. In every community.
  - Speak up for public schools
  - 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

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Our school board is great!  
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.

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- Make board members the guests of honor at a school carnival or festival.
- Arrange for a student group to organize a recognition event for the board.
- Have elementary students research what the board does and then make a presentation to the board.
- Pair up a talented student with each board member and have the students teach their board member something these students excel in: a cheerleaders/dance student could teach a cheer or dance routine, a math whiz could show a board member the practical uses of a Pythagorean theorem, etc. Then have the board member teach the students something about their occupation and have all the students and board members report what they learned at a board meeting.

### **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.
- 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.

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# 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 in 2018:

Students served by **Mercer County ESC** went all out this year to show appreciation for their governing board members during School Board Recognition Month in January.

Special education classes served by the ESC made tokens of appreciation that were displayed in the board room during the organizational meeting.

The ESC operates preschools in several local school districts. A preschool class in **Celina City** Schools created a poster that read, "Thank you SNOW much" on one side and "Thank you for all you do!" on the other. In addition, 28 preschoolers housed in **Marion City** Schools made blue construction paper thank-you notes and placed their individual pictures in the center of each one along with the words, "I'm a happy little snowflake that is sent your way. Your gift was very special, and it made my day!"

Students participating in the ESC's Vocational Skills Center class made new name plates for the board, while elementary students at **St. Henry Consolidated Local (Mercer)** created a thank-you poster for the ESC governing board. Transition students in the ESC's Transitional Center filled bags with Tootsie Rolls with a note attached that read, "Thank you for your ROLL in our lives!"

Every January, Ohio school districts, like Mercer County ESC, recognize board members in fun and unique ways. Ohio's School Board Recognition Month runs concurrently with the National School Boards Association's campaign, which began in 1995 to highlight school boards' significant roles in public education.

To support recognition celebrations each year, OSBA provides member districts with a web-based resource kit, which includes tips on ways to honor board members; sample news releases, editorials, newsletter articles, public service announcements and resolutions; and a theme poster.

This year's theme — School boards lead so students can achieve — underscores the significant

leadership role board members play in student learning and the future of Ohio's approximately 1.6 million schoolchildren.

More than 3,400 Ohio school board members lead so students can achieve by participating in district, board and community events while balancing job, personal and family responsibilities. Their role requires them to stay up-to-date on the latest educational and district-related issues, typically with minimal pay and long hours. Their important work has the power to change the future of their community; yet, board members often are not thanked for their dedication.

OSBA is committed to helping districts honor these hardworking public servants. In addition to the resource kit, the association provides personalized appreciation certificates signed by OSBA's president and chief executive officer to every board member in the state.

You can see photos from Mercer County ESC's celebration, along with pictures and videos of the other school district activities mentioned in this article, by visiting the School Board Recognition Month page at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/52515>. Districts submit information and photos, and OSBA gathers information from stories written by local news media.

While most districts honored board members with a proclamation and OSBA certificates, others, like **Westlake City** made their board feel extra special with a combination of tributes: a full-page thank-you ad and public service announcement ran in the local newspaper; cheerleaders greeted everyone, and the PTA council president sharing messages of appreciation at the January board meeting; Westlake Mayor **Dennis M. Clough** attended the board meeting to present a proclamation; photos and articles spotlighting the board were posted on the district's website and Twitter and Facebook pages; athletic boosters donated a small gift certificate to each board member; Superintendent **Scott E. Goggin** had cookies made with the school logo and presenting them to board members along with the framed certificates provided by OSBA; elementary art students made large thank-you cards, and middle school students making a large poster; gift cards for a cup of coffee were given to each board member; the message "We can't spell SUCCESS without U" was displayed on the front sign and "Thank you board members for all you do" ran on the high school's marquee; and the OSBA School Board Recognition Month poster was showcased all month.

**Perkins Local (Erie)** students and teachers engaged board members in a variety of fun activities during the board's first meeting of the year. After an instructional demonstration by Furry Elementary School students, board member **Nicole Hykes** learned to use an iPad to make their robot, Dash, dance to classical music.

Later during the meeting, Meadowlawn Intermediate School students taught board members quarter and eighth notes and played a rhythm telephone game with them. During a timed segment, as students sang the Jeopardy! theme song, board members were tested to see if they qualify as spatially gifted.

Students also held flat, three-dimensional shapes and asked board members to determine what the shapes would become when put together. Board members received treats as positive reinforcement for their hard work. In addition, students displayed artwork during the meeting.

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**Franklin Local (Muskingum)** board members were honored in an article sent to a local newspaper, and district office staff presented board members with a candle. Staff and students from Philo High School gave board members a snowman with the words "Philo High School staff and students 'SNOW' you have our backs!" Philo Junior High School students presented board members plants with the message "Thanks for helping us grow!"

**Goshen Local (Clermont)** treated its board members to a dinner before their organizational meeting. As part of the celebration, board members received certificates of appreciation, and Superintendent **Darrell Edwards** thanked them for their years of service.

GNN, the district's student news network, also created a video praising the dedication of the board, and each member was spotlighted in social media posts. You can watch the video at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/52515>.

**Toronto City** Superintendent **Maureen Taggart** presented board members with the book, "Boardmanship: A Guide for School Board Members," which is edited by OSBA staff.

As she presented OSBA certificates, Taggart praised the board for their "unwavering commitment to providing the best possible education for the students of the district."

Following the meeting, attendees were invited to a dinner honoring the board. The board also was recognized in an article that appeared in the district's newsletter.

OSBA Director of Communication Services **Jeff Chambers** attended **Columbus City's** January board meeting to present OSBA certificates of appreciation.

Students from **Tiffin City's** Lincoln Elementary School led the Pledge of Allegiance at the district's January meeting. They also worked with Tiffin Columbian Connection, the district's alternative high school, to create a video where the "littles" explained to the "bigs" what it takes to be a good board member.

Washington Elementary School students thanked board members with a hilarious video that answers the question: What does a board member do? You can view both videos at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/52515>.

The students also put fingerprints on canvas to reflect the "impression" that board members have made on their lives. Other schools in the district sent letters of appreciation as well as drawings, pictures and posters. The food service team made huge chocolate chip cookies that were individually frosted, decorated and presented to each board member. Finally, each board member received a certificate of appreciation for their service.

**Liberty Local (Trumbull)** Superintendent **Joseph Nohra** presented OSBA certificates to board members, and cookies and refreshments were enjoyed during the meeting.

"This spring, thanks to the board's progressive leadership, the Liberty Local Schools will open a **youth recreation center for not only Liberty students, but for the entire community**

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youth recreation center for not only Liberty students, but for the entire community to enjoy," Nohra said.

**Richmond Heights Local's (Cuyahoga)** celebration began with a group of Richmond Heights Elementary students performing two songs. The board then had refreshments and photo time, with selfie frames decorated with student artwork and expressions of thanks.

Each board member also received an OSBA certificate of appreciation from Superintendent Dr. **Renee T. Willis**, along with a Spartan-designed jacket and pant set, a leather portfolio with "Thanks" embroidered on it and a booklet titled, "Kindergarten students say the 'darndest' things."

**Kirtland Local (Lake)** handed out T-shirts from the district's Make It Club that had "Kirtland All-Star School Board" printed on the front.

**Olmsted Falls City** gifted its board members with embroidered computer bags with construction-themed goodies inside to commemorate the \$21.9 million high school renovation project in progress. Olmsted Falls Middle School students also wrote a letter to the board expressing their gratitude and what they look forward to next year at the newly renovated high school.

**Circleville City** recognized its five board members through a social media campaign. As part of it, the newest board member, **Andrea Tipping**, was profiled in a blog to give stakeholders the opportunity to become more familiar with her.

**Olentangy Local (Delaware)** celebrated School Board Recognition Month through a social media campaign. Staff members posted a picture of each board member and a fun fact or memory. Board members also received OSBA certificates, a flower bouquet, student gifts and thank-you cards. At the end of the month, the district posted a final thank-you along with a group picture of the board.

**Tuscarawas Valley Local (Tuscarawas)** gifted coaster sets engraved with board members' names and the district's logo. The coaster sets were designed in a Project Lead the Way class. Board members also received OSBA certificates, and students produced and shared two thank-you videos at the board's January meeting. Watch the videos at <http://links.ohioschool-boards.org/52515>.

**Kings Local (Warren)** used Flipgrid, a video discussion platform, to thank its school board.

"It was a fun, innovative way to say, 'thank you,'" district Community Relations Coordinator **Dawn Gould** said. "Another plus about Flipgrid is that it can be recorded anywhere on any device."

**Aurora City** student artists sketched board members during the district's January meeting, and the Unaccompanied Minors Choral Singers sang songs of appreciation.

**In Madison Local (Richland)**, each building recognized board members in its own special way. Madison Middle School students made a thank-you video, and all of the district's elementary schools created poster boards.

**Edgewood City** presented each board member with a framed OSBA certificate. Additional recognition and appreciation messages were posted on the district's website and Facebook pages.

**Indian Hill EV** board members were treated to a musical quartet from members of Indian Hill High School's orchestra, and Superintendent Dr. **Mark T. Miles** handed out OSBA certificates.

**Lancaster City's** board members enjoyed a meal provided by the Lancaster High School Culinary Arts Class. You can view a video from the event at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/52515>.

**Dawson-Bryant Local (Lawrence)** Superintendent **Steven Easterling** presented each board member with a token of appreciation and a certificate from OSBA.

**Lake Local (Stark)** Superintendent **Kevin T. Tobin** gifted board members with a thank-you poster signed by administrative staff along with framed OSBA certificates.

**Warren County ESC** gave board members cards, posters and a video created by students in the district's special needs and at-risk programs.

**Princeton City** presented personalized Princeton calendars to its board members, symbolizing how their work impacts students' lives daily. They also received Princeton umbrellas, and a thank-you article was featured on the district's website.

**Champion Local (Trumbull)** provided board members with a DVD of highlights from the school year. Each building principal also presented an appreciation gift made by students.

**Fairborn City** honored its board members with framed OSBA certificates and flowers. An OSBA poster signed by staff members was displayed at the podium during the meeting.

**Buckeye Career Center** recognized its board members by presenting them with a wooden box made by students in the construction technology program. The center held a small reception following the board meeting, with food prepared by cafeteria staff and students in the culinary arts and meat cutting, deli and bakery programs.

**Gallipolis City** Superintendent **Craig D. Wright** praised his school board for its exemplary service as he handed out OSBA certificates.

"These people unselfishly contribute their time and talents toward the advancement of public education," Wright said. "They are dedicated individuals who are committed to the continuing success of our schools and students."

As **Poland Local (Mahoning)** Superintendent **Dave Janofa** presented OSBA certificates to his board, he noted that the members usually meet about 30 times per year, yet they are only compensated for 12 meetings.

"I appreciate everything you do for the students of Poland schools and for the community," Janofa told The Vindicator.

**Boardman Local (Mahoning)** Superintendent **Tim L. Saxton** spoke at length about his board members' dedication during the January meeting, and students made thank-you cards that were given to the board.

Each year, the superintendents at **Pickaway-Ross Career & Technology Center** and **Pickaway County ESC** write an article to recognize the board of education and ESC governing board in their January district newsletters.

Students at **Patrick Henry Local's (Henry)** Patrick Henry Elementary School were featured in a thank-you video presented to board members.

**Covington EV** Superintendent **Charles Eugene Gooding** recognized his board members with OSBA certificates.

"Serving on a school board requires an unselfish devotion of time and service to carry on the mission and business of the school district," Gooding said.

**Gallia County Local (Gallia)** Superintendent **Jude Meyers** handed out OSBA certificates and thanked the board for its tireless dedication.

"Thank you very much for your service," Meyers said. "I think when you get on the board, in a short time you realize how serious it is ... you're on the other side of the door, and you know a lot happens with the decisions that you make."

**Fairfield City's** Fairfield High School posted pictures of board members on its website.

**Highland Local (Medina)** Superintendent **Catherine Aukerman** gave her board OSBA certificates and commended them by saying, "Our board of education has one thing in mind: to best serve students in the Highland School District," she said. "I appreciate and value this very much."

**Copley-Fairlawn City** Superintendent **Brian Poe** also praised his board at length during their January meeting.

"I think sometimes folks don't realize the amount of time that the five of you are and will be spending in face-to-face conversations in the grocery stores, on the telephone, as you walk in your neighborhood or someone just stops you when you're out and about," he said.

Students at **Huron City's** Shawnee Elementary School presented board members with a thank-you banner signed by students from throughout the district. Each board member also received an OSBA certificate.

**Chagrin Falls EV** recognized its members at the January meeting and posted the picture and thank-yous on the district's social media pages and district newsletter.

**Medina City** staff and students created an appreciation video for their board members. You can view the video at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/52515>.

**Bellefontaine City** board members received a poster signed by the district's elementary students.

**Wellston City** Schools posted a tribute to its board members via a post on the district's Facebook page. Following is an excerpt from that post: "It is with pleasure that we are able to work as a team toward a common goal, which is to reduce the barriers we face in order to help our students succeed. ... Your job as a board member is not easy and we want to thank you for your public service."

**Loveland City** students posed with thank-you banners they created to honor their board of education. The pictures were compiled into a slideshow that played during the January business meeting and is posted on the district's website.

**Cleveland Municipal** designed, printed and prominently displayed a poster to show the district's appreciation of the hard work board members do on a daily basis. It also created a video which can be seen at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/52515>.

Many other districts awarded OSBA certificates to their board, including **Clyde-Green Springs EV; Defiance City; Fayetteville-Perry Local (Brown); Lincolnview Local (Van Wert); Norton City; Norwood City; Ridgemont Local (Hardin); Three Rivers Local (Hamilton); United Local (Columbiana); and Walnut Township Local (Fairfield).**

# **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 education 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 the more than 700 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 make a difference in our community, for every child, every day.

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# School Board Recognition Month sample proclamation

## 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 2019 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, 2019

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 2019 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 more than 700 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.

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.)

### **Ohio School Boards Association**

8050 North High Street, Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43235-6481

(614) 540-4000 | fax (614) 540-4100

# 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 more than 700 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.

## School Boards Make a Difference

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 2019 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

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# New poster

OSBA will mail one 35" by 22" poster to each school district (with the OSBA wall calendar) in December. To obtain an electronic version, email Crystal Davis ([cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org](mailto:cdavis@ohioschoolboards.org)) at OSBA. Be creative with the poster to thank your school board. You will be able to 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, you will be able to 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 poster without the photographs can be obtained by contacting Crystal Davis at the email address above.



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