



SAMPLE DISTRICT 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 2019:

As the mayor of Westlake, Dennis Clough knows all about serving his community. At a January Westlake City Board of Education meeting, he let the district's five board members know just how much the community appreciates them.

Clough read a proclamation honoring the board and posed for pictures as part of the district's School Board Recognition Month celebrations.

Students and staff at Westlake City's Lee Burneson Middle School planned a breakfast, catered by a local restaurant, while other students throughout the district made thank-you cards or sent thank-you notes. Westlake High School even posted a message of appreciation on its digital signboard.

Each board member received a coffee mug filled with Starbursts and a note that read, "burst-ing with appreciation for your Star-studded effort!" The mug featured a logo of this year's "All-Star Team" board appreciation month theme.

Every January, Ohio school districts honor their board members in thoughtful and fun ways as part of OSBA's School Board Recognition Month campaign. The celebration runs simultaneously with the National School Boards Association's campaign, which began in 1995 to highlight school boards' significant roles in public education.

"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," Gallipolis City Superintendent Craig D. Wright wrote in an op-ed article for the Gallipolis Daily Tribune. "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."

School board members take on enormous responsibilities as advocates for our public schools. With extraordinary dedication, they approach their work like it's a full-time job and contribute hundreds of hours every year leading their districts.

They are making the future of education in Ohio through their dedication, governance, advocacy and collaboration with other school district staff. In an op-ed for the Huber Heights Courier, Huber Heights City Superintendent Susan Gunnell wrote that, "while school board members come from various walks of life, when they are part of the school board, they come together with the common goals of promoting continuous improvement in our schools and increasing student learning and achievement."



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Bucyrus City Superintendent Kevin D. Kimmel wrote in an op-ed for the Richland Source that his board supports students and staff “in their relentless pursuit of success in and out of the classroom.”

Covington EV Superintendent Charles Eugene Gooding thanked his board for its dedication by saying, “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. Serving on a school board requires unselfish devotion of time and service to carry on the mission and business of the school district.”

Vandalia-Butler City Superintendent Robert M. O’Leary and Treasurer Eric K. Beavers thanked their board and described its vital role in helping set the district’s vision.

“It’s very nice to work with a board of education that provides such good vision and always has kids first and foremost of every decision they make as well as support staff, including Rob and myself,” Beavers said. “Thank you for your time, thank you for your efforts and thank you for your commitment.”

Each year, OSBA provides member districts with a web-based resource kit, which includes tips on honoring board members; sample news releases, editorials, newsletter articles, public service announcements and resolutions; and a theme poster.

OSBA also helps honor these tireless public servants by sending districts personalized appreciation certificates signed by OSBA’s president and chief executive officer for every board member in the state. In addition to presenting certificates, many districts went all-out in celebrating the state’s public school board members who provide a significant leadership role for Ohio’s approximately 1.7 million public schoolchildren.

At Lakewood Local (Licking), digital photography students at Lakewood High School created framed photographs for board members, who also received a certificate of appreciation from school board student representative Grant Davis.

Superintendent Mary Kay Andrews said the district also reintroduced board members to the community. Each one provided a reflection of their year on the board.

Board President Tara Houdeshell shared that “teamwork is a fundamental necessity for affecting positive change within an organization. I know that as we continue to improve the functionality and relational aspects of our board, we will become stronger and so will our district.”

Wooster City board members received “Go Woo” cookies and appreciation notes from the district’s schools.



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Students in Sandy Valley Local's (Stark) horticulture program delivered floral arrangements to board members, who also received a Cardinal "treat bag" filled with iced Cardinal cookies, chocolates and more. Members of Sandy Valley Elementary School's Safety Patrol showed the board a video about being aware of their surroundings.

Warren County ESC administration and staff thanked governing board members by presenting them with cards, posters, handcrafted gifts and a video created by students in the ESC's special needs and at-risk programming classes.

Lorain Mayor Chase Ritenauer and Amherst Mayor Mark Costilow appeared at a January Amherst EV Board of Education meeting with proclamations.

"I really think any position in local government, particularly when you're in the trenches like the school board, like city council, they're tough positions," Ritenauer said. "I think it's a real service to the community. I'm here to say, 'thank you' ... Obviously, there is a portion of Lorain that goes to Amherst Schools, and I want to extend my thanks and gratitude."

Amherst EV Superintendent Steven A. Sayers also shared a large stack of cards and letters from the district's second-, third- and fourth-graders who thanked board members.

Students and staff at Franklin Local (Muskingum) created special tokens of appreciation for board members, and Superintendent Sharon McDermott presented OSBA certificates to the board. Each board member also received a candle with a sign that read, "You are a 'Scent' sational Board Member! Thanks for all you do!" from district staff. Staff members at Philo High School gave each board member a snowman with the message, "Philo High School Staff and Students 'SNOW' you have our backs." Elementary school students presented a photo and a small puzzle with board members in the center. There also was a note that read, "THANK YOU for being a major 'piece of the puzzle' as we serve the students of the Franklin Local School District."

Pickerington Local (Fairfield) sent a 'pawsitively' sweet thank-you to its board members for their hard work. Pickerington Central High School's food services department made paw print sugar cookies. District office staff and others, including two fourth-grade classes at Heritage Elementary School, signed the School Board Recognition Month poster, which was part of OSBA's resource kit.

"We thank you immensely for your year-round contribution to students, staff and the community supporting Pickerington Schools," Superintendent Dr. Chris M. Briggs said. "You truly are our all-star team that is making Pickerington proud every day."



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North Ridgeville City acknowledged the dedication of its board members in many ways, including thank-you videos from students in classes and clubs. Board members also received a booklet with thank-you letters and additional mementos from students in grades three through eight. The district's Academic Center created a thank-you banner signed by the entire staff. Students in industrial technology classes designed new nameplates and a gavel for board meetings.

Richmond Heights Local (Cuyahoga) recognized its board member all-star team during a home basketball game in January. Members also were invited to a special dinner after the Jan. 28 board meeting. Special education students baked cookies and made veggie trays. Board members received their OSBA certificates, an inside-out umbrella with "Thanks for all you do" printed on it and a personalized coffee mug.

At Wauseon EV, administration team members wrote thank-you messages on the framed OSBA certificates and each board member received a Wauseon staff tote.

Students in the culinary arts program at Jefferson County Vocational School prepared dinner for board members, who also received sweatshirts with the school's logo and framed OSBA certificates.

"It's a pleasure to have worked with this board," Superintendent Todd Phillipson said. "The wealth of knowledge and expertise is what makes these schools successful. They show a real interest in the students, and that's what education is all about."

Other districts that celebrated School Board Recognition Month, as reported by the district or local media, include:

- Arcanum-Butler Local (Darke)
- Eaton Community City
- Highland Local (Medina)
- Logan-Hocking Local (Hocking)
- New Riegel Local (Seneca)
- Norwalk City
- North Royalton City
- Port Clinton City
- Sebring Local (Mahoning)
- Union Local (Belmont)
- Yellow Springs EV