



2020 School Board Recognition Month Tool Kit

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

Ohio School Boards Association
www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm

PLANTING SEEDS OF SUCCESS

School Board Recognition Month



USING THIS TOOL KIT

This School Board Recognition Month Tool Kit is designed to help you recognize the valuable contributions of your school board members. This Web-based resource can be used in two ways: either download the entire resource kit or download files you wish to customize yourself by visiting www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm.

The kit contains:

Ideas for honoring your school board members

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: Honoring our school board members

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

School Board Recognition Month sample proclamation

Use this sample language when asking your township, village, city or county's elected officials to proclaim January School Board Recognition Month in your community.

Sample news release

Personalized this news release to send your community newspapers. If your county has only one newspaper, considering coordinating with the other districts in the county to submit one news release honoring all board of education members in the area.

Sample 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 messaging for school marquees

Place appreciation messages on school marquees.

Art

The School Board Recognition Month art is saved in two formats: jpeg and pdf. Other file formats can be provided upon request. All are, including graphics for social media, are available at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm.

Please contact Angela Penquite at apenquite@ohioschoolboards.org or (614) 540-4000, ext. 277, if you have questions.

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IDEAS TO HONOR YOUR SCHOOL BOARD

Let your board members know how much their work for your students is appreciated during School Board Recognition Month (SBRM) in January. The online kit just the starting point. Visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm for artwork, a sample news release, downloadable logos for your website and printed materials and other resources.

The theme for 2020 is Planting seeds of success, and we hope these ideas will grow into successful board recognition campaigns at your district!

Plan a board member recognition event

- Plan a special reception at your January board meeting. Invite community members, students, parents, the media, city council members and more.
- Present SBRM certificates, student thank-you cards, artwork and any other tokens of appreciation to board members during the event. (OSBA will send districts personalized certificates in December.)
- Feature student entertainment at the event.
- Ask staff to say a few words on behalf of their teams, including teachers, school administrative assistants, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, etc.
- Give special recognition to school board members with extensive service records.
- Ask local businesses to host and/or support the event.

Promote school board appreciation in the community

- Encourage your city council, chamber of commerce or PTA to pass a local SBRM proclamation. (A sample is available at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm.)
- Ask your local chamber of commerce for an endorsement. Your chamber knows the importance of a strong education system in attracting new industry.
- Publish information on board members, including their background, years of service, accomplishments, etc. This information can be distributed in a variety of formats, like a brochure, webpage, blog and communicated at civic meetings.
- Place appreciation messages on school marquees. (Available at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm.)
- Ask your PTA or students to place a thank-you ad in the local newspaper.
- Download the SBRM logo and print it on shirts, use it on school or district websites, and more. (Available at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm.)

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IDEAS TO HONOR YOUR SCHOOL BOARD

Promote SBRM using your district's digital assets

- Place an SBRM logo in staff e-mail signatures during the month of January. Link the logo to your dedicated-SBRM district webpage. (Available at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm.)
- Use your district's blog, newsletter or website to post information about SBRM, post trustee profiles, and more.
- Watch OSBA's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts for updates. Feel free to like, retweet and share posts.
- Share SBRM graphics on your social media accounts. Be sure to use #SchoolBoardMonth on Twitter and Instagram. (Available at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm.)
- Invite your community members to share their appreciation for board members through social media and e-mail.

Get media coverage

- Send a press release about SBRM. (Customizable Microsoft Word document available at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm.)
- Provide your local media information about what the board does, major decisions and actions your board is facing and the amount of time board members spend supporting your district. Offer to coordinate interviews with school board members.
- Send an article about SBRM to your local news outlet. (Available at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm.)

Educate students, community on what a school board does

- Hold mock school board meetings and elections in high school and invite your board members to attend.
- Include information about what a board does on your district/school cable TV channel or in school newspapers. Encourage students to interview board members.

Other creative ideas and student projects

- Have students create ship thank-you notes using colorful construction paper.
- Invite board members to attend a school lunch. Have members of the schools' student council or other student group sit with the board member.
- Invite board members to athletic events to throw the first ball or blow the whistle to kick off the game.

Don't forget to complete the online form at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm to share your great ideas and help us continue to improve this campaign. District recognition events will be shared in the OSBA Journal magazine and on the association's website.



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."



SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

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.



SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

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."



SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

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



SAMPLE EDITORIAL

The following editorial can be submitted to your community newspaper, used as a post on your website or as the basis of a speech. Be sure to add information about your school district and board of education.

Honoring our school board members

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

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. 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, thank you 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)



SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

Ask your mayor, city council, or county official to proclaim January 2020 as School Board Recognition Month in your community. Publicize this action with a news release, on your website and in your district's newsletter.

WHEREAS, the mission of the public schools is to meet the diverse educational needs of all children and to empower them to become competent, productive contributors to a democratic society and an ever-changing world; and

WHEREAS, local school board members are committed to children and believe that all children can be successful learners and that the best education is tailored to the individual needs of the child; and

WHEREAS, local school board members work closely with parents, educational professionals, and other community members to create the educational vision we want for our students; and

WHEREAS, local school board members are responsible for ensuring the structure that provides a solid foundation for our school system; and

WHEREAS, local school board members are strong advocates for public education and are responsible for communicating the needs of the school district to the public and the public's expectations to the district;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, _____, do hereby declare my appreciation to the members of the _____ School Board and proclaim the month of January 2020, as

SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH in _____. I urge all citizens to join me in recognizing the dedication and hard work of local school board members and in working with them to mold an education system that meets the needs of both today's and tomorrow's children.

IN OFFICIAL RECOGNITION WHEREOF, I hereby affix my signature this _____ day of _____, 2020.



SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

Prepare this release on district letterhead and submit it to local media. You also can post this and OSBA artwork on your website with photos of the board.

District contact: (name, title, phone number, email address)

For release: January 2020

_____ School District Celebrates School Board Recognition Month in January

(City name, in capital letters) – The (school district's name) will join more than 700 school districts throughout Ohio to celebrate January as School Board Recognition Month, Superintendent (first and last name) announced (date/day of the week).

“Our school board members are citizen-servants who shoulder critical responsibilities and often make difficult choices for our district, all with minimal pay,” *(superintendent's last name)* said. “Their focus is always on the future success of the children in our district. Celebrating School Board Recognition Month is one way to say thanks for all they do.”

Serving as a link between the community and classroom, school board members are elected to establish the policies that provide the framework for public schools. The *(school district's name)* board is responsible for an annual budget of \$_____million, _____students, _____employees and _____schools.

(Summarize major district achievements and honors accomplished recently under the board's leadership. Add details about specific activities planned in January for recognition month.)

Board members serving *(district name)* are: *(List name, years on board, occupation and personal quote from each board member on why he or she serves.)*

“It's more important than ever that communities support public education so that today's students are prepared to be productive citizens and the leaders of tomorrow,” *(superintendent's last name)* said. “Please take a moment and tell school board members ‘thanks for caring about our children and giving so much to our community.’ Let them know we support them and that their dedicated service is recognized and truly appreciated,”



SAMPLE ARTICLE

The following article can be used on your district's blog, as a letter to the editor, in newsletters, and more. Be sure to add information about your school district and board of education.

School boards plant the seeds of success

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 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.