

Celebrating School Boards



School Board Recognition Month

2022 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

www.ohioschoolboards.org/SBRM



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 and social media

Place appreciation messages on school marquees and in social media posts.

Art

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

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



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 2022 is Celebrating school boards, and we hope these ideas will build 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 to submit videos thanking board members for their service.
- Send SBRM certificates, student thank-you cards, artwork and any other tokens of appreciation to board members. (OSBA will send districts personalized certificates in December.)
- Feature videos of student entertainment at the event.
- Ask staff to record 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 post notices of School Board Recognition Month in their business or on social media.

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.
- Ask your community's civic and business clubs (Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis or chamber of commerce) to host your board at a breakfast or lunch.
- Publish information on board members, including their background, years of service, 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.)



IDEAS TO HONOR YOUR SCHOOL BOARD

Promote SBRM using your district's digital assets

- Place an SBRM logo in staff email 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.
- Post video interviews with board members in which they talk about the role of the board.
- 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 email.

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.
- Invite students to write about the important role of school boards that can be given to members and published in local newspapers.
- Schools with access to a district cable TV channel can use their time to conduct interviews with school board members and have informal talks on board service. Utilize students as interviewers and technical help.
- 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 watch via Zoom.
- Work with high school government teachers who are interested in discussing the role of local government – and public school leadership, in particular – with their students.
- Include information about what a board does on your district/school cable TV channel or podcast or in school newspapers. Encourage students to interview board members.
- Ask schools to “adopt a board member” and sponsor events for the adoptee throughout the month or year.

Other creative ideas and student projects

- Have students create thank-you notes using colorful construction paper.
- Invite members of the schools' student council or other student



IDEAS TO HONOR YOUR SCHOOL BOARD

groups to record videos honoring school board members.

- Ask each school in your district to be responsible for doing something special for one of your board members.
- 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.
- Give special recognition to school board members with lengthy service records.

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 2021. Please note: You are encouraged to take all necessary precautions in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and participate in socially distant recognitions, which may include virtual presentations, videos of students and online celebrations.

Students and staff at Benjamin Logan Local (Logan) went all out this year to show how their school board members are building the future of public education during School Board Recognition Month in January.

The district collaborated with the local chamber of commerce to publicize a thank-you message from staff and students in the chamber's January newsletter. The district also recorded a 60-second radio spot to run for three weeks in January, sent a press release to a local radio station and newspaper thanking board members and created new profile images for each board member.

Students in art classes and the student council made signs and cards, and the high school jazz combo performed before the board's January meeting. In addition to OSBA certificates, board members were given cookies and shirts featuring the district's new logo along with other tokens of appreciation.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic may have changed recognition celebrations this year, hundreds of Ohio school districts honored their school board members with social media posts, messages on school building marquees, videos, articles in local newspapers and recognition events at January board meetings. Running concurrently with the National School Boards Association's campaign, Ohio's School Board Recognition Month highlights the significant role board members play in public education.

To support district recognition celebrations, OSBA provides member districts with an online resource kit, including a proclamation by Gov. Mike DeWine declaring January as School Board Recognition Month; personalized recognition certifications for each board member; and a large-scale poster of this year's theme, "Building the future of public education."

You can find additional photos from Benjamin Logan Local's celebrations, along with pictures and videos of other school district activities mentioned in this article, by visiting the School Board Recognition Month recap page at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm-recap. Districts submit information and photos about their activities, and OSBA gathers information from stories written by local news media.

Westlake City made School Board Recognition Month a community affair. The board's January meeting featured an appreciation video created by the music department, a sign made by the middle school and a proclamation presented by Westlake City Mayor Dennis M. Clough. The district's West Shore Career Center provided mugs for the event, and middle school students delivered cookies to board members' homes.



SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

In recognizing Columbiana County ESC Governing Board members for their work over the past year, Superintendent Anna Marie Vaughn thanked them for the encouragement and support they provide to educators in the county.

Franklin Local (Muskingum) presented board members with tokens of appreciation from staff and students throughout the district, including a replica of the Power Plant gym floor; notes of appreciation, a gift certificate and photo collage cards; a coloring book and crayons with a note describing the seven benefits of coloring for adults; and a container of peanuts with a note stating “We are NUTS about our board members. Thank you for all you do for our students!”

Van Wert City Superintendent Mark Bagley and building principals thanked board members for their service, giving them superhero masks to recognize their efforts. In addition, a video was shown to celebrate the board’s work. Board President Anthony J. Adams acknowledged the support the board receives from district staff, stating, “You make us feel special all year long with the wonderful job you do.”

Chardon Local (Geauga) staff and students created gifts, cards, digital slideshows and videos with the theme “Building the future of public education.” Gifts included shelf-size wooden schoolhouses adorned in red and black made by the Tiny Toppers Preschool, while middle school students created Lego-embellished photo frames for each board member, complete with a group photo of the board members with the phrase “Building the Future — Chardon Local Schools.” Third-graders from Park Elementary School recorded a song of thanks for board members while holding signs with each board member’s name, and student liaisons Mary McCauley and Cade McDevitt, seniors at Chardon High School, thanked board members during their board meeting presentation.

“We just want to thank you and everyone else for keeping us safe and keeping school effective and for making sure extracurriculars still happen and just making everything is as normal as it can be,” McCauley said.

Many districts used social media to share their appreciation. New Richmond EV, Fairfield City and Lancaster City created graphics thanking board members for their service. Lancaster City went a step further: Since each board member graduated from the district, the graphic included their senior pictures in addition to current photos.

In his News From the Superintendent column in the Northwest Signal, Patrick Henry Local (Henry) Superintendent Josh Biederstedt thanked the district’s board members for their commitment, writing, “these members give of their time and talents to help make Patrick Henry Local Schools what it is.”

Olentangy Local’s (Delaware) January board meeting featured a room decorated with artwork created by students attending the district’s OASIS program, a prerecorded musical performance with students from Heritage Elementary School and a video thank-you message created by students at Hyatts Middle School. You can view the videos at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm-recap. In addition, the



SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

communications department featured each board member on the district's social media platforms during the month of January and displayed messages of gratitude on building sign boards.

Medina City Superintendent Aaron J. Sable thanked board members for being advocates for students during the pandemic and beyond.

"The COVID situation ... really makes us realize the importance of our elected board members," Sable said. "When we go through a difficult time like we are now, their role in voicing what's happening in the community and what different opinions are in the community are more important than ever."

Bay Village City high school senior James Bish — representing the student body — read DeWine's proclamation and shared his personal thanks for board members' service during the January board meeting.

Tri-County North Local (Preble) Superintendent William K. Derringer thanked board members for building the future of public education.

"This year has been challenging ... but I speak for everybody in saying that we appreciate the support and the leadership you guys have given us as we've dealt with the pandemic."

Students in Brown Local's (Carroll) kindergarten, second-grade and sixth-grade classes created artwork thanking and celebrating their board members.

"We are very fortunate at Brown Local Schools to have such a dedicated school board that always puts students first," said Superintendent Mark Scott. "I want to thank our school board for their vision and leadership during this unique and challenging time."

Morgan Local (Morgan) gave board members an insulated mug designed with the school colors and inscribed with "Thanks for all you do."

Ohio Hi-Point Career Center (OHP) Superintendent Dr. Richard D. Smith recognized board members for their years of service and their dedication. "Our board members bring experience from their industry as well as from the partner school board they serve on, and we're all a part of an exciting time at OHP as we prepare for the first phase of our building renovation project. We look forward to the future of education as we continue to provide our students a 21st century education for the modern-day workforce."

Wauseon EV's Wauseon Elementary School Principal Theresa Vietmeier worked with staff and students to create a video to thank the district's hard-working board members. You can view the video at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm-recap.

While thanking Crestview Local's (Van Wert) board members, Superintendent Kathy Mollenkopf said, "Each one of you brings your own particular talents and



SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

gifts to the board. But what (stands out) among all of you is your care and consideration for the students of our district and for our staff. So, thank you all.”

Students in Buckeye Career Center’s Business/Marketing lab designed small gifts for their board members. While recognizing board members’ dedication, Superintendent Bob Alsept said, “Too frequently, they receive far more criticism than praise. This is an opportunity for all of us to say ‘thank you’ for a job well done.”

Leetonia EV Superintendent Dennis J. Dunham thanked board members, stating he couldn’t have asked for a better group of individuals to work with in his first seven months, and encouraged community members to express their gratitude as well.

“(The board) meets once a month ... but you’re never not on call,” he said, noting each member is easy to approach and their caring is what makes the district great.

Students at Vinton County Local (Vinton) created artwork to thank board members for their service. The art was displayed on the walls of the high school media center for board members to enjoy.

While honoring board members with certificates for their service, Conotton Valley Union Local (Harrison) Superintendent Jerry Todd Herman said, “I am thankful for our board of education that is able to think outside of the box and agree to undertake projects that benefit our kids and the community.”

Norwayne Local (Wayne) board members were feted with pie and student projects, including letters, notebooks with comments, plates of cookies and a video expressing their thanks. In addition, the teachers association gave each board member a gift card.

Coventry Local (Summit) Superintendent Lisa A. Blough thanked board members for their support and hard work over the past year, stating the district is fortunate to have such “dedicated” board members.

Austintown Local (Mahoning) treated its board members with a cake from a local bakery during the board’s monthly board meeting.

In a letter to members of the West Geauga Local (Gauga) Board of Education, Superintendent Dr. Richard A. Markwardt said, “This past school year, you led West Geauga through the territory transfer of the former Newbury Local School District into West Geauga, reconfiguration of our elementary school buildings and a life-altering pandemic. Always, you did so with an awareness of your responsibility to promote the academic, social and emotional growth of our students and the physical and mental safety of our students, staff and residents. ... Thank you for your thoughtful focused leadership during a year characterized by uncertainties and challenges.”



SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

Some districts profiled their board members, highlighting why they ran for their local school board and the challenges and rewards of serving on a board of education. Acknowledging the challenges of making tough decisions, Greenfield EV board members cited the rewards of board service as working on various projects being implemented in the district, shaping policy and getting to know staff and students. When challenges arise, board member Eric Zint said, “It’s nice to know that we tackle them as a team.”

Honoring board members for their ongoing commitment to the district and its students, Indian Creek Local (Jefferson) Superintendent Dr. T.C. Chappellear, said “We have five people elected to serve the schools and children. You see all of the things happening (with new and renovated schools), and it all starts at the top and trickles down. I appreciate the job you have done. The stability and support you have and the perspective to make the right decisions for the kids is incredible.”

Jefferson County Vocational School passed a resolution designating January as School Board Recognition Month and gave board members gift bags as tokens of appreciation for their service.

Mansfield City Superintendent Stan Jefferson recognized the board of education, stating, “We would like to thank each and every one of our members for your leadership, your service and your dedication to building the future of public education in our schools.”

The Alliance Review’s Talk of the Town column thanked Sandy Valley Local’s (Stark) board members for “their dedication and leadership on the Sandy Valley School Board. We appreciate all that you do.”

Northwestern Local (Wayne) Superintendent Jeffrey N. Layton praised his board members for their time, dedication and “heartfelt concern for students,” in addition to their service to the district and community.

Huron City board members received plaques of appreciation commemorating their hard work.

Pickaway-Ross Career & Technology Center Superintendent Dennis L. Franks devoted an issue of his January newsletter to recognizing his board members. “Being a member of a school board is not glamorous,” Franks wrote. “But like everything about career and technical education, their service is essential. Each of these people chooses to give their time and energy to ensure that we are providing the right programs for students, which creates a stronger community.”

South Range Local (Mahoning) Superintendent Bethany Carlson and Treasurer James Phillips thanked board members for their service and presented them with an OSBA certificate.

“It has been a very trying year, and your support and leadership is very appreciated,” Carlson said.



SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

Other districts presenting certificates or recognizing their boards included: Ansonia Local (Darke); Arcanum-Butler Local (Darke); Bellefontaine City; Botkins Local (Shelby); Carey EV; Coldwater EV; Continental Local (Putnam); Defiance City; Eaton Community City; Edison Local (Jefferson); Fairborn City; Four County Career Center; Gallipolis City; Garaway Local (Tuscarawas); Highland Local (Medina); Hillsboro City; Holgate Local (Henry); Jonathan Alder Local (Madison); Lincolnview Local (Van Wert); Lisbon EV; Madison Local (Richland); Paulding EV; Pettisville Local (Fulton); Ridgemont Local (Hardin); River View Local (Coshocton); Southwest Local (Hamilton); St. Henry Consolidated Local (Mercer); Tuscarawas Valley Local (Tuscarawas); Washington County Career Center; Washington Court House City; West Branch Local (Mahoning); Western Buckeye ESC; and Woodridge Local (Summit).



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 are 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 2022 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, our community values a quality education as a vital step along the pathway to success for our children; and

WHEREAS, (insert school board members' first and last names) contribute greatly to this community through their service on the (district name) Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, these local decision-makers set the 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, these school board members are serving our community with integrity, honor and a commitment to our children's futures;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, _____, do hereby declare my appreciation to the members of the _____ School Board and proclaim the month of January 2022, 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 _____, 2022.



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 2022

_____ 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 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 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.



SAMPLE MARQUEE AND SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

Marquee messaging

2022 School Board Recognition Month
Thank you, school board!

Serving our kids and community
Thank a board member

Thank a school board member today!

We appreciate our school board members!

_____ School Board
Working to make a difference

Elected to serve our kids!
Thank you, school board

Strong schools = strong communities
Thank your school board

Social media messaging

Twitter

It's School Board Recognition Month. We thank our school board for their hard work and leadership! (post with a photo of the school board)

Take time to thank our school board members. It's School Board Recognition Month! (post with a photo of the school board)

Facebook, Instagram, etc. (longer message)

(School district name) student benefit every day from the leadership and vision of our school board. January is School Board Recognition Month, so take time to thank these dedicated school leaders.

School board members devote hours of their time each week to provide leadership for our school district. January is School Board Recognition Month, so take time to thank a school board member today!

Tag OSBA at OHSchoolBoards and use the hashtag #SchoolBoardMonth