



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 2022.

Licking Heights Local (Licking) students from around the district presented each school board member with a certificate honoring their work during the district's School Board Recognition Month celebration in January. Students also expressed gratitude for all that the board members do to shape the district.

Similar praises were echoed in recognition programs across Ohio as districts celebrated school board members and their service. January is designated as School Board Recognition Month, and school districts honored their board members with articles in newsletters and local newspapers, social media posts, videos and celebrations at board meetings.

To support district recognition celebrations, OSBA provided member districts with an online resource kit, including a proclamation by Gov. Mike DeWine declaring January as School Board Recognition Month; personalized recognition certificates for each board member; and a poster of this year's theme, "Celebrating school boards."

You can find additional photos from Licking Heights 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 submitted information and photos about their activities, and OSBA gathered information from stories written by local news media.

Richmond Heights Local (Cuyahoga) celebrated with appetizers and desserts before the January board meeting. Board members received certificates of appreciation and gift bags with an edible arrangements fruit box; candied nuts; a pin stating, "Hands that Serve"; a metal business card that was engraved in the district's new Makerspace; and a touch-free tool. Thank-you messages were posted on school marquees and on TVs in the school buildings, and the elementary classes created a thank-you song video to honor board members. You can view the video at the link listed above.

Akron City held a celebration in December to recognize board members Lisa Mansfield and Patrick Bravo, who did not seek reelection in 2021. The district's social media sites included messages of gratitude from the community for their service. At the board's January meeting, Superintendent Christine Fowler Mack presented certificates to current board members, recognizing their "exemplary leadership and service to public schools."

Pickaway-Ross Career & Technology Center board members were recognized for their service on social media and on the career center's blog, Pickaway-Ross Pride. You can view the blog at www.pickawayross.com/pickaway-rosspride.aspx.



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Orange City celebrated its board members with a thank-you video that began with the board members' children, including those in college, thanking them for their service. The video also featured responses from elementary school students and performances by the elementary and high school choirs and middle school band. The video is posted at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm-recap.

In a column in the Circleville Herald, Pickaway County ESC Superintendent Ty Ankrom highlighted the service of each of the ESC's five governing board members, noting they all have strong county ties.

"It's an honor to work with them, and I thank them for their service and dedication," he wrote.

Olentangy Local (Delaware) board members enjoyed a performance by the Orange High School Jazz Band and saw the roll out of a video featuring a conversation with each board member. They also received a bouquet of flowers, recognition certificates and pack of greeting cards with artwork created by students at Liberty Tree Elementary School. You can view the video at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm-recap.

Other organizations also celebrated the work of school board members. The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and DeWine thanked board members for their dedication through social media posts. Dr. John Richard, president of the Stark Education Partnership and former ODE deputy superintendent, submitted an editorial to the Canton Repository recognizing the contributions of local school board members.

"Thank you to all school board members for your involvement in making a better tomorrow for Stark County's students and community," he wrote.

West Branch Local (Mahoning) Superintendent Micki Egli recognized the contributions of the district's school board members, stating, "I would like to thank each of you for your service to the school district community and look forward to another year of moving our district forward."

Copley Fairlawn City Assistant Superintendent Brian Williams acknowledged the challenges the board has faced over the last two years as he thanked board members for their "unwavering dedication to our staff, our families, our community (and) our students."

"Being a member of a board of education during normal times is challenging and demanding," he said. "However, being a board member during a pandemic walks a very fine line of being nearly impossible."

ESC of Eastern Ohio Superintendent Dr. Traci Hostetler thanked the governing board members for the "selfless contributions" made in the district and encouraged others to thank them for their dedication and service.



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Handmade artwork and cards created by Chardon Local (Geauga) students were given to board members during their January meeting to thank them for their service. In addition, high school seniors Morgan Fisher and Sebastian Marker expressed gratitude for board members past and present during their student liaison presentation that evening. A video of Park Elementary School students singing a thank-you song was shared at the board's February meeting.

In an article submitted to the Times Reporter, Dover City Superintendent Karie McCrate recognized the work of the district's board members, pointing out that "more goes into their decisions about what students learn, who teaches them and what kind of facilities house their academic and extracurricular experiences than any of us realize.

"I'm honored to work with such a wonderful group of Dover citizens who commit themselves to make student-centered decisions each and every day to keep Dover Schools moving forward," she added.

To honor Bay Village City's board members, high school seniors Milan Oppewall and Angelica Jameson read DeWine's proclamation recognizing January as School Board Recognition Month. Each personally thanked board members for their service, and Jameson pointed out that the district is "not only a community, but one big family," which Oppewall echoed.

"Growing up with love and support trains us to give back," Oppewall said. "So many kids have benefited from the work you do."

In recognizing board members for their commitment to the district, Liberty Center Local (Henry) Superintendent Richard A. Peters pointed out that they are all graduates of the district who either have children currently in school in the district or who have graduated from the district.

"It's through their leadership that we've been able to accomplish so much, concerning education opportunities and facilities, and they've been great stewards financially for the district," Peters said. "I appreciate everything they do for the betterment of our kids."

At the board's January meeting, Switzerland of Ohio Local (Monroe) Superintendent Phil Ackerman presented board members with framed certificates of appreciation and congratulated them for their work on behalf of the school and community.

Buckeye Career Center students made small, hand-crafted gifts for the board.

"Our Buckeye Career Center Board of Education members are truly dedicated to our students, staff and stakeholders," Superintendent Bob Alsept said in a press release. "The time away from their family is very valuable to keeping us on the proper course."



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In an article published in ThisWeek Grandview, Grandview Heights City Superintendent Andy Cupp recognized board members for their dedication and leadership as they “navigated a pandemic in the present while planning and building for the future,” noting that they were “instrumental in the construction” of the district’s new middle school and renovations of the high school.

Revere Local (Summit) board members received a Revere knit cap as a thank-you gift. “We are thankful as a school district for your commitment and support,” Superintendent Dr. Michael L. Tefs said as he presented the gifts.

Tuscarawas Valley Local (Tuscarawas) Superintendent Mark A. Murphy praised board members for the strength they bring to the district and their “caring leadership ability.”

During the board’s January meeting, Medina City Superintendent Aaron Sable expressed his appreciation for the work the board has accomplished despite the COVID-19 pandemic while creating safe environments for staff and students. He also thanked the board’s two newly elected members for “the work to come.”

“I am hopeful that, as a board, we have the opportunity to really be focused on academics and education,” Sable said.

Independence Local (Cuyahoga) elementary school students made thank-you cards for the school board members. The cards were presented by Primary School Principal T.J. Ebert, who thanked the board for “everything they do for us as administrators.” Superintendent Ben Hegedish also thanked the board, noting that, “You make a difference for our kids, and I see that every day.”

During the board’s January meeting, Sebring Local (Mahoning) Superintendent Toni Viscounte recognized the “immeasurable value” board members bring to the district.

“They have been instrumental in helping us make the decisions and policies necessary to continue our mission, despite the challenges brought on in the past two years,” Viscounte said. “I ask that the community join us by taking a moment to thank a board member — for their time, energy, knowledge and dedication to making our schools safe places where students can learn and grow into tomorrow’s leaders, learners and thinkers.”

Students in Columbiana EV’s entrepreneurial class created shirts to honor their board members. As Superintendent Dr. Donald J. Mook and the district’s three principals thanked the board members for their service, Principal Kimberly Sharshan emphasized the value behind the board’s decision-making process.

“I just don’t know if everybody tells you enough, thank you for everything,” she said.



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Jefferson County JVSD Superintendent Todd Phillipson recognized the board of education during its January meeting, praising the members' dedication to students and to providing educational opportunities as pathways to a successful year. Celebrations extended into February, when the board enjoyed a dinner prepared by students from the center's culinary arts program.

In a press release, Woodbridge Local (Summit) Superintendent Walter C. Davis recognized the work of the district's board members, asking the community to "join us as we say 'thank you'" for their service.

Other districts presenting certificates or recognizing their boards included: Arcanum-Butler Local (Darke); Brookfield Local (Trumbull); Bryan City; Cleveland Municipal; East Liverpool City; Edison Local (Jefferson); Fairborn City; Four County Career Center; Gallipolis City; Huber Heights City; Indian Creek Local (Jefferson); Jackson City; Lakeview Local (Trumbull); Mid-Ohio ESC; Monroeville Local (Huron); North Central Local (Williams); North Royalton City; Northeastern Local (Defiance); Oak Hill Union Local (Jackson); Ridgemont Local (Hardin); Sylvania City; Toledo City; Warrensville Heights City; and Wellston City.