



 **School Board** 
Recognition Month

JANUARY 2023

2023 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



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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.



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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 2023 is Supporting Success for All Students, 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.)



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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



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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 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.



SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

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.



SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

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.



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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 2023 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 2023, 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 _____, 2023.



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 2023

_____ 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). The theme of this year’s School Board Recognition Month is “Supporting success for all students.”

“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 helping all our students be successful in their future endeavors. 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.



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SAMPLE MARQUEE AND SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

Marquee messaging

2023 School Board Recognition Month
Supporting success for all students!

2023 School Board Recognition Month
Thank you, school board!

Thank a school board member today!

Serving our kids and community
Thank a board member

We appreciate our school board members!

_____ School Board
Supporting all students!

Elected to serve our students!
Thank you, school board

Strong schools = strong communities
Thank your school board

Social media messaging

Tag OSBA at OHSchoolBoards and use the hashtag #SchoolBoardMonth

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!