



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 2020. 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.

Embracing the 2020 theme “Planting seeds of success,” Chardon Local (Geauga) students created thank-you cards and gifts to honor their board members during School Board Recognition Month. Among the gifts presented at the January board meeting were framed canvases of trees with finger-painted leaves from the district’s preschool students.

During the celebration, Chardon High School seniors Kaylie Malloy and Cayleigh Dawson, who serve as student liaisons to the board, thanked board members for their commitment to the district.

“There’s something really special about Chardon,” Malloy said. “It’s obvious how much you care about our students. You help build this school community and support it.”

Similar praises were echoed in recognition programs across Ohio as districts honored their school board members in fun and unique ways. 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.

“Through partnerships with teachers, school administrators, staff and parents, school board members provide vital leadership and support for schools, and we thank them for their service and for the positive difference they make throughout our state,” Gov. Mike DeWine said in his proclamation declaring January School Board Recognition Month.

You can find additional photos from Chardon 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.

Students from each of Maumee City’s five school buildings played a key role in honoring the district’s board members. One student from each school was selected to write a thank-you note to a school board member. Students read their notes and gave board members plants and flowers to celebrate the month’s theme.



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Students in Richmond Heights Local's (Cuyahoga) Rise Up after-school program shared a video they created to show their appreciation, and board members received a planner marked with their meeting dates, a pack of daisy seeds and a garden stone painted with this year's theme.

Buckeye Career Center board members received handcrafted wooden gifts designed by Construction Technology students and a coffee mug. The district also recognized the board on social media, with a large banner in the career center and in a press release to local media.

"Too frequently, they receive far more criticism than praise," Superintendent Bob Asept said in the press release. "This is an opportunity for all of us to say thank you for a job well done."

The Warren County ESC administration and staff thanked their governing board members with cards, posters, paintings and handpicked gifts from students in the special needs and at-risk programs. Those contributing to the celebration included students and participants in the multidisabilities; social communication; Warren County Learning Center Campuses; John K. Lazares Alternative School; adult connections; and transition living classroom programs.

In an article submitted to the Times Bulletin, Van Wert City Superintendent Vicki L. Brunn shared how the board has overseen a variety of substantial projects, including implementing a new strategic plan, updating all lighting and security for five buildings and hiring a new treasurer, among other initiatives.

"For our board members, being on the board is a labor of love by people who care deeply about our district," Brunn wrote.

Westerville City board members enjoyed a live performance by Westerville South High School's Soundsation as well as a video of a song performed by choir members from both Westerville North and Westerville Central high schools. Westerville Mayor Kathy Cocuzzi presented a proclamation from the city, and each board member received a gift basket of handmade soaps and other products from Westerville North High School's Chem Gems, an interdisciplinary business that teaches students how chemistry is used in the real world.

Felicity-Franklin Local (Clermont) middle school students made cards that were displayed at the board's January meeting. The district also created two videos honoring board members that were posted on the district website and on its app and featured a board member recognition slide in the slideshow that plays near the concession stand for all home basketball games. You can view the videos at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm-recap.



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Dublin City Superintendent Dr. Todd F. Hoadley wrote an article published in the Dublin Villager thanking board members for their service, noting that they are all long-serving board members and “their experience is a huge asset to our district.”

Osnaburg Local (Stark) treated board members were treated to performances by the district’s East Canton High School Hornet Band and Echoes choir.

Ripley Union Lewis Huntington Local (Brown) Superintendent James L. Wilkins II presented congratulatory plaques to the district’s board members, noting that being a school board member is “a noble cause” requiring a lot of time with little pay.

“I really appreciate all that you do for our kids and all the support you provide to administrators, teachers and staff,” Wilkins said. “You don’t achieve things like the Momentum Award, you don’t get grants and have great successes with your students like we have without everyone pulling (in) the same direction. We’ve got some wonderful things going on.”

Pickerington Local (Fairfield) board members were honored with a performance by Pickerington High School Central’s Class A saxophone quartet. Board members also received potted plants with the message “Thank you for helping students grow,” recognition certificates and a theme poster with personalized messages from staff and students at Heritage Elementary School.

In addition to receiving certificates recognizing their service, Woodridge Local (Summit) board members received cards and handcrafted items reflecting the theme, “Planting seeds of success.”

North Royalton City students created a video in which elementary students performed “You’ve got a friend in me,” and older students thanked board members. You can view the video at www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm-recap. Elementary students also made books, rulers and nameplates for board members.

In recognizing board members for their work, Teays Valley Local (Pickaway) Superintendent Robin Halley thanked them for their dedication to the district’s students and staff.

“While there are times when difficult decisions need to be made, these board members always focus on what is best for our students,” Halley said.

Students in Jackson Local’s (Stark) Strausser Elementary School created stained glass figures for the district’s board members in appreciation of their service.



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Port Clinton City board members were honored with a special performance by the high school orchestra. Orchestra director Adam Murray thanked the board for supporting music education, and students shared what they liked best about being in the orchestra.

Arcanum-Butler Local (Darke) Superintendent John Stephens thanked his school board for its focus on the future success of the district's students, citing the completion of the new Agricultural Education, Community and Athletic Center as an example.

"The project was a direct reflection of our board of education listening to our students and (the) community and finding a way to get it done," Stephens said. "(We want to) let them know we support them and that their dedicated service is recognized and truly appreciated."

Galion City celebrated board members with a thank-you video from the intermediate staff and students, goody bags from primary school students, a signed thank-you poster from the middle school and a card from the high school.

In a letter to the Morgan County Herald, Morgan Local (Morgan) Superintendent Dr. Kristin Barker praised the district's board members for their "vision and voice to help shape a better tomorrow." Board members also received awards engraved with "Essential Piece."

Kirtland Local (Lake) students used the district Makerspace — a collaborative workspace that encourages entrepreneurship in the STEM fields — to design and create T-shirts, mugs and signs thanking board members for their service. Eaton Community City Superintendent Jeff Parker thanked the district's board members, noting that they can be in "a tough situation."

"They get their share of people calling and asking questions or (sharing) concerns," Parker said. "I do want to thank and recognize them."

Manchester Local's (Summit) fourth-grade choir performed songs to honor board members.

Union Local (Belmont) Superintendent Ben Porter thanked board members for the dedication they provide for students in the district.

"We appreciate all you do for us," Porter said. "Your leadership is critical for what we do."

Southern Local (Meigs) students created thank-you notes and posters that were used to decorate the boardroom to honor the school board.



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Mansfield City Superintendent Stan Jefferson surprised the board of education prior to a board meeting, recognizing them with Tyger Orange flowers and an orchestra concert.

Students in Bellefontaine City's high school technology program created new nameplates to honor board members.

East Muskingum Local (Muskingum) Superintendent Dave Adams recognized the board's work at the January board meeting, and board members received a copy of the Muskie-Olopy game from the administrative team.

Franklin-Monroe Local (Darke) school board members were recognized by Arcanum News columnist Vickie Rhodehamel, who thanked them for their "contributions to make our schools better."

East Guernsey Local (Guernsey) Superintendent Adam Pittis recognized the board of education during its January meeting, thanking them for their service to the district.

Many other districts awarded OSBA certificates to their boards.

To see how other districts celebrated School Board Recognition Month, visit www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm-recap.