

# 2021 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](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/SBRM)



# USING THIS TOOL KIT

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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](http://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](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm).

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



# IDEAS TO HONOR YOUR SCHOOL BOARD

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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](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm) for artwork, a sample news release, downloadable logos for your website and printed materials and other resources.

The theme for 2021 is Building the future of public education, 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](http://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, 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](http://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](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm).)



# IDEAS TO HONOR YOUR SCHOOL BOARD

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## 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.
- 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.

## 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 groups to record videos honoring school board members.

Don't forget to complete the online form at [www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm](http://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

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*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](http://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.



# SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

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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](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm-recap).



# SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

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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](http://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.



# SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

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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.





# SAMPLE DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

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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.

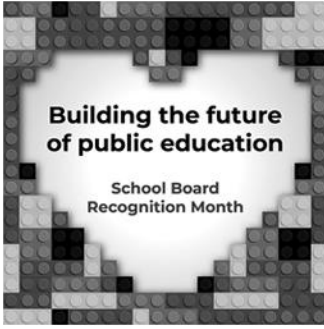
East Muskingum Local (Muskingum) Superintendent Dave Adams recognized the board's work at the January board meeting, and board members received a copy of the Muskie-Olopy game from the administrative team.

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](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/sbrm-recap).



# SAMPLE EDITORIAL

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*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

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*Ask your mayor, city council, or county official to proclaim January 2021 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 2021, 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 \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

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# SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

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*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 2021**

## \_\_\_\_\_ 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,”

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# SAMPLE ARTICLE

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*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.



# SAMPLE MARQUEE AND SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

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## Marquee messaging

2021 School Board Recognition Month  
Thank you, school board!

School boards: Building the future of public education

Serving our kids and community  
Thank a board member

Thank a school board member today!

Building the future of public education  
\_\_\_\_\_ Schools Board of Education

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