

January

School Board Member Recognition Month

► Tips Sheet

Please join schools, governments and civic organizations nationwide in saluting school board members' dedication and hard work during School Board Member Recognition Month in January. The theme is *School Boards: Making a World of Difference*.

Here are a variety of ideas for activities to make this occasion special for your school board members. Please include your representative on the state Board of Education as well as your local school board members in your celebration activities.



Remember, a number of these suggested activities have no price tags, and most board members prefer words of encouragement and support that come in the form of handwritten letters from students, parents and others in the communities they serve. AASB encourages medium to large school systems to consider coordinating events among the schools, so neither the schools nor the board members are overwhelmed with activities during the month.

In Schools:

- Put a message thanking your school board members for “making a world of difference” on your school’s marquee.
- Design a bulletin board display featuring school board members’ photographs, background information and years of board service.
- Invite parent organizations to attend the school board’s January meeting to make remarks commending the board’s service to students.
- Invite board members to a PTA or PTO meeting and publicly thank them for their service.
- Invite board members to a school sporting event and arrange a special ceremony to honor them at halftime.
- Invite board members to speak to social studies classes and explain the board’s role in local government.
- Invite board members to a school assembly to entertain them with a student-produced skit demonstrating what a school board does. Give the board members a round of applause.

In Schools (continued):

- Invite school board members to a breakfast, lunch or dinner prepared in their honor by home economics or vocational students. Use student artwork on the placemats.
- Invite a school board member to “shadow” a student through a typical school day or ride a school bus through its route.
- Make board members the guests of honor at a school luncheon, carnival, festival or event.
- Make a special effort to introduce school board members when they attend school functions and to thank them for their services.
- Introduce school board members during halftime festivities at a high school basketball game. Include a message thanking them in your game program or on the score board.
- Have students write notes of appreciation to board members. Encourage staff and parents to write thank-you notes or cards to school board members.
- Present examples of student artwork or school T-shirts or sweatshirts to school board members.
- Present each board member with a plant grown by the horticulture students.
- Arrange for a student choir to sing to the board at the board’s monthly meeting.
- Record a CD featuring a song from each choir and/or band in the school system to present to the school board.
- Add a special school board recognition “thank you” to your website’s home page.
- Donate a book or set of books to the school library and include board members’ names and dates of service on a recognition label within each book.
- Research your school board’s history and write a timeline listing the highlights. Post the timeline on your website.
- Publish a “Meet Your School Board Members” mini-brochure featuring a picture and short bio of each board member. Also include a few comments from each about how they view their role on the board.
- Write board members’ employers, thanking them for allowing the board member the time for board service (see sample letter).
- Ask a group of schools to “adopt” a board member and plan a special activity for him/her. Follow up to ensure no board member is overlooked.
- Ask your congressmen to write a letter of commendation to each board member.
- Produce a show on your cable company’s local access channel to pay tribute to board members.
- Ask the student editors of school newspapers and blogs to run an editorial highlighting board members’ impact on the school (see sample editorial). Or, ask student publications to run the provided advertisements in January.
- If your school system’s website doesn’t have a board of education page (or has one that needs updating), create one and unveil it at the monthly board meeting.

In the News:

- Ask local newspapers to use Board Member Recognition Month logos and run advertisements as a public service during January (see camera-ready ad).
- Ask local newspapers and student newspapers to profile board members.
- Ask each board member why they serve and use their quotes in news releases and articles.
- Submit a guest column, letter to the editor or opinion piece to your local newspaper or online news blog about the job your board members do.
- Provide news outlets with information about school boards and their special role in local governance of public schools. Be sure to provide a summary of the board's recent outstanding achievements.

In Your Community:

- Encourage the city council, county commission and/or chamber of commerce to issue an official proclamation honoring your school board members and commemorating January as School Board Member Recognition Month in your community (see sample resolution).
- Display board appreciation posters, cards and banners in community businesses.
- Ask local merchants to use their marquees to say "thanks" to the school board for "making a world of difference."
- Host a reception for school board members prior to a regularly scheduled board meeting.
- Invite former board members to a current school board meeting and recognize them.
- Ask board members' employers and civic groups to recognize them for the job they do through letters, e-mails, announcements or newsletters.
- Ask board members' employers to sponsor advertisements recognizing their employee for their community service.
- Sponsor a student poster or essay contest to thank school board members for their dedication and hard work. Display the results in local banks, post offices or libraries. Send a photograph of the winners to local newspapers.
- Hold a monthly board meeting in a school to encourage public attendance and participation.
- Ask community groups to invite board members to speak about the role boards play in school governance.