

Tennessee School Board Appreciation Week Kit



School Boards:
Impacting **Every** Student
Every Day.

Thank you school board members for everything you do!

TENNESSEE SCHOOL BOARD APPRECIATION WEEK
JANUARY 27-31, 2020



Recognition Week Kit Contents

- Activities/Tip sheet with ideas for recognition activities.
- Sample letters to school board members' employers to acknowledge their service to the community and emphasize school-business ties.
- Sample marquee slogans, Facebook statuses, and Twitter updates.
- Sample column for the district newsletter, local newspaper, website or other publication.
- Sample news release.
- Sample radio public service announcements.
- Sample Proclamation.
- School board fact sheet.
- School board week logos for ad creation, social media sharing, website posting, print needs (please see separate files in dropbox).

Please Note:

Copies of this kit can be found at
<https://tsba.net/resources/school-board-appreciation-week/>



Sample Activities

In public schools, the giving starts at the top with the school board. The board's job is to determine a vision for education; design a structure to achieve that vision; assure the schools are accountable to the local community; and advocate for continuous improvement in student learning. These responsibilities require the unselfish giving of time and service. There are an endless number of meetings and school functions to attend; unlimited amounts of reports, agendas, proposals and other information to read and study; and a variety of difficult decisions to make.

The following suggestions are for how you can show your appreciation to the school board members from your school district for the service they provide to your community. Once January is over, use these same ideas to show school board members that they are appreciated throughout the year.

In schools and for school administrators:

- 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 member about how they view their role on the board.
- 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 scoreboard.
- Invite board members to speak to social studies classes and explain the board's role in local government.
- Design a bulletin board display featuring school board members' photographs, background information and years of board service.
- Feature school board members in school publications, on the website and social media sites.
- Write board members' employers, thanking them for allowing board members the time for board service. (See Sample Letter to Employer).
- Host a surprise banquet for board members and invite the school staff and community leaders. Coordinate this activity with the board members' families.
- Arrange for a city or county official to proclaim Jan. 27-31 as "School Board Week." (See sample proclamation).
- Invite board members to your school. These people undoubtedly became board members because they care about students and want to help your community provide the best possible education for students. They may hesitate to come to school unless they are invited there for a specific purpose.



Staff, students, and parents:

- Each week during January, ask a different class from each school to “adopt” a board member. Students can send cards and other special creations to their adopted board member’s home or place of work (if appropriate) or they can present them at a board meeting.
- Arrange for a student choir or a class to sing to the board at their monthly meeting or invite them to a school concert and dedicate a song in the board’s honor.
- Invite board members to a brunch cooked by students. Some middle and high school programs offer food preparation classes or operate student-run community restaurants. Encourage board members to invite spouses and other friends or relatives who support them in their role as a board member to this special brunch.
- Create board appreciation posters, cards and banners and display in community businesses during the month.
- 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 the recognition label within each book.
- Have students write notes of appreciation to board members.
- Ask elementary students to draw pictures of what they think school board members do. Mail or email these to your school board members, post them in the room where the board meets or invite board members to your school to see the art display.
- Invite board members to a PTA meeting and publicly thank them for their service on the school board.

In the news:

- Feature one or two board members each week of January in the local newspaper. Include a photo of the board member in a school setting, a short biography and his or her philosophy about school board work and the importance of education. Suggest that the education reporter write a feature story about the person who has served the longest on the school board or a school board member who attended your local schools.
- Submit a guest column or opinion piece to your local newspaper and the job your board members do.
- Provide newspapers, television and radio stations with information about school boards and their special role in local governance of public schools.



Community groups and businesses:

- Encourage businesses to sponsor radio public service announcements, acknowledging the work of the school board and reviewing what responsibilities they hold.
- Display an appreciation banner across a major street or highway where it will be seen by lots of residents of the school district. Use community marquees to post messages of thanks. (See sample marquee slogans)
- Set up a recognition corner or area in the public library to exhibit memorabilia from past school boards.
- Create and place board appreciation signs along busy streets or highways entering and exiting the community. Be sure to check with local government agencies about regulations for signs along public roads.
- Arrange for a florist to donate a single rose for each board member and put it at their place at a board meeting as a thank you for their service.
- Make service clubs in the area aware that January is school board appreciation month, and encourage them to show public appreciation for their members who serve on school boards.



Sample Letter to Employer

(Send letters to school board members' employers to acknowledge board members' service to the community and emphasize school-business ties. To be mailed by the Superintendent.)

Dear _____:

Thank you for giving your employee, _____, the time to serve our community as a member of the _____ School Board.

As a member of the board, _____ helps make decisions that have a tremendous impact on our children's future and the community's quality of life. Both you and your company have shown a tremendous commitment to our community by giving _____ the flexibility to attend board meetings and events.

School board membership is one of the most personally demanding forms of public service. _____ and the other members of the school board spend countless hours preparing for and participating in their monthly meetings. They also devote a great deal of time to studying education issues and laws and listening to the concerns of parents, teachers and community members. In fact, they never are completely "off the job" as board members.

School Board Appreciation Week is being celebrated January 27-31, 2020 throughout Tennessee. I want to thank you for the important role you play in helping our school board take care of our community's children.

Sincerely,

Superintendent of Schools



Sample Slogans/Messages

- School Boards: Impacting **Every** Student **Every** Day.
- Elected to Work for our Kids! Thank you, School Board Members.
- January 27-31...School Board Appreciation Week...Say 'Thanks!'
- We Celebrate Our School Board!
- School Boards are Essential to School Success...Thank You!
- Strong Schools = Strong Communities...Thank Your School Board!
- School Boards Lead so Students Can Achieve!
- Thank a School Board Member Today!
- #impactingeverystudenteveryday

Sample Facebook and Twitter Messages

- Thank you (School District Name) school board members for impacting every student every day!
- Thank you to the (School District Name) school board members for your dedication to our students, faculty, and staff!
- (School District Name) is proud of our school board members and the work they do to improve public education for everyone!
- (School District Name) students benefit every day from the leadership and vision of our school board. Jan. 27-31 is School Board Appreciation Week in Tennessee 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. This week is School Board Appreciation week in Tennessee so take time to thank a school board member today!



Sample Opinion Column

(This article can be adapted for use in your district newsletter, as an article in your local newspaper, as a letter to the editor, or as the foundation of a speech. Localize the article by adding information about your board, details of how board members will be honored and examples of ways your board has improved education in your district. To be mailed or emailed by the superintendent.)

The (school district name) will join other school districts in saluting our local education leaders during Tennessee's annual School Board Appreciation Week from January 27-31, 2020.

The week is designed to recognize the contributions made by all school board members, including the (district name) School Board. School boards are given the tremendous responsibility of ensuring the education of Tennessee's youth.

School board members are elected by their communities to manage the local schools. They oversee multimillion-dollar budgets, which fund education programs for more than 973,659 students in approximately 1,800 schools. Their personnel decisions affect more than 70,000 teachers, administrators and support staff.

These volunteer leaders are responsible for formulating school district policy, approving the curriculum, maintaining school facilities, and adhering to state and federal education laws. Legal concerns and the complexities of school finance, including budgeting and taxation, require them to spend many hours in board training programs and personal study to enhance their understanding of these issues.

Our deepest appreciation is extended to the dedicated men and women who make it possible for local citizens to participate in education. We salute the public servants of the (district name) School Board whose commitment and civic responsibility make local control of public schools in our community possible:

(Insert names of local board members)

Please join us by saying thank you to our school board members during Tennessee's School Board Appreciation Week!

Sample News Release

(To be emailed or mailed on letterhead to local media outlets - TSBA will send a generic press release to all media outlets)

FOR RELEASE JANUARY 27, 2020

**For more information, contact:
(Person's name and phone #)**

School Board Appreciation Week Set for Jan. 27-31, 2020

(City) - January 27-31, 2020, is School Board Appreciation Week in Tennessee. This week helps build awareness and understanding of the vital functions our locally elected boards of education play in our community. (School District Name Here) is joining public school districts from across the state to celebrate School Board Appreciation Week and honor local board members for their commitment to (Community's Name) and its children.

"Our school system is the backbone of our community, and these men and women devote countless hours to making sure our schools are helping every child," (Superintendent's Full Name) said. "There is no greater honor that can be bestowed upon a citizen than membership on a local board of education. They spend countless hours studying the issues and regulations and make the tough decisions when called upon to ensure the type of accountability people expect."

(Superintendent's Last Name) said the key work of school boards is to:

- Create a vision for what the community wants the school district to be and for making student achievement the top priority;
- Establish standards for what students will be expected to learn and be able to do;
- Ensure progress is measured to be sure the district's goals are achieved and students are learning at expected levels;
- Create a safe, orderly climate where students can learn and teachers can teach;
- Form partnerships with others in the community to solve common problems; and
- Focus attention on the need for continuous improvement by questioning, refining and revising issues related to student achievement.

"Our local school board impacts every student every day in (Community's Name) by influencing the high-quality of education that our children and youth receive. The (School District Name Here) school board shows its commitment to educational excellence and equity – and for that we are very grateful for their attitude of service."

The members serving our district and their years of service are as follows: (list board members here)



Sample Radio Public Service Announcements

10-second PSA

January 27-31 is School Board Appreciation Week. We want to thank all our school board members for impacting every student every day. Thank a school board member today!

10-second PSA

Our children need a first-rate education, and our (school district name) school board members work hard to make that possible by impacting every student every day. Take time to thank them this week. It's School Board Appreciation Week.

20-second PSA

(School District Name) children benefit every day from the hard work of our school board. January 27-31 is School Board Appreciation Week, so take the time to thank these dedicated leaders for spending countless hours away from their own families and jobs so all our children can get a great education.

20-second PSA

We want our children to work hard and learn to be responsible members of the community. Every day, our (school district name) school board members are leading by example. They give hours of their time so our children can have a first-rate education. Thank a school board member today!

“SCHOOL BOARD WEEK”

SAMPLE LOCAL PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, an excellent public education system is vital to the quality of life of Tennessee’s communities and to the economic development of the State; and

WHEREAS, school board members represent a tremendous resource as local decision makers and diligently work to overcome the challenges of a changing world while providing students with the services and opportunities needed for a quality education; and

WHEREAS, school board members strive to ensure that every student graduates high school prepared for a career and/or college; and

WHEREAS, school board members support and appreciate the efforts of students, educators and administrators whose diligent efforts have led to Tennessee having the highest graduation rate on record; and

WHEREAS, the men and women of our local school boards are elected by the people to make decisions most appropriate for their communities and deserve recognition and thanks for their countless hours of service to public education in Tennessee;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, _____, Mayor/County Executive of _____, do hereby proclaim the week of January 27-31, 2020.

SCHOOL BOARD APPRECIATION WEEK

In (city/county) and encourage all citizens to join me in this worthy observance.

Mayor/County Executive

Date



School Board Facts

What is a school board?

The local board of education is a policy-making legislative body and the individual member is an official of the state. Except during an official meeting, a board member has no more power, authority or jurisdiction over school matters than any other citizen in the community. A school board's primary duty is to provide the opportunity for the best and most appropriate education for all children entrusted in its care. Tennessee currently has 141 public school districts.

Eligibility

In order to be elected to a Tennessee school board, one must be:

- A citizen of Tennessee
- At least 18 years old
- A resident of the school district
- A high school graduate (or G.E.D.)
- A registered voter in the county

Elections

All county school boards must be popularly elected by district, in non-partisan elections, to staggered four-year terms of office. City school systems also must be popularly elected to staggered four-year terms of office, but they may be elected by district or at-large. Boards of special school districts will continue to be elected pursuant to the provisions of private acts establishing such systems.

Duties of a school board

The two basic premises of school board operations are:

The board is a corporate body. The authority of a board member includes expressing an opinion and casting a vote in a board meeting. Outside a board meeting, a board member has no authority over school matters.

The board is a policy-making body. The board speaks through policy. Matters the board chooses not to address through policy are left to the discretion of the superintendent. School boards make policy and superintendents carry out the policy.

In addition, the legislature has specified the following mandatory duties:

- **Management and Control.** The board of education is to manage and control all public schools established under its jurisdiction. This gives the board of education the primary authority over school matters, but management responsibilities are delegated to the superintendent.
- **Employment.** The board has the duty to employ the superintendent, set salaries for employees, grant tenure, approve evaluation plans for employees and hold dismissal hearings when necessary.
- **Purchasing.** The board may purchase supplies, furniture, fixtures and materials of every kind. All expenditures for such purchases estimated to exceed \$10,000 must be made by competitive bids.
- **Budget Preparation.** The Board of Education is required to prepare a budget and to submit it to the appropriate legislative body.
- **Students.** The board of education has several duties regarding students. The Education Code gives the board the duty to discipline students after a hearing as well as the duty to establish standards and policies governing student attendance.
- **Policies.** Local boards of education are required to compile and publish an official policy manual.

Mandated School Board Training

State Board of Education Rules and Regulations require each member of a local board of education to participate annually in seven hours of training provided through the School Board Academy Program. The basic core modules are: Board Policy and Operations, Board/Superintendent Relations Advocating Your Board's Vision, School Finance and School Law. New school board members must in their first year of service, attend a two-day orientation session in Nashville sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee School Boards Association plus one seven-hour module.