



## Recognition Week Kit Contents

- Sample 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 logo for ad creation, social media sharing, website posting, print needs.

### **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 begins 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.

Below are suggestions for ways your school district can show appreciation to your school board members 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 board meetings, schools, and for school administrators:**

- Put together an e-mail to students, district staff or civic organizations to announce School Board Appreciation Week. Invite them to the January school board meeting to join in the celebration.
- Add a special school board recognition "thank you" to your website's home page.
- Have a board member read the morning school announcements each day during this week.
- Design a bulletin board display featuring school board members' photographs, careers, hobbies, volunteer activities, and years of board service.
- Post a "thank you" message to school board members on the school marquee or digital signs.
- Invite board members to speak to social studies classes and explain the board's role in local government.
- Invite a board member to visit the district's schools and interact with students depending on age (read to first graders, perform a science experiment with a high school chemistry student).
- Design, order and distribute special bumper stickers or magnets. Include the school district colors and logo in the design.
- Make board members the guests of honor at a school luncheon, carnival, festival, or event.
- Introduce school board members during halftime at a high school athletic event and/or include a message thanking them on the scoreboard.
- Invite board members to athletic events to throw the first ball or blow the whistle to kick off the game.
- Ask board members to share their positive thoughts about the district's students, staff, and community and to describe their role on the board. Post these on social media, include in school newsletter or submit to your local newspaper.
- Present board members with coupons for "Free School Lunch." Have them sit with members of student senate or another student group.



- Showcase student artwork during the board meeting
- Arrange for a florist to donate a rose for each board member and place it at his or her place at the board meeting.
- Ask a local restaurant or grocery store to sponsor refreshments or dinner for the board.
- Create a slide show presentation featuring the board members and their accomplishments. Be sure to show off improvements in student achievement, new or renovated facilities and innovative academic programs.
- Decorate entrances to administration buildings/board room.
- Feature student entertainment at the board meeting.
- Give special recognition to board members with lengthy service records.
- Invite students to create bookmarks with each board member. Include board member photos; the district name, address, and phone number; board meeting dates, times, and locations; the district's mission statement; and a brief "thank you" to the board for its support of student reading. Distribute these bookmarks to schools, libraries, boys' and girls' clubs, recreation centers and bookstores.

#### **Staff, students, and parents:**

- Each week during January, ask a different class from each school to "adopt" a board member. Students can send cards, artwork, and other special creations to their adopted board member at the Central Office, or they can present them at a board meeting.
- Invite school board members to a school concert and dedicate a song in the board's honor.
- Have culinary arts, or family and consumer science students bake a cake and serve at a recognition ceremony.
- Hold mock school board meetings and elections in high school and invite your board members to watch.
- Create school board appreciation posters, cards and banners and display in community businesses during the month.
- Have school librarians dedicate books in the name of each board member as a lasting symbol of the board's contribution to student learning. Prior to the meeting in January, give members a chance to look at the books being given in their names and sign each of them.
- Have students write notes of appreciation to board members.
- Ask students to draw pictures of your school board members or 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:**

- 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.
- Invite local media to cover any special presentations recognizing board members during the January school board meeting.
- Send a news release about School Board Member Recognition Week to your local newspaper, television stations and radio stations.
- Submit a letter/column to the editor.
- Ask your local newspaper to write an editorial recognizing
  - Many volunteer hours school board members give to your community
  - Recent achievements from school board members
  - Recent or upcoming events/activities with school board members and students in the community
- Provide newspapers, television, and radio stations with information about what the board does, the major decisions facing your board, important actions the board has taken, or the amount of time each board member devotes to public schools

### **Community groups, service clubs and businesses:**

- Encourage the city council, county commission and/or chamber of commerce to issue an official proclamation honoring your school board members and commemorating School Board Member Recognition Week in your community. (See sample proclamation).
- Encourage businesses to sponsor radio public service announcements acknowledging the work of the school board and reviewing what responsibilities they hold.
- Encourage organizations or groups to send board members a note of appreciation, gift basket, or thank you gift.
- Display an appreciation banner across a major street or highway where it will be seen by residents of the school district.
- Use community marquees to post messages of thanks.
- 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 21-27, 2024, 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: Unlocking Opportunities
- Let's Face It – School Board's Work!
- School Board Members: Building a Brighter Future Every Day!
- You know what week it is! Thank you, School Board Members!
- Let's Celebrate! Our School Board is Great!
- School Boards are Essential to School Success... Thank You!
- School Boards Lead So Students Can Achieve!
- School boards: Building the way for public education!
- Strong schools = Strong communities  
Thank you, school board members!
- (School District Name): Working to make a difference

## Sample Facebook and Twitter Messages

- Shout out to our school board members for all their hard work!
- 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 our students!
- (School District Name) students benefit every day from the leadership and vision of our school board. Jan. 21-27 is School Board Appreciation Week in Tennessee so take time to thank these dedicated school leaders.
- School boards: Every day citizens doing extraordinary work to lead their community's schools.
- School boards: Helping children thrive during extraordinary times
- School boards: Working for kids and their communities
- Have you thanked a school board member today for their service and dedication to our students and community? #SchoolBoardAppreciationWeek



## 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 it with examples of board members roles and responsibilities, how board members will be honored during January, and examples of ways your board has improved education for the students in your district.)

The (school district name) will join other Tennessee school districts in saluting our local education leaders during Tennessee’s annual School Board Appreciation Week from January 21-27, 2024.

During this week, we take a moment to recognize the value of their work to our students and our communities. 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 to build a future for our students.

The school board works closely with parents, education professionals, and community members to create the educational vision we want for our students. It then formulates goals, defines results and sets the course for a quality and equitable educational program for all students. The school board is accountable to the public. 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.

These volunteer leaders are responsible for defining 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.

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 \_\_\_\_ students in approximately \_\_\_\_ schools. Their personnel decisions affect more than \_\_\_\_ teachers, administrators, and support staff.

Our deepest appreciation is extended to the dedicated men and women who make it possible for local citizens to participate in education. We honor the public servants of the (school board name) 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 21, 2024**

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

### **(School District) Celebrates School Board Appreciation Week**

(City) - January 21-27, 2024, is School Board Appreciation Week in Tennessee. (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.

The theme "School Boards: Unlocking Opportunities" reminds us to celebrate the unique role school boards play in building a future for their students, championing and advocating for quality education, and governing their local public schools. As the elected/appointed representatives of the people in their local communities, they represent their local communities' voice and vision for the future of their public schools.

"It takes strong leaders to build a strong community, and these men and women devote countless hours to making sure our schools are helping every child learn at a higher level," (superintendent's full name) said.

The school board's main goal is to support student achievement, (superintendent's last name) added. To achieve that goal, the board focuses on the following needs:

- Creating a vision for what the community wants the school district to be and for making student achievement the top priority;
- Setting the direction of the school district to achieve the highest student performance;
- Ensuring progress is measured to be sure the district's goals are achieved and students are learning at expected levels;
- Supporting a healthy and safe school district culture in which to work and to learn;
- Forming partnerships with others in the community to solve common problems; and
- Focusing on continuous improvement by questioning, examining, revising, refining, and revisiting issues related to student achievement.

Even though we are making a special effort during the last week of January to show appreciation for our school board members, we recognize their contributions reflect a year-round effort on their part," (Superintendent) said.

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





## Sample Radio Public Service Announcements

### 15-second PSA

January 21-27, 2024 is School Board Member Appreciation Week in Tennessee. School Board Members in the (School District Name) volunteer their time to tend to board business, which helps Tennessee students thrive.

### 15-second PSA

January 21-27, 2024 marks the annual observance of School Board Appreciation Week in Tennessee – a good time to salute the work of school board members and celebrate public education. Tell your locally elected board members you appreciate what they do for students in [School District].

### 30-second PSA

School Board Member Appreciation Week in Tennessee is January 21-27, 2024. Join the [your school district] in honoring the men and women who serve on the local school board.

The dedication of [your school district] board members to students and the community makes our schools places where all children can discover their interests and prepare for their future.

Celebrate local board members during School Board Member Appreciation Week. They volunteer their time to tend to board business, which helps Tennessee students thrive.



## **“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**, 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 21-27, 2024, **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

To be elected to a Tennessee school board, one must be:

- A citizen of Tennessee;
- A qualified voter of the county and a resident of the county for one (1) year prior to the date of the qualifying deadline for running as a candidate for the board of education;
- A resident of the school district;
- Resides within and be a qualified voter of the district represented;
- At least 18 years old;
- Possess a high school diploma, G.E.D, or HiSET; and
- A registered voter in the county.

### Elections

All county school boards must be popularly elected by district 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:

1. **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.
2. **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. Generally, 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.

Logo:



*School Boards:*  
**UNLOCKING  
OPPORTUNITIES**

TENNESSEE SCHOOL BOARD APPRECIATION WEEK  
JANUARY 21-27, 2024