



TO: Superintendents, Board Secretaries/Clerks and Public Information Officers

FROM: Debbie Elmore, SCSBA Communications Director

RE: School Board Recognition Month, January 2012

DATE: November 29, 2012

Salute the service of more than 630 school board members in South Carolina in January 2012 during School Board Recognition Month. The theme — School Boards Speak Out For Public Schools — reflects the efforts of thousands of men and women who advocate and shape the direction of our state's public schools.

The month-long observance is an opportunity for your school district and community to build a stronger understanding of the crucial role school boards assume in a representative democracy. School boards voluntarily tackle the enormous job of governing multi-million dollar public school districts, while preserving the core of our democratic values.

Use the month to highlight the accomplishments of your local board. Encourage community leaders, business partners and local civic groups to join in your recognition efforts. The following is SCSBA's School Board Recognition Kit to assist you in your efforts and includes:

- Kit contents and instructions sheet
- Suggested activities and tips
- Sample news release
- Sample letter to the editor
- Public service announcement
- Sample article for district newsletters and other publications
- Five reasons for school boards
- School boards – Keys to good schools flier (pdf)
- Your voice counts brochure (pdf)
- Education quotes sheet
- Draft resolution
- Camera-ready logos in color and black and white

Thank you in advance for your support to make School Board Recognition Month a success! Please contact me at 803.988.0224, delmore@scsba.org with any questions, comments or suggestions.

KIT CONTENTS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Activities and tips

Here you'll find dozens of ideas that may be used to celebrate School Board Recognition Month. Some of the newer ideas incorporate the use of your district and schools websites and other electronic tools. Don't let this opportunity slip by without some sort of thanks and recognition for your school board members.

Sample news release

This news release can be submitted to the local media for publication. Be sure to add information about special ceremonies or events you are planning for your board members. You may want to include an accompanying "fact sheet" about your district and/or board members. Include photos, if available.

Sample letter to the editor

This sample letter can be submitted to your local newspaper for publication. Use the letter to inform the community about School Board Recognition Month and to send a positive message about public education and your district's accomplishments. Ask a parent, booster or business partner to sign the letter.

Public service announcements

Contact local radio stations to arrange the announcing and placement of your public service announcement (PSA). This sample radio scripts can be customized to include your district information.

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.

Five reasons for school boards & education quotes

An article from the National School Boards Association and education quotes from a variety of sources that can be used as resources, fillers in newsletters, or in preparing remarks or gifts. A few ideas for using the quotes are included on the tips sheet.

Flyer: School boards – Keys to good schools (pdf)

This flyer, which can be distributed at school board meetings, features the crucial role of school boards in a democratic society and can be customized to include your school district's name and logo.

Brochure: Your voice counts! (pdf)

This brochure, which can be distributed to parents and community organizations, features information about the importance of electing quality citizens to the school board and can be customized to include your district name and logo.

Draft proclamation

Sample resolution that your city or county councils can pass to proclaim January as "School Board Recognition Month" in your community.

Logo

Provided in color and black and white, logos can be used in newsletters and on the Website.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND TIPS

Reach out to your community:

- Form a recognition month planning committee of staff and community leaders to plan special events/activities.
- Plan a special reception at the January board meeting. Invite students and community members, as well as the media, city council members, Jaycees, Rotary, etc.
- Ask local restaurants and grocery stores to help host the event.
- Promote the event at all sporting and school events.
- Hang invitations to the January board meeting (event) in bowling alleys, laundromats, fitness clubs, malls, grocery stores, public buildings, church lobbies, restaurants, children's play areas — wherever you can reach a cross-section of your community.
- Place messages on school marquees and websites.
- Seek endorsement and recognition for the school board from the chamber of commerce. The chamber is a leader in economic development and knows the value of a strong education system in attracting new industry and providing educated, skilled employees.
- Encourage the city council, local chamber of commerce or PTA to pass a local "School Board Recognition" proclamation.
- Invite legislators to attend a reception and "say a few words" of appreciation.
- Publish a brochure with photographs of board members giving their background, years of service, committee assignments, accomplishments, etc. for use at civic meetings.
- Ask your community's civic and business clubs (Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, Jaycees, chamber of commerce) to host your board at a breakfast or lunch.
- Arrange a speaking engagement at a local service or civic club to explain the school board's role and how public education is governed.
- Ask the PTO or students to place a "thank you" ad in the local newspaper.
- Invite community members to serve on event planning committees.
- Ask schools to "adopt a board member" and sponsor events for the adoptee throughout the month or year.
- Ask faith organizations to put an announcement in their bulletins, newsletters, etc. and send a news release.
- Invite students to write about the important role of school boards that can be given to members and published in local newspapers.

Plan gifts and special presentations at the January board meeting:

- Use enclosed logo slick to customize printed materials, T-shirts, sweatshirts, websites, etc.
- Present board members with coupons for "Free School Lunch." Have them sit with members of student congress or some other student group.
- Hang a "School Board Recognition Month" banner and/or poster in public places.
- Ask elementary children or high school graphic design students to color and decorate "School Board Recognition Month" posters for downtown store windows.
- Every day, for the first week of January, e-mail an inspirational education-related quote, using the enclosed education quotes.
- Introduce a student and a staff member from each grade or department who represents a different culture in your community.
- Ask staff to say a few words on behalf of their work group—teachers, cooks, bus drivers, school secretaries, etc.

- Ask student athletic team captains to invite board members to “toss the first ball” or “blow the first whistle” at a home sporting event or to kick off a competitive academic event.
- Decorate entrances to school buildings.
- Hang student drawings or self-portraits in the boardroom.
- Ask students to write hand written notes of appreciation.
- Feature student entertainment at the board meeting.
- Ask each school in your district to be responsible for doing something special for one of your board members.
- 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 a recognition label within each book.
- Plan for a school board commendation at a staff in-service meeting or meeting of school and district administrators.
- Hold mock school board meetings and elections in high school government and speech/debate classes. Invite board members.
- Give special recognition to school board members with lengthy service records.

Involve the media:

- Send a press release on School Board Recognition Month (sample enclosed).
- Send a letter to the editor (sample enclosed).
- Ask your local radio station to run a public service announcement (sample enclosed).
- Ask a student or the school Webmaster to design a School Board Recognition Month ad for your district’s Web page (use enclosed artwork for scanning).
- Encourage your local news media (newspapers, radio stations and television stations) to interview school board members.
- Provide media representatives with information about what the board does, the major decisions facing your board, important actions the board has taken and the tremendous amount of time each board member devotes to your public schools.
- Schools with access to a district cable TV channel can use their time to conduct interviews with school board members and have informal talks on board service. Utilize students as interviewers and technical help.

Sample news release

Date

For Immediate Release

For Further Information Contact: [Name & Title]

[School District]

[Phone Number]

SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE IN JANUARY

School Boards Speak Out For Public Schools

[School district] will join 82 other school districts throughout the state to celebrate School Board Recognition Month in January. More than 630 elected and appointed school board members throughout South Carolina will be recognized by schools and communities for their service and dedication to public education.

The theme of this year's celebration, "School Boards Speak Out For Public Schools," reflects the combined commitment of school boards to lead and advocate for quality and accountable public schools that ensure all students achieve.

"The foundation of school leadership is ensuring equal learning opportunities for all students," says [superintendent]. "We're proud of our district, and School Board Recognition Month is the time to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of our elected trustees."

In [school district], school board members must develop policies and make tough decisions on complex educational and social issues impacting the entire community. They bear responsibility for an annual budget of \$_____ million, _____ students, _____ employees and _____ buildings.

"School board members statewide make decisions that affect 690,000 South Carolina children and more than \$3 billion in educational expenditures," notes [superintendent last name]. "They preserve the core of our democracy—public education."

[Add a paragraph listing ways you will honor board members in your district during January.]
More information is posted on the (your district's name) website at [district's Web address].

The men and women serving [district] and their years of service are [board members and years of service].

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Date

Dear Editor:

The month of January marks the annual observance of School Board Recognition Month—a time to salute the work of school board members and celebrate public education.

The theme of this year’s celebration, “School Boards Speak Out For Public Schools,” reflects the combined commitment to lead and advocate for quality and accountable public schools that ensure all students achieve.

In [school district], school board members must develop policies and make tough decisions on complex educational and social issues impacting the entire community. They bear responsibility for an annual budget of \$_____ million, _____ students, _____ employees and _____ buildings. They carry out the truest form of representative government in our democracy— volunteer public service and preserve the core of our democratic land—public education.

Too often we neglect to recognize the dedication and hard work of these men and women who represent us. I invite you to recognize and celebrate the work of your school trustees. Invite them out for coffee. Ask how you might help support your local neighborhood schools. Write your school board members a thank you note. Let them know you appreciate what they do for students in [district].

The men and women serving [school district] and their years of service are: [board members and years of service]

Sincerely,

[Superintendent]
[School District]

School Board Recognition Month, in January, is celebrated by 83 local school districts in South Carolina, as more than 630 elected school board members are honored by their schools and community for untiring dedication to school governance.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Date:

For Further Information Contact: [Name & Title]

[School District]

[Phone Number]

“School Boards Speak Out For Public Schools”

THANK YOU ANNOUNCEMENT (15 seconds)

The month of January marks the annual observance of School Board Recognition Month—a good time to salute the work of school board members and celebrate public education. Tell your locally elected/appointed trustees you appreciate what they do for students in [school district] and for speaking out for public schools.

A message from [radio station] and [school district].

CELEBRATE ANNOUNCEMENT (30 seconds)

The month of January marks the annual observance of School Board Recognition Month—a good time to salute the work of school board members and celebrate public education.

Your locally elected/appointed trustees in [school district] speak out for public schools by ensuring our students have the opportunity to think, work, solve problems and more. Their decisions and actions affect the present and future lives of our community’s children. Join us in celebrating School Board Recognition Month in [school district].

A message from [radio station] and [school district].

SAMPLE OPINION COLUMN

[The following 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 schools trustees, details of how board members will be honored during January and examples of ways your board has improved education for the students in your district.]

As citizen leaders, school board members face complex and demanding challenges. Yet few people fully understand the scope and far reaching implications of board members' responsibilities. South Carolinians should recognize the vital contributions of these men and women and focus attention on the crucial role these elected public officials play in the education of our children.

Their job is to establish a vision for the education program, design a structure to achieve that vision, ensure schools are accountable to the community and strongly advocate continuous improvement in student learning. That job entails an endless string of meetings and school functions to attend; reams of reports, agendas, proposals and other information to read and study; and a host of difficult decisions to make.

School board members come from all walks of life. They are farmers, secretaries, doctors, lawyers, homemakers, architects, truck drivers, professors, business owners and real estate agents, to name a few.

Although they wear many hats in the workday world, school board members put on a collective hat when they get down to the business of leading their school districts. Board members must pull together as a team toward a common goal of helping all students achieve. Though individual school board members may sometimes disagree on issues, their role as a member of the school board is to consistently strive toward the goal of high academic achievement. Working together, school board members speak out for public schools and the students they serve.

Board members contribute hundreds and hundreds of hours each year leading their districts. Whether it be crafting policies, hiring top-notch administrators, listening to staff and student concerns or recognizing outstanding programs, board members always keep their eyes on the goal of student achievement.

The time spent in board meetings represents just a small fraction of the hours school board members spend leading in their districts. They also work hard at seminars and training sessions to keep abreast of the latest trends in educational leadership, are deeply involved in community activities and spend many hours in the schools and at extracurricular events. Their love for learning, and concern and caring for students, staff and community, drives board members' desire to lead so students can achieve.

In recognition of the dedicated service of school board members throughout South Carolina, January has been designated as School Board Recognition Month. This is the time to show our appreciation and to increase our understanding of how local trustees work together to provide a better future for our children. Please join the [school 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 that his or her hard work has been noticed and is truly appreciated.

FIVE REASONS FOR SCHOOL BOARDS

[The following is a short article from the National School Boards Association that you can use all or part of in an article or editorial as long as you credit the National School Boards Association.]

Are school boards necessary? Should the present governance structure of our nation's public schools remain in place? The answer to both questions is, unequivocally, yes.

No one questions why planning boards, municipal governments, and state legislatures exist. And yet, some people advocate turning over control of school governance to those same bodies, saying we should let someone else take charge of the future of our children's future.

School boards, elected or appointed by their communities, represent the community's beliefs and values. Who better than these community representatives to shoulder the responsibility for preparing children to live productive and satisfying lives?

The following are five reasons school boards are the decision makers in today's schools:

1. Your school board looks out for children – first and foremost. Education is not a line item in your school board's budget – it is the *only* item.
2. Your school board is the advocate for your community when decisions are made about your children's education. The school board represents the public's voice in public education, providing citizen governance for what the public schools need and what the community wants.
3. Your school board sets the standard for achievement in your district, incorporating the community's view of what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Your school board is also responsible for working with the superintendent to establish a valid process for measuring student success and, when necessary, shifting resources to ensure that the district's goals are achieved.
4. Your school board is accessible to you and accountable for the performance of the schools in your district. If the schools are not producing, it is your right as a voter to select new board members who will see to it that your students and your schools succeed.
5. Your school board is your community's education watchdog, ensuring that taxpayers get the most for their tax dollars. Public education in South Carolina is a \$6.5 billion business. In the majority of districts, school boards have taxing authority. That direct oversight – and responsibility – should not be given to politicians whose first priority is something other than education.

EDUCATION QUOTES

“Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow.”

— Anthony J. D'Angelo

“Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army.”

— Edward Everett

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

— William Butler Yeats

“Education’s purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one.”

— Malcolm Forbes

“There is a place in America to take a stand: it is public education. It is the underpinning of our cultural and political system. It is the great common ground. Public education after all is the engine that moves us as a society toward a common destiny...It is in public education that the American dream begins to take shape.”

—Tom Brokaw

“Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education.”

—John F. Kennedy

“As a product of the public education system, I want all American students to have what I had—access to a quality education that enables them to pursue any career they wish, and take on any challenge they choose. Giving our students the best education in the world is a moral imperative and, especially, an economic necessity.”

—Richard Riley, former U.S. Secretary of Education

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world; indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Meade

“If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people.”

—Chinese proverb

“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.”

— B.B. King

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.”

—Gandhi

SAMPLE RESOLUTION

South Carolina School Board Recognition Month

January 2012

Whereas, the education of South Carolina's school-aged children is the foundation upon which the economic, social and intellectual capital of our state is built; and

Whereas, locally elected and appointed school boards play an important and vital role in a representative democracy, and decisions made by local boards of education directly influence instruction in South Carolina's public schools; and

Whereas, these decisions affect the present and future lives of children, and also set direction to prepare all students to be competitive in a local, state, national and global 21st Century knowledge economy; and

Whereas, local school board members work with parents, businesses, education professionals and other community members to create the educational vision we want for our students; and

Whereas, this year's theme School Boards Speak Out For Public Schools reflects the efforts of local school board members to advocate for public education with local, state and federal leaders; and

Whereas, School Board Recognition Month provides an opportunity to build stronger relationships between the thousands of South Carolinians who champion the mission of public education and school board members; now, therefore be it

Resolved the _____ recognizes the contributions of the state's local school boards to the academic success of its public school students and expresses its sincerest recognition to local board members for their focus on the well-being and achievement of children throughout the state; and be it finally

Resolved the _____ declares January 2012 as School Board Member Recognition Month and encourages local school districts and community leaders to appropriately recognize our state's dedicated school board members.