



January 30, 2020

Dear Superintendent,

The Association of Alaska School Boards Board of Directors has declared February to be School Board Recognition Month. The goal is to build awareness and understanding in your community and schools of the crucial function an elected school board plays in a representative democracy. As citizen advocates, individual board members face a complex and often demanding job; yet few people fully understand the scope and far-reaching implications of board members' responsibilities.

All Alaska citizens should recognize the important contributions of these men and women and focus attention on the vital role these public officials play in the education of our children.

Such deserved recognition can encourage veteran board members to continue to make the commitment board service requires; other citizens might be encouraged to get involved in the schools and make positive change. A full month allows local districts, PTAs, booster clubs, Chambers of Commerce, and individual campuses to organize activities convenient and appropriate for them.

Take this opportunity to help acknowledge thousands of public servants who make the time to share their vision and voice about the future of Alaskan children. Our best wishes for a productive month of building awareness and support in your community.

Sincerely,

Norm Wooten Executive Director



## Information Included In This Kit:

- 🍏 Original certificates for district presentation to board members suitable for calligraphing individual names and framing
- 🍏 Camera-ready certificate for school board members to be presented by PTA/PTO, business-education partners, municipal government officials, village council or Chamber of Commerce
- 🍏 Tip sheet on recognition activities for school administrators, staff and students, parents, and community groups and businesses
- 🍏 Sample proclamation
- 🍏 News release and editorials-should be individualized on school district letterhead and sent to local media.
- 🍏 Reader board messages
- 🍏 Several sizes of art work that you can use in your district newsletter or provide to local newspapers and Chamber of Commerce journals
- 🍏 Evaluation form . . . please take time to share your suggestions.



association of  
**ALASKA**  
school boards

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Honoring

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for dedicated leadership in public education and  
continuing service to the children of this community.

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Superintendent

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School District

# School Board Appreciation Activities

The Association of Alaska School Boards Board of Directors has declared February to be School Board Recognition Month, a time to honor school board members and to express appreciation for their contributions.

Ideas in this packet will help school administrators, district staff, parents, community leaders and students say how much they appreciate their school board members. Included are ideas and activities that school and community groups can use during School Board Recognition Month, or other occasions.

## School Administrators

- 🍏 Host a special luncheon and invite community leaders to attend. Introduce each board member, note special interests, highlight accomplishments and present him/her with a special award and/or memento.
- 🍏 Invite board members to attend a school assembly in their honor. Arrange for students to present skits, sing, perform dances, recite poetry, etc., to express their appreciation. Notify local news media.
- 🍏 Prepare a video presentation of school activities and accomplishments to share with the board, at a board meeting or at an all-school assembly. Such a video is also a good year-round communications tool.
- 🍏 Create a brochure complete with board member's pictures, profiles and an invitation for comments. Distribute it to parents and staff, and make it available at public gathering places throughout your community.
- 🍏 Work with local media to setup interviews with board members. Suggest they interview board members about the role they play in the schools and community. This acknowledges the importance of school board members; it also helps spread good news about your schools.
- 🍏 Place a large "thank you to our board members" ad in the local papers. The ad could include signatures of staff members and students and community leaders, etc., and showcase student art.
- 🍏 Focus attention on board members during athletic events scheduled during February. For example, a board member could "toss the ball" to begin a home basketball game.
- 🍏 Ask staff members to express gratitude to board members for their consistent efforts on behalf of your schools.
- 🍏 Ask the city governing body to declare February School Board Recognition Month in your community.
- 🍏 Include a "thank you to the board" ad in your district newsletter that is distributed throughout your community.



# Staff & Students



- 🍏 Make a large "Thank You to Our School Board" banner and ask students, staff and parents to sign their names below the message. Display the banner at a prominent location in your community such as a grocery store, library, bank, etc., throughout February.
- 🍏 Ask students from every grade level to write and decorate appreciation cards to board members and mail them to their homes (a parent organization or local service club might be willing to help pay for the postage). Coordinate the mailings to assure that messages are received throughout February or throughout the year.
- 🍏 Ask students and staff to create original works of art that demonstrate appreciation to board members. Display this art during February in the boardroom. Perhaps local artists and/or teachers will help "dress up" the original works of art for display, i.e., matting, framing, mounting on construction paper, etc.
- 🍏 Ask students to write letters to board members expressing their gratitude for the work they do. This is a good way to demonstrate proper punctuation, spelling, grammar and good penmanship, and to teach students about the responsibilities of the school board.
- 🍏 Replant flowering plants grown by students in science or horticultural classes in containers decorated by students in art classes. Present them to the board members at a board meeting and use them to decorate the boardroom year round.
- 🍏 Since board members are busy people and often miss dinner in order to fulfill their school board responsibilities, give each board member a "dinner out" gift certificate for two at a local restaurant. Ask local business people to help pay for these special treats.
- 🍏 Make buttons, pins or bookmarks from student art and present them to the board members as a personal "Care Package."
- 🍏 At a board meeting, present a portfolio of students' work showing their improvement over the school year.
- 🍏 Sponsor classroom luncheons for board members. Have students send personal invitations and prepare and serve the meal in their classroom.
- 🍏 Make each board member a photo album, which depicts your district's academic, athletic and service projects. He or she can keep it as a reminder of all of the exciting things taking place in your school district.
- 🍏 Ask each school in your district to be responsible for doing something special for one of your board members. Students at one school tackled this assignment by making a board member "King for the Day," with appropriate crown and robe, and had a photo of the occasion printed in the local newspaper.
- 🍏 Hold mock school board meetings and elections in high school government and speech/debate classes.

# Parents



- 🍏 Invite board members to attend a meeting of your parent organization and include a reception in their honor. This provides an excellent opportunity for parents to meet the board members in person and get acquainted.
- 🍏 Send board members thank-you notes citing examples of how the schools have helped their children.
- 🍏 Send or deliver flowers or "goodies" to each board member at their place of employment.
- 🍏 Help distribute School Board Recognition Month posters throughout the community.

## Community Groups & Businesses

- 🍏 Place a "thank you school board members" or other notes of appreciation on reader boards throughout the community.
- 🍏 Invite board members to be honored guests at a meeting or luncheon during February.
- 🍏 Invite board members to participate in school-related workshops or on school-related committees.
- 🍏 Donate a special book or video to a school library in recognition of the board or of individual board members.

# Sample Proclamation



Ask your mayor or city council to proclaim February as School Board Recognition Month in your community. Publicize this with a press release and in your district's newsletter.

WHEREAS, the mission of the public schools is to meet the diverse educational needs of all children and to empower them to become competent, productive contributors to a democratic society and an ever-changing world;

WHEREAS, local school board members are committed to children and believe that all children can be successful learners and that the best education is tailored to the individual needs of the child;

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

WHEREAS, local school board members are responsible for ensuring the structure that provides a solid foundation for our school system;

WHEREAS, local school board members assure the assessment of students, school staff, and educational programs and are accountable to the community;

WHEREAS, local school board members are strong advocates for public education and are responsible for communicating the needs of the school district to the public and the public's expectations to the district;

NOW, THEREFORE, I \_\_\_\_\_ do hereby declare my appreciation to the members of the \_\_\_\_\_ School Board and proclaim the month of February 2020 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 \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

# Sample Press Release



Retype this news release on district letterhead and submit it to local media. Be sure to add information about special recognition you are planning for your local school board members.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (Date)

For more information contact: (Person's name) (Phone number)  
AASB Board of Directors Proclaims February as School Board  
Recognition Month

The Association of Alaska School Boards Board of Directors has declared February to be School Board Recognition Month, a time to honor school board members and to express appreciation for their contributions.

The \_\_\_\_\_ School District is joining with other districts throughout Alaska to recognize the important contributions board members make to their communities.

"Alaskans benefit every day from the dedicated energies and countless hours devoted by a group of more than 300 men and women across the state. These public servants are elected to serve by local constituents and receive no compensation for their tireless efforts. These men and women are the local school board members of Alaska," said \_\_\_\_\_ (superintendent's full name), \_\_\_\_\_ (district name).

"These people unselfishly contribute their time and talents toward the advancement of public education," (superintendent's last name) said. "They represent a continuing commitment to local citizen control and decision making in education.

"Even though we are making a special effort during February to show appreciation to our school board members, we recognize their contributions reflect a year-round effort on their part," \_\_\_\_\_ superintendent's last name) said. "They are dedicated individuals who are committed to the continuing success of our schools and students."

(Add a paragraph or two describing the special ways you will recognize your board members during School Board Recognition Month)

The men and women serving \_\_\_\_\_ School District and their years of service are: \_\_\_\_\_ .



# Sample Editorial #1



Talk to local newspaper editor about using this as a basis for an editorial.

Submit under superintendent's byline as guest editorial.

Adapt to letter-to-the-editor format signed by Chamber of Commerce president or other prominent community leader.

Imagine a community with no local control over its schools. Picture paying an education bill without local men and women to make spending decisions for you and other citizens like you. Think about an education system where all policy is set at the state or national level. Imagine putting your children in the hands of someone you don't know.

School board members are our neighbors who make education their business, investing countless hours of their time, and often their own resources, to set direction for your children and your local public schools.

Local school board members establish policies that reflect your beliefs and set goals that protect your community's vision for the future.

They spend long hours, after their own work days, making decisions on issues that will eventually impact everything from local business to the quality of life in your community.

Most of their efforts go unrewarded. Often, the only response school board members get is criticism. But what would you do without them? Where would you go with your concerns? Your questions? Your complaints?

Who else is "in tune" with both the prospects and the problems of your community? With the successes and failures of your businesses? With the special needs of your employers? With the fears, hopes and dreams of your families?

When you elected your school board members, you picked people to act for you in your absence. You chose men and women you knew you could trust with the vitality of your community and the development of your children.

They play such an important role in the uniquely American school governance system that guarantees you local control of your schools.

Show your appreciation for them during School Board Recognition Month in February. Say thanks to these board members for guiding your public school system. Without them you would lose a vital link to your local schools.

List names and occupations of local board members:

AND RECOGNITION



## Sample Editorial #2

In addition to its use as a guest editorial, this article can also form the basis for a column in your newsletter, a speech, or letter-to-the-editor.

Have you thanked a school board member lately?

School board members exemplify local citizen control and decision making in education. They volunteer hundreds of hours and an immeasurable amount of energy to assure that our schools are providing the best education possible for the children of our community. Here are some reasons we are taking this time 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-and sometimes turbulent meetings, conferences, and institutes where they broaden their knowledge about education; during numerous conversations about the schools; and before the Alaska Legislature.

Our school board is one of fifty-three such boards across the state. These boards enable us to have local control of the public schools, meaning that decisions on school programming are made by local, elected representatives who understand the community's unique problems, values, cultures, and circumstances.

It's a tradition that began more than 200 years ago. 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 hats off 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 for board members:

# Sample Article



This sample article can be used in your district newsletter as an article in your local newspaper, a letter to the editor, or as the foundation for a speech. Localize the article by adding information about your school board members, details of how board members will be honored during February, and examples of ways your board has improved education for students in your district.

School board members are people who have an extraordinary dedication to our public schools. It's time we said thank you for their untiring efforts.

Too often we forget about the sacrifices board members routinely make.

Too often we forget about the important role 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 in the tradition of a representative democracy, board members are our connection to influencing how public schools are governed.

Too often we are quick to criticize board members without really knowing all the details that went into any given decision.

Too often the efforts of board members go unrecognized and unrewarded.

We can begin to correct these oversights throughout February, designated by the Association of Alaska School Boards Board of Directors as School Board Recognition Month. This is a time to show our appreciation and 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 education vision we want for students. It then formulates goals, defines results, and sets the course for an adequate and equitable education program for all students.

The school board is accountable to the public. It is responsible for assuring the public that money allocated to public schools has a good return on investment, overseeing regular assessment of the district's students, staff, and programs.

The school board is also a strong advocate for public schools, responsible for communicating the needs of the school district to the public, and vice-versa.

In February, 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 that his or her hard work has been noticed and is very much appreciated.

# Sample Reader Board Messages

Use reader boards to publicly thank your school board members and to urge people in your community to express their appreciation.

Your message might read:

Our School Board is #1

Thank You School Board!

Let's Celebrate!  
Our School Board is Great!  
February 2020

We Appreciate Our School Board:  
(List your board members' names)

Celebrate School Board Month  
February 2020

February 2020 School Board Month  
Say "Thanks"

Show Your Appreciation  
February is School Board Month

## **Artwork for newsletters or media**





# Evaluation Form

Tell us how you celebrated School Board Recognition Month.

We hope this planning kit gave you some useful ideas. Did you find a unique way to celebrate School Board Recognition Month? Please share with us how you recognized your local board members; your input and thought will help us plan activities for next year.

School District: \_\_\_\_\_

We did not use the materials. If not used, please explain.

The most useful part of the kit was:

Please share any special activities your district or school planned to recognize your school board members. Send newspaper clippings, letters or photos if you can.

Do you have any suggestions for other materials AASB could provide for next year's School Board Recognition Month?

Thank you for your cooperation.  
Please return this form to:



1111 West 9th Street, Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Fax: (907) 586-2995      Email: [aasb@aasb.org](mailto:aasb@aasb.org)

Name of person completing form (optional)

Title (optional)