



VSBA

Virginia School Boards Association

Leadership · Advocacy · Support

School Board Appreciation Month Toolkit

February 2025

Champions
of Opportunity



Advocates
for Excellence

Participation in VSBA initiatives and observances is optional. Any related materials from the Association are shared as suggested ideas and resources for implementation. Member school boards may choose not to participate locally.

February is “School Board Appreciation Month”

Salute the service of over 800 school board members in Virginia in February 2025 during School Board Appreciation Month. The theme — *Champions of Opportunity, Advocates for Excellence* — highlights the efforts made by school board members to create pathways for student achievement and innovation.

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

Use the month to highlight the accomplishments of your local school board. Encourage community leaders, business partners and local civic groups to join in your recognition efforts. This toolkit was developed to assist you in these efforts and includes:

- Toolkit content and instructions sheet
- Suggested activities and tips
- Sample news release
- Sample letter to the editor
- Sample Public service announcement scripts
- Sample article for division newsletters and other publications
- Education quotes sheet
- Draft Proclamation

An electronic certificate template will be sent to School Division Clerks prior to February. This certificate can be filled out for each school board member and used to recognize the school division’s school board members during a school board meeting. In addition to this, a certificate for Student School Board Representatives will also be sent so that school divisions with Student Representatives can acknowledge them as well.

Thank you in advance for your support to make School Board Appreciation Month a success! Please contact communications@vsba.org with any questions, comments, or suggestions.

Toolkit Content & Instructions

Suggested Activities & Tips

Within this toolkit you'll find dozens of ideas that may be used to celebrate School Board Appreciation Month. Don't miss out on this opportunity to celebrate 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 division 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 Appreciation Month and to send a positive message about public education and your division's accomplishments. You could also ask a parent, booster or business partner to sign or co-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 script can be customized to include your division information.

Sample Opinion Column

This article can be adapted for use in your division newsletter, as an article in your local newspaper, as a letter to the editor or as the foundation of a speech.

Draft Proclamation

A sample resolution that your city council or county board of supervisors can adapt/adopt and pass to proclaim February as "School Board Appreciation Month."

Suggested Activities and Tips

- Send a letter to the editor (sample enclosed).
- Ask your local radio station to run a public service announcement (sample enclosed).
- Send a press release on School Board Appreciation Month (sample enclosed).
- Plan a special reception at the February board meeting. Ask local restaurants and grocery stores to help host the event.
- Promote the initiative in division communications. Consider compiling statements from stakeholders to create a video to present to the board in appreciation.
- 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 Appreciation” proclamation.
- Invite legislators to attend a reception or school board meeting 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, etc.) to host your board at a breakfast or lunch.
- Arrange a speaking engagement with 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.
- Invite students to write about the important role of school boards that can be given to members and published in local newspapers.
- Hang a “School Board Appreciation Month” banner and/or poster in public places.
- Ask students to design “School Board Appreciation Month” posters for downtown store windows.
- Every day, for the first week of February, email an inspirational education-related quote, using the enclosed education quotes.
- 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.

- Ask students to write handwritten notes of appreciation.
- Feature student entertainment at the board meeting.
- Ask a student or the school webmaster to design and display a School Board Appreciation Month ad on your division's web page.
- 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 division 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.
- Plan a social media campaign where you introduce each of the school board members on social media with photos and fun facts about them.

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

[DATE]

Contact

[NAME]

[PHONE]

SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE IN FEBRUARY

Champions of Opportunity, Advocates for Excellence

[CITY/COUNTY], VA – [SCHOOL DIVISION] will join school divisions throughout the state to celebrate School Board Appreciation Month in February. Over 800 elected and appointed school board members throughout Virginia will be recognized by schools and communities for their service and dedication to public education.

The theme of this year’s celebration, “Champions of Opportunity, Advocates for Excellence,” highlights the efforts made by school board members to create pathways for student achievement and innovation.

“The foundation of student success is yearlong leadership, advocacy, and support from our School Board,” said [SUPERINTENDENT]. “We’re proud of our division, and School Board Appreciation Month is the time to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of our elected members.”

In [SCHOOL DIVISION], 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 over 1.2 million students across the Commonwealth,” 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 DIVISION DURING FEBRUARY.] More information is posted on the [SCHOOL DIVISION] website at [WEB ADDRESS].

The members serving on the [SCHOOL DIVISION] school board are [LIST BOARD MEMBERS AND YEARS OF SERVICE].

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Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

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

The theme of this year’s celebration, “Champions of Opportunity, Advocates for Excellence,” highlights the efforts made by school board members to create pathways for student achievement and innovation.

In [SCHOOL DIVISION], 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 preserve the core of our democracy—public education.

Too often we neglect to recognize the dedication and hard work of these board members who represent us. I invite you to recognize and celebrate the work of your school board. 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 [SCHOOL DIVISION].

The members who are serving on the [SCHOOL DIVISION] school board are: [LIST BOARD MEMBERS AND YEARS OF SERVICE].

Sincerely,

[SUPERINTENDENT]
[SCHOOL DIVISION]

School Board Appreciation Month, in February, is celebrated by local school divisions in Virginia, as over 800 school board members are honored by their schools and community for untiring dedication to school governance.

Sample Public Service Announcement

[DATE]

Contact

[NAME]

[SCHOOL DIVISION]

[PHONE]

“Champions of Opportunity, Advocates for Excellence”

THANK YOU ANNOUNCEMENT (15 seconds)

The month of February marks the annual observance of School Board Appreciation Month—a good time to recognize the work of school board members and celebrate public education. Tell your locally [ELECTED/APPOINTED] board members you appreciate what they do for students in [SCHOOL DIVISION] and for being the champions of opportunity and advocates for excellence. A message from [RADIO STATION] and [SCHOOL DIVISION].

CELEBRATE ANNOUNCEMENT (30 seconds)

The month of February marks the annual observance of School Board Appreciation Month—a good time to salute the work of school board members and celebrate public education. Your locally [ELECTED/APPOINTED] board in [SCHOOL DIVISION] are champions of opportunity and advocates for excellence by ensuring our students have the opportunity to benefit from a high-quality education. Their decisions and actions affect the present and future lives of our community’s children. Join us in celebrating School Board Appreciation Month in [SCHOOL DIVISION]. A message from [RADIO STATION] and [SCHOOL DIVISION].

Sample Article

The following article can be adapted for use in your division 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 school board members, details of how board members will be honored during February, and examples of ways your board has improved education for the students in your division.

February marks School Board Appreciation Month, a special time to recognize and celebrate the dedication and hard work of our school board members. These leaders are the backbone of our education system, champions of opportunity, and advocates for excellence, tirelessly working to ensure that every student has access to quality education and opportunities for success.

School board members serve our community with the vision and commitment to create pathways for student achievement. They oversee division policies, manage budgets, and set goals that impact every student, family, and staff member. Their work is often behind the scenes, yet it profoundly shapes the educational experiences and futures of our students.

As **Champions of Opportunity**, our school board members are dedicated to breaking down barriers and ensuring that every child, regardless of background, has the support they need to thrive. Through programs that promote equity, expand academic options, and provide access to essential resources, they work to close gaps and create opportunities for all students to achieve their fullest potential.

In addition, our board members are **Advocates for Excellence**, pushing our schools to innovate and evolve. They support initiatives that bring new technology into classrooms, encourage career pathways through Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, and invest in professional development for teachers and staff. Their commitment to excellence helps our students acquire the skills they need to meet the demands of the future and equips them to make meaningful contributions to society.

Here in [SCHOOL DIVISION], our board members have made a remarkable impact. *[Add specific examples, such as building new STEM facilities, forming partnerships with local organizations, expanding extracurricular activities, or launching new mental health services for students.]*

Throughout February, we will be celebrating School Board Appreciation Month with *[describe any planned activities like recognition events, student tributes, or social media acknowledgments]*. This month is an opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude for their vision, leadership, and unwavering dedication to our students and community.

Please join us in honoring our school board members this February. We are grateful for their service as true champions of opportunity and advocates for excellence, helping us build a brighter and more equitable future for every student in our community.

Education Quotes

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”

—Martin Luther King Jr.

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”

—Benjamin Franklin

“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

“No one has yet realized the wealth of sympathy, the kindness, and generosity hidden in the soul of a child. The effort of every true education should be to unlock that treasure.”

—Emma Goldman

“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

“Everyone you will ever meet knows something you don’t.”

—Bill Nye

“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

Virginia School Board Appreciation Month February 2025

Whereas the education of Virginia’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 government role, and decisions made by local school boards directly influence instruction in Virginia’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 – *Champions of Opportunity, Advocates for Excellence* – highlights the efforts made by school board members to create pathways for student achievement and innovation on behalf of all students; and

Whereas, School Board Appreciation Month provides an opportunity to celebrate Virginia’s school board members who champion the mission of public education; now, therefore be it

Resolved, the _____ division joins the Virginia School Boards Association in recognizing the contributions of the local school board members 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 students throughout the Commonwealth; and, be it finally

Resolved, the _____ division declares February 2025 as School Board Appreciation Month and encourages local community members and leaders to appropriately recognize our school division’s dedicated school board members.



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