



School Board Member Recognition Month

To be customized with information specific to the school system, board members and board members' accomplishments. This may be published in school/community newsletters or newspapers.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS SERVE FOR KIDS' SAKE

How will the world have changed by the time today's first-graders graduate from high school? What skills will they need? And what about students who entered high school this year — are they learning what they should? What programs are needed to help the ones who are behind catch up and to challenge those who are excelling?

These are just some of the complex questions members of the (school system's name) Board of Education routinely tackle as they work to help (system's name) students achieve at higher levels. In January, they, along with school board members nationwide, are being honored for the time and energy they put into ensuring that local schools meet local expectations.

School board members for the most part are laymen, not educators. (School system's name) board members come from diverse backgrounds. (List their names and occupations.) Rather than being professional educators, their primary role is to give the community a voice in the oversight of the school system. Their most important goal is to keep everything in the school system focused on raising academic achievement and ensuring students learn the importance of hard work, persistence and behaving in responsible, respectful ways.

But the job is not an easy one these days. Public demands for accountability have never been higher, nor have expectations for student achievement. In addition, state accountability programs and the federal No Child Left Behind Act mandate that children perform at ever-increasing levels. But the resources to get the job done often are stretched thin. In addition, today's overworked parents have less and less time to help their children with their schoolwork or to provide the volunteer service that is crucial to schools with limited financial resources.

To ensure they are prepared to tackle the various challenges of the job, board members also spend a considerable amount of time each year in attending training offered through the Alabama Association of School Boards' School Board Member Academy.

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Recent Academy training sessions have covered topics such as the state’s tenure, open meetings and ethics laws; special education; fiscal management; and student achievement. (Insert information about the level each board member has achieved in the Academy.)

“School board members are very civic-minded people,” said AASB Executive Director Sally Howell. “They frequently must put their community’s children ahead of their personal lives and their own interests.”

Statewide, school board members are elected or appointed to manage local schools. They oversee multimillion-dollar budgets and programs that serve more than 748,889 students in 1,518 public schools. Their personnel decisions impact 48,165 teachers, 37,257 support workers and 3,273 administrators. They formulate school system policy, approve curriculum, maintain school facilities and ensure that state and federal regulations are followed.

(Insert a paragraph about the size of the local system, including the size of the budget and the number of campuses, students and employees.)

“School business is big business,” Howell said. “Even people who don’t have children in school are affected because schools are so closely tied to the overall quality of life in a community.”