**Sample Article**

*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 school’s board members, 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, individual school board members face complex and demanding challenges. Yet few people fully understand the scope and far-reaching implications of board members’ responsibilities. All Oklahoma citizens 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 many meetings; numerous 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—helping students achieve. Though they may individually disagree on certain issues, their role as a board is to consistently strive toward that goal.

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 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 their dedicated service, January is designated School Board Recognition Month. This is a time to show appreciation and begin to better understand how local trustees work together to provide a better future for our children. In January, 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 truly appreciated.