

HATS OFF TO TEXAS TRUSTEES

As citizens who serve children and represent their communities, 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 Texans 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. They make a difference for students.

Their job is to establish a vision for the education program, design a structure to achieve that vision, assure 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, teachers, architects, truck drivers, professors, business owners, and real estate agents, to name just a few.

While 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. While 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 crafting policies, hiring top-notch administrators, listening to staff and student concerns, or recognizing outstanding programs, board members always keep their eyes on the prize of student achievement.

The time spent in board meetings represents just a small fraction of the hours school board members devote to 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 of learning, and concern and caring for students, staff, and the community, drive board members' desire to lead so students can achieve.

In recognition of this service, January is designated as School Board Recognition Month and a number of other districts across the state will take this opportunity to say thanks to trustees for giving so much to their communities.

