



School Board Members Day 2013

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## ***THANK SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS FOR LENDING A HAND***

When it comes to **PITCHING IN TO LEND A HAND**, school board members are some of the most selfless volunteers around. They are ordinary people and in their everyday lives they might be farmers or bankers, homemakers or doctors, truck drivers or professors, business owners or retirees. The one thing they do have in common is that they serve without expectation of pay for a time-consuming job.

They also have an extraordinary dedication to public education.

Nearly 6,000 men and women serve on local public school boards in Illinois, guiding the education of 2,087,628 students in 867 districts and overseeing a combined budget of more than \$21 billion. School board members are elected by their local communities during a consolidated election held the first Tuesday of April in odd numbered years. They serve for four years.

Everyone knows that board members attend meetings, but those hours represent just a fraction of the actual time that they devote to leading their districts. They attend extracurricular events to support schools. They attend seminars to learn how to be better board members and, while some of their training is now mandated by law, many of them were spending large amounts of time already learning how to do their job better, whether anyone was keeping track or not. And often they are involved in other community activities, representing themselves, their community and their district. Many of these school- and community-related activities take them away from time that could be spent with their own family.

More than any other public servant, school board members must listen to the voices of their community and then craft a vision, mission and goals for their district to accurately reflect those voices in the design. They must guard two of the community's most precious resources — their children and their tax dollars — while they create the best educational environment possible with the money available.

Too often communities are quick to criticize school board members without really knowing all the details that went into their decisions. As a result, the efforts of school board members often go unrecognized and unrewarded.

November 15, 2013, has been designated as School Board Members Day in Illinois. This is a time to show appreciation and to begin to better understand how school board members work together to provide leadership for schools.

Help us join with others from throughout Illinois to give a heartfelt “thank you” to the men and women who provide the grassroots governance for public schools. Make a special effort to tell each school board member his or her hard work has been noticed and is very much appreciated.