

# The Horace Mann League Membership Recruitment Toolkit

*A complete set of tools to help leaders confidently invite new members*

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## Overview & Purpose

### A statement of why membership matters

1. The Horace Mann League of the United States of America was formed by a group of leading educators in 1922.
2. The League exists to perpetuate the ideals of Horace Mann, the founder of America's public schools
3. The League believes that the public school is an indispensable agency for the perpetuation of the ideals of our democracy and the most necessary unifying and dynamic influence in American life.  
The League believes that the American tradition of separation of church and state must be preserved and should be most vigorously and zealously safeguarded.

### A statement of the value of being a member of the League:

Membership in the Horace Mann League connects distinguished education leaders to a prestigious, invitation-based national fellowship committed to public education and democratic leadership. Members gain professional credibility, a trusted peer network, national voice, and access to thoughtful publications and dialogue that strengthen both personal leadership and the broader profession. The League offers not only recognition for past service, but ongoing purpose, influence, and renewal for leaders shaping the future of public education.

### How recruitment supports HML's mission of defending and promoting public education.

Recruitment strengthens the Horace Mann League by ensuring that courageous, ethical, and public-minded education leaders continue to advance its century-long mission of defending and promoting public education. Each new member expands the League's national voice, deepens its collective wisdom, and reinforces its commitment to democracy, equity, and professional integrity. Through intentional recruitment, the League safeguards its legacy while equipping future generations to lead and protect public schools.

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## The HML “Elevator Speech”

A 20–30 second script any board member can use:

- What HML is
- Why it exists
- Who belongs
- Why someone should join
- What makes membership honorary and prestigious
- An example: The Elevator Speech

### **Horace Mann League Elevator Speech (30 seconds)**

*“The Horace Mann League is a national honorary association of leaders who believe that public education is the cornerstone of American democracy. Founded in 1922, the League exists to uphold the ideals of Horace Mann—universal, free, nonsectarian public schools open to all children.*

*Our members include superintendents, scholars, policymakers, and advocates who are deeply committed to strengthening public education. We publish the HML Post, honor outstanding educators, collaborate with national organizations, and speak out on the issues that matter most to our schools.*

*Membership is by invitation, and we welcome leaders who share a strong commitment to public education and democratic citizenship.”*

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## Key Talking Points

### An example: **Speaking with One Voice About Our Purpose, Legacy, and Impact**

#### Horace Mann League — Unified Message

##### 1. Unwavering Commitment to Public Education & Democracy

The Horace Mann League exists to protect and advance **public education as the cornerstone of a healthy democracy**. We believe that strong, inclusive public schools are essential to civic life, opportunity, and social stability. Our work affirms education as a **public good**, not a market commodity.

##### **Unified Message:**

*Public education sustains democracy. The Horace Mann League exists to defend that truth.*

##### 2. A Proud 100-Year Legacy of Leadership

For more than a century, HML has convened and honored the nation’s most respected education leaders. Our history reflects **continuity of purpose across generations**—from the early expansion of public schooling to today’s defense of equity, access, and democratic values.

##### **Unified Message:**

*We carry forward a 100-year tradition of principled education leadership.*

##### 3. Prestigious, Invitation-Based Membership

Membership in HML is **not open enrollment**. It is by **invitation**, based on distinguished service, ethical leadership, and national-level impact. This preserves the League’s credibility, trust, and professional standing.

##### **Unified Message:**

*Membership in the Horace Mann League is a professional distinction earned through service and leadership.*

##### 4. High-Quality Publications & Thought Leadership

HML produces and sponsors **scholarly publications, essays, policy reflections, and leadership commentary** that elevate national discourse on education. Our materials are not reactive—they are **reflective, evidence-guided, and mission-driven**.

##### **Unified Message:**

*The League shapes how the nation thinks about public education—not just how it reacts to it.*

##### 5. National Influence & Strategic Partnerships

HML collaborates with major education organizations, universities, foundations, and civic groups to **advance shared goals for school leadership, governance, and democratic education**. Our partnerships amplify member voices at the national level.

##### **Unified Message:**

*Through partnership, the League extends local leadership into national influence.*

##### 6. Recognition of Outstanding Educators

The League honors and elevates **exceptional educators and superintendents** whose careers exemplify service, courage, and public purpose. These recognitions reinforce professional excellence and moral leadership.

**Unified Message:**

*We honor not only achievement—but character, service, and democratic purpose.*

7. A Fellowship of Ethical, Public-Minded Leaders

More than an organization, HML is a **professional fellowship**—a space for reflection, mentorship, peer counsel, and shared moral commitment. In an era of division, the League remains a place for **civil, principled leadership**.

**Unified Message:**

*The Horace Mann League is where public education leadership finds both professional credibility and moral grounding.*

Identity Statement

**The Horace Mann League is a prestigious, invitation-based national fellowship dedicated for more than 100 years to the defense of public education, democratic leadership, and professional excellence.**

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## Recruitment Scripts

Short scripts for different outreach settings:

### An Email Invitation Script

#### 1. Invitation to Join the Horace Mann League

*Dear [Name],*

*I hope you are well. I'm writing to extend an invitation for you to join the Horace Mann League, an honorary association of leaders who believe that public schools are the foundation of our democracy. Since 1922, the League has brought together superintendents, scholars, and national education leaders who share a deep commitment to free, nonsectarian, high-quality public education for all children.*

*Your leadership and dedication to public education reflect the very ideals the League exists to honor. We would be proud to welcome you as a member.*

*Membership includes access to the weekly HML Post, national recognition opportunities, and engagement with a network of respected colleagues. I would be happy to answer any questions or submit a nomination on your behalf.*

*Thank you for your service to public education. I hope you will consider joining us.*

Warm regards,

[Your Name]

Horace Mann League Board of Directors

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#### 2. Phone or In-Person Conversation Script

##### **Short, confident, and conversational**

*“Hi [Name], I wanted to talk with you about something important. The Horace Mann League is a national honorary association of leaders who believe, as you do, that public schools are essential to our democracy. The League has existed for more than a century, and its members include some of the most respected leaders in American education.*

*Given your work and commitment to public education, I believe you'd be an excellent addition. Membership is by invitation, and I would be glad to nominate you. It's an opportunity to join a group that celebrates public school leadership, publishes high-quality research, and advocates strongly for public education.*

*Would you be open to considering membership? I'd be happy to share more details.”*

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### 3. Conference or Event Script

#### **For use when meeting potential members in person**

*“It’s great to meet you, [Name]. I serve on the Board of the Horace Mann League, an honorary association dedicated to the ideals of universal, free public education. We recognize outstanding educators each year, publish the HML Post, and collaborate with national organizations like AASA to defend public education.*

*Your leadership really aligns with what the League values. If you’d be interested, I’d like to nominate you for membership. It’s an invitation-only organization, and we’re always seeking leaders who demonstrate a deep commitment to public schools.*

*Could I send you a little more information?”*

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### 4. Follow-Up Script (Gentle Reminder)

*Hello [Name],*

*I wanted to follow up on our recent conversation about joining the Horace Mann League. Your leadership and dedication to public education make you an ideal candidate, and we would be honored to welcome you.*

*If you have any questions about membership or the nomination process, I’m happy to help. When you’re ready, I can begin the nomination immediately.*

*Thank you again for considering this opportunity. I hope we can count on your voice and your presence in the League.*

*Warmly,  
[Your Name]*

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### 5. Who to Invite: A Prospect Profile

A description of ideal potential members:

- School superintendents
  - Educational scholars
  - State or national policy leaders
  - Retired leaders with strong public education records
  - Leaders aligned with Horace Mann’s principles
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## 7. Benefits of Membership in the Horace Mann League

- Intellectual benefits (HML Post, special reports, position papers)
- Honorary recognition
- Access to national events and the annual luncheon
- Professional networking with top public education leaders
- Involvement in defending public education

An example:

1. **Honorary Recognition**  
Membership affirms a leader's exceptional commitment to public education and democratic ideals.
2. **National Network of Leaders**  
Connect with respected superintendents, scholars, researchers, and public education advocates from across the country.
3. **Weekly Access to High-Quality Research**  
Receive the *HML Post*, a curated digest of policy updates, leadership insights, research findings, and national education commentary.
4. **Exclusive Special Reports**  
Members gain access to HML's in-depth reports on emerging issues affecting public schools and national education leadership.
5. **Collaborative Advocacy Opportunities**  
Work with like-minded organizations to strengthen public education and protect democratic values in schooling.
6. **Annual Awards & Recognition Events**  
Participate in HML's annual luncheon held with AASA, celebrating educators and leaders whose work strengthens public education.
7. **Legacy and Impact**  
Join an organization with over 100 years of influence, rooted in Horace Mann's principles of universal, nonsectarian, democratic public schooling.
8. **Professional Pride and Identity**  
Membership conveys a sense of civic purpose, historical continuity, and dedication to sustaining American public education.
9. **Thought Leadership Platform**  
Members can contribute to discussions, position papers, panels, and initiatives that shape national conversations on public schooling.
10. **Shared Mission and Community Purpose**  
Become part of a collective effort to defend, support, and elevate the public school system as the foundation of our democracy.

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## 8. "How to Ask Someone to Join" Guide: Step-by-step guidance:

1. Identify a promising leader

2. Share the elevator speech
3. Highlight why *they* specifically are a good match
4. Share membership benefits
5. Offer to personally nominate them
6. Follow up within a week

Example: An Invitational Letter to a “promising” new member

## 9. How to Ask Someone to Join the Horace Mann League

Dear [Name],

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to you in a spirit of professional respect and personal regard, and with an invitation that I extend thoughtfully and without expectation.

Throughout your career, you have demonstrated the very qualities that define distinguished public education leadership: steady judgment, ethical decision-making, commitment to students, and unwavering service to your community. It is for these reasons that I wish to invite you to consider membership in the Horace Mann League.

The League is a national, invitation-based fellowship of education leaders who share a commitment to public education as the foundation of our democracy. For more than a century, it has served as a professional home for superintendents and senior leaders who believe that leadership is not only about management, but about moral purpose, stewardship, and public trust.

My own experience as a member has been both grounding and renewing. In a profession that can feel increasingly isolating, the League offers something rare: thoughtful conversation among peers who understand the weight of this work without explanation, and who engage one another with generosity, discretion, and purpose.

Membership is not transactional. It is a statement of values. It reflects a belief that public education deserves national advocacy, ethical leadership, and a strong, unified professional voice—especially in times of social and political strain.

I believe your voice, experience, and leadership would meaningfully strengthen the League. More importantly, I believe you would find in the League a circle of colleagues who support, challenge, and affirm the deeper purpose of your work.

If you are open to learning more, I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you personally—simply as colleagues—about what membership involves and what it has meant to me. There is no obligation attached to this invitation, only sincere respect.

Thank you for the leadership you provide every day to students, staff, and community. Our profession is better because of leaders like you.

With warm regards and deep respect,

[Your Name]  
[Your Title / District]

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## FAQs for Potential Members

Answers to common questions:

An Example:

**FAQ answers** for the Horace Mann League (HML).

1. How does one become a member?

Membership in the Horace Mann League is **by invitation**. Prospective members are nominated by current members based on distinguished service, ethical leadership, and demonstrated commitment to public education. Nominations are reviewed through the League’s established membership process, and approved candidates receive a formal invitation.

2. **What is the cost?**

Members pay annual dues are \$175, which support League operations, publications, programming, recognition activities, and national initiatives. Dues are intentionally modest to ensure accessibility while sustaining the League’s mission. (Exact amounts are provided upon invitation.)

3. **What commitments are expected?**

Members are expected to:

Uphold the League’s mission and democratic values

Engage professionally and ethically

Support public education advocacy

Participate in League activities as their schedules allow

Serve as positive ambassadors for the profession

The League respects that members have demanding leadership roles and does not impose rigid participation requirements.

4. **Is HML nonpartisan?**

Yes. The Horace Mann League is **strictly nonpartisan**. While it advocates strongly for public education and democratic principles, it does **not** align with political parties or candidates. Its influence is grounded in professional ethics, research, and moral leadership—not politics.

5. **How active must members be?**

Members are encouraged—but not required—to be active. Participation may include:

Attending meetings or events

Contributing to publications

Mentoring emerging leaders

Supporting advocacy efforts

Levels of participation are flexible, recognizing the realities of superintendent and executive leadership responsibilities.

#### **6. Recruitment Goals & Expectations**

Annual membership targets for board members (e.g., 3–5 new members)

Monthly check-in structure

Template for tracking outreach attempts

Creates accountability and shared ownership.

#### **7. New Member Welcome Packet**

To reinforce value from day one:

Welcome letter

#### **8. Summary of mission and strategic priorities**

HML history overview

Horace Mann poster and bookmark

Recent HML Post sample

A strong welcome increases retention.

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## Why Join the Horace Mann League?”

A handout for conferences, presentations, and committee meetings.

### **Why Join the Horace Mann League?**

A National Honorary Association of Leaders Committed to Public Education and *Democracy*

*Joining the Horace Mann League connects you to a distinguished community of leaders who believe that **public schools are the foundation of American democracy**. Since 1922, the League has honored and advanced the ideals of Horace Mann—universal, free, nonsectarian public education open to all children.*

*Here is what membership offers:*

#### **1. A Prestigious, Honorary Community**

*Membership in the HML is by invitation, bringing together superintendents, scholars, policymakers, and advocates who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to public education.*

#### **Advocacy for Public Education and Democracy**

*The League speaks with a clear and principled voice in support of free, inclusive public schools. Members join a respected national effort to defend public education at a time when it faces unprecedented challenges.*

#### **National Thought Leadership**

*Members receive the weekly **HML Post**, featuring curated research, commentary, and leadership insights. Special reports and issue papers keep members informed about critical policy developments.*

#### **Networking with Respected Leaders**

*HML provides connections to influential educational leaders across the country—current and retired superintendents, university deans, researchers, and national advocates.*

#### **5. Recognition of Excellence**

*The League honors outstanding educators and national leaders each year, highlighting the best of American public education and amplifying the work of those who move it forward.*

#### **6. Collaboration With National Partners**

*HML works closely with AASA and other national organizations, strengthening advocacy efforts and expanding opportunities for leadership engagement.*

#### **7. An Annual Luncheon That Celebrates the Profession**

*Held in conjunction with the AASA National Conference on Education, the annual luncheon brings members together to recognize excellence, build relationships, and honor the ideals of Horace Mann.*

#### **8. A Century of History—and a Future of Purpose**

*For over 100 years, the League has stood as a defender of democratic public education. Becoming a member means continuing this legacy and shaping the next century of advocacy.*

#### **Join Us. Your Voice Matters.**

*Membership in the Horace Mann League is more than a professional affiliation—it is a statement of commitment to the principles that keep America’s public schools strong, equitable, and essential to our democracy.*

## The League’s Recruitment Brochure

## The Horace Mann League Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_\_

Current Position \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues: \$175.00

Retired \$90.00

501 C3 IRS TAX. ID 47-2227740

### Credit Card Information

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Exp/Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Phone # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Send to:

The HML

400 Cameron Station Blvd, #121.

Alexandria, VA 22304

Email: [jminichello@comcast.net](mailto:jminichello@comcast.net)

12/10/25

## Why should I become a member of the Horace Mann League?

- Being part of a national honorary association that supports the importance of strong public schools for all students.
- Being part of an association that keeps me fully informed about the latest research about learning and leading public schools.
- Being part of an association of public education advocates who believe that the local public school is the cornerstone of the community and democracy.

### President

**Dr. Kevin Riley**, Assoc. Prof, Dept. of Ed. Ad.  
University of Nebraska-Omaha

### Vice President

**Dr. Carl Hermanns**, Professor Emeritus  
Arizona State Univ.

### Vice President:

**Ms. Jeanne C-Deweese**, Lancaster, SC

### Past President

**Dr. Brent Clark**, Executive Director, IASA,  
Springfield IL

### Directors

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Mr. Douglas Burge, Zillah, WA  
Dr. Martin Brooks Setauket, NY  
Dr. Martha Bruckner Omaha, NE  
Dr. Roxann Caserio, North Ridgefield, OH  
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Dr. Kenneth Spells, Raeford, NC  
Dr. Jerry Thacker, Penn- Mishawaka IN  
Dr. Louis N, Wool, Harrison, NY  
Dr. Greg Wyman, San Tan Valley, AZ

### Executive. Director

James Minichello  
Alexandra, VA

## The Horace Mann League

is an Honorary Society of Educational Leaders Who Believe Public Schools are the Cornerstone of our Democracy.



The Horace Mann League of the United States of America was formed by a group of leading educators in 1922.

The League exists to perpetuate the ideals of Horace Mann, the founder of America's public schools

The League believes that the public school is an indispensable agency for the perpetuation of the ideals of our democracy and the most necessary unifying and dynamic influence in American life.

The League believes that the American tradition of separation of church and state must be preserved and should be most vigorously and zealously safeguarded.

 2024 OE Alfredo Artiles, Stanford University	 2014 OF Rich Bagin Exec. Dir. NSPRA	 2024 OE James Banks, U. of Washington	 1998 OE Emeritus Prof. David Berliner Arizona St. U	 2022 OF Gloria Ladsen Billings, U. of Wisconsin	 2012 FL Ken Bird, Pres. CEO Avenue S	 2002 OE Gerald Bracy Researcher	 2020 FL Martha Bruckner Past Pres.	 2018 OF Carol Burris CEO NPE	 2015 OF Gene Carter Exec. Dir. ASCD	 1997 OE Gordon Cawelti, Curr. Dev.
 2014 OE Larry Cuban Professor Stanford	 2007 OE Linton Deck, Professor Peabody College	 2023 OE Dan Domenech AASA Director	 2014 OF Marion, Edelman Children's Defense Fd	 2015 FL Mark Edwards Past President	 2017 FL Charles Fowler Past Pres.	 2003 OF M. Fitzgerald Reader's Digest	 2023 OE Patricia Gándara Civil Rights	 2016 OE Gene Glass, Prof. U. of Colorado	 2018 FL Jay Goldman Editor AASA	 2009 OE John Goodlad Prof., U. W.
 2004 FL Terry Grier, Past President	 2000 FL Jane Hammond Past President	 2005 OE Linda D. Hammond Prof. Stanford U.	 2016 OE Andy Hargraves Boston College	 2022 FI James Harvey, Past President	 2001 OE Paul Houston AASA Exec. Dir. Past Pres.	 1998 OF James Hunt Gov. NC	 2023 FL Kathleen Hurley Author	 2012 OF Jack Jennings, Ctr. Public	 2011 FL Spike Jorgensen Past Pres.	 2006 OF Jonathon Kozol, Author
 2007 OE Charles F. Johnson Pastors Children	 2008 OE Carroll Johnson, Columbia U.	 2020 FL Cindy Johnson CEO Artemis Connections	 2011 OE Michael Krist, Professor Stanford U.	 2019 OE Henry Levin Prof. Columbia U.	 1996 OE Larry Lezotte, Effective Schools	 2000 OF Barry Lynn, Americans United	 2024 FL Matt Krise MAASA	 2018 OE Bill Mathis, Manager- NEAP	 2016 FL Gary Marx, Author & Past President	 2005 & 205 FL Jack McKay Emeritus Prof. & Dir. HML
 2015 OE Pedro Noguera, Professor NYU.	 2019 OE Jeanne Oakes, Emeritus Prof. UCLA	 2023 OF Gary Orfield, Co-Dir. UCLA Civil Rights	 2013 OE Tom Payzant Harvard U. & Past Pres.	 2008 OF Wendy Puriefory, Public Ed. Net.	 2011 OE Diane Ravitch Author. Prof. NYU	 2002 OF Richard Rothstein NY Times	 1999 OF Bob Salvin, Research Hopkins U	 1996 OF Richard Riley, US Sec of Ed.	 2025 OF Michael Rebell, Ctr. Ed. Equity	 2019 OF Andy Schaefer, VP Discovery
 2010 OE Phil Schlechty Edu Consultant	 1999 OF Lew Salmon Milken Fd.	 2003 OF Ted Sanders Pres, Ed. States	 2020 OE P. Smagorinsky Pro. Georgia	 2007 OE Tom Sobol Comm. NY Ed. Comm	 2006 FL Art Stellar, Past Pres.	 2005 OF Joyce Stupski Stupski Fd	 2006 OE Gerald Tirozi, Exec. NASSP	 2022 OF Valerie Straus Wash. Post	 2004 OF Frosty Troy, Editor OK Observer	 2004 OE Julie Underwood NSBA & Pres
										

		<i>2009 OF Ken Underwood Consultant</i>	<i>2013 OF Mark Warner, US Senator Virginia</i>	<i>2018 OE Kevin Welner, Dir. NEAP</i>	<i>2002 OF Chad Wooley, Pres. HOST</i>	<i>2009 OE Harry Wong, Author - speaker</i>	<i>2017 OE Yong Zhao, Prof. U. of Kansas</i>			
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