



Update for Members: National School Boards Association

From: Lisa Bartusek, Executive Director, May 27, 2022

With the May 20 release of the [independent review](#) report from the National School Boards Association (NSBA), I'll also take an opportunity to update you on IASB's continuing efforts regarding our national membership in NSBA, including discussions of the IASB Board of Directors at their meeting May 18-19.

NSBA Independent Review of September Letter: IASB disagreed with NSBA's September 2021 decision to call for federal intervention regarding illegal threats and violence against school board members and school officials, and the decision of NSBA leadership to tie the request to claims of domestic terrorism and hate crimes. IASB formally communicated its significant concerns to NSBA about this matter, including a call for the NSBA Board of Directors to seek an independent investigation of this issue.

The NSBA Board of Directors has taken several actions, including an apology, a change of executive leadership, and efforts to affirm in policy the organization's commitment to parent engagement, local control, and nonpartisanship. The release of the independent review on May 20 adds objectivity and transparency regarding the facts surrounding the incident. The report outlines the need for improvements to internal controls and clearer oversight of executive authority for advocacy positions. NSBA has committed to those changes as well.

IASB National Membership: The IASB Bylaws require mandatory membership in NSBA, which is a federation of state school boards associations. That commitment many years ago by IASB members recognized the importance of a unified, national presence representing the value of local governance and support of public education. IASB concerns regarding the operations of NSBA go beyond the recent high-visibility issue, and include ongoing concerns with governance, financial stewardship, and service quality. The IASB Board of Directors has been discussing these concerns and seeking to rectify them through advocacy with NSBA for some time.

Twenty-three state school boards associations to date have withdrawn or announced their intent to withdraw from NSBA membership. Most of these states are working together to structure a new national organization for state school boards associations, the [Consortium of State School Boards Associations](#).

At their meeting May 18-19, the IASB Board discussed my recommendation to seek a bylaws amendment granting authority to determine national membership. The proposed bylaws amendment requires further action by the IASB Board to formalize its recommendation to the Delegate Assembly.

The proverb, “United we stand divided we fall” holds true here. I believe we need a unified national organization, not two separate ones. Granting authority to the IASB Board of Directors to determine national membership will best position IASB to focus on building up the strongest option to become a unified national voice. That will take continued due diligence and active involvement from IASB leadership.

We will seek to keep you updated—please feel free to contact me with your questions or concerns on this issue.



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