



STATEMENT REGARDING PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION DECISION TO LEAVE THE NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION FEDERATION

The Governing Board of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association has voted unanimously to cancel PSBA's longstanding membership in the National School Boards Association. The decision was reached following significant deliberations and discussions with counsel and management.

PSBA membership in NSBA should bring value and support to our organization and local school directors. The value of the NSBA federation membership has been questioned numerous times over the past several years both within Pennsylvania and amongst many other state school boards associations. The most recent national controversy surrounding a letter to President Biden suggesting that some parents should be considered domestic terrorists was the final straw. This misguided approach has made our work and that of many school boards more difficult. It has fomented more disputes and cast partisanship on our work on behalf of school directors, when we seek to find common ground and support all school directors in their work, no matter their politics. Now is not the time for more politics and posturing, it is the time for solutions to the many challenges facing education.

PSBA abhors the fact that some boards have been met with threats and violence. We are absolutely opposed to such actions. A school board meeting needs to be the model of democracy in action – locally elected officials hearing from the public as local solutions are debated and formulated. Civility is the bedrock of this approach to local governance. Board members, the public and parents need to be held to a high standard of responsible participation in this process. No school board member or administrator should ever be the subject of threats or violence – it is shocking that someone would ever use violence to solve a difference of opinion over educational policies. However, attempting to solve the problems with a call for federal intervention is not the place to begin, nor a model for promoting greater civility and respect for the democratic process.

It has been a struggle for the board and leadership of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association to identify a reason to continue to be a part of a federation that is not focused on bipartisanship, civility and seeking solutions to the internal problems that have plagued the national organization for so long. From financial and pension issues to a never-ending

disagreement on a governance model and definition of membership, the problems at NSBA have only become more and more entrenched despite recurring promises for action.

PSBA remains firmly committed to serving the needs of Pennsylvania's 500 school districts and the 4,500 elected school directors. The PSBA Governing Board has directed the PSBA staff to develop additional services and resources to meet the ongoing, evolving needs of our membership. We intend to continue to work closely with other state school boards associations and remain hopeful that following this period of substantial tumult for NSBA, we will find a new national organization ready and able to serve all its member states effectively.