



"Leadership in Public School Governance"

JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

122 W. WASHINGTON AVENUE, MADISON, WI 53703
PHONE: 608-257-2622 FAX: 608-257-8386

WASB Statement on Withdrawal from NSBA

On June 10, the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards voted to not renew its membership in the National School Boards Association for the 2022-23 school year. The association's current membership expires June 30.

Since November, when the WASB Board of Directors voted to withdraw participation in NSBA programs and activities, the board has been listening to member feedback while monitoring the NSBA's efforts to correct the problems that led the WASB to suspend its participation in the NSBA.

The board's rationale for the decision includes ongoing concerns — many of which pre-date last fall's events — about NSBA leadership, governance structure and transparency; the fiscal management and financial oversight of the national association; and its failure to prioritize and serve state school board associations. The WASB's Board of Directors concluded that the interests of Wisconsin school boards are not being represented effectively at the national level by the NSBA.

Actions by the NSBA's leadership last fall needlessly harmed school board relationships and inflamed partisan tensions. Those actions caused more than half of the state school board organizations across the nation to distance themselves from the NSBA or drop membership entirely. Nevertheless, we are encouraged by the selection of Dr. John Heim as the NSBA's new executive director and will be anticipating positive changes as a result.

The WASB Board of Directors will remain focused on continuing to represent Wisconsin school boards at the national level. It is investigating membership in an alternative national association of state school board associations and/or directly engaging at the national level. We will not preclude NSBA membership in the future.

Responsible fiscal management is a bedrock value of board members on behalf of those who elect them to serve, and an area in which the NSBA has fallen short. The NSBA's burdensome post-employment liabilities serve as one example of this concern and evidence of systemic issues over which the WASB has had concerns for several years.

Finally, the NSBA has failed to prioritize serving state school board associations. Its programs and services have too often been inconsistent with or at odds with members, including the WASB.

Our support for parent and community input is unwavering. We realize that we are partners with our parents and community members and that the great majority of the interactions with our constituents are cordial, collaborative and thoughtful. We understand that important policy decisions can be passionately

discussed, but in a manner that reinforces the basic tenet of public schools — local control of students' education. The WASB has spoken up about the need for civility in the conduct of school board business and will continue to do so. There is no justification for threats directed against school board members and school staff.

If any member has a question or concern about the Board of Directors' recent action, please contact John Ashley so we can discuss it further.

John Ashley
Executive Director
Wisconsin Association of School Boards

Barb Herzog, Region 7
President
Wisconsin Association of School Boards

WASB Board of Directors:

Linda Flottum, Region 1

Captain Terry McCloskey, Region 2

Sue Todey, Region 3

Alan Tuchtenhagen, Region 4

James Bouche, Region 5

Mary Jo Rozmenoski, Region 6

Andrew Maertz, Region 8

Mike Humke, Region 9

Sandie Anderson, Region 10

Brett Hyde, Region 11

Tom Weber, Region 12

Rosanne Hahn, Region 13

Cherie Rhodes, Region 15

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards is a nonprofit association that provides information and services to Wisconsin school boards in the areas of school law and policymaking, legislation and leadership development.