



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on October 27, 2021

Three State School-board Associations Withdraw From National Group Over Letter to Biden

Three state school-board associations have left the National School Boards Association (NSBA) in response to NSBA's recent letter suggesting the Biden administration treat concerned parents as domestic terrorists.

The Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Missouri school-board groups have all notified NSBA that they can no longer be party to an organization that inflames tensions between school boards and parents and calls for federal intervention into matters best handled locally.

In a letter to its members, the [Missouri School Boards' Association \(MSBA\)](#) wrote that while "school boards have always been asked to make tough decisions,"



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We ... believe that no school board member or educator should ever have to endure threats of violence or acts of intimidation against themselves or their families for making these difficult decisions. However, attempting to address that issue with federal intervention should not be the first step in most cases, and is antithetical to our longstanding tradition of local control. Further, the use of inflammatory terms in the NSBA letter is not a model for promoting greater civility and respect for the democratic process.

Indeed, NSBA's missive, which was apparently crafted in collaboration with the White House, was anything but civil. The group intimated that practically any parental disagreement with school boards might qualify as "domestic terrorism," but as [The New American](#) reported,

the only cases of "intimidation" that were cited arguably do not constitute instances of ... "domestic terrorism" and do not require the involvement of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Among other such "attacks," the association mentioned disruptions at school-board meetings, penning "offensive" letters to school-board members, and making lists of school-board members who support CRT [Critical Race Theory], masking, etc.

The [Ohio School Boards Association \(OSBA\)](#), in a letter informing NSBA of its decision to terminate their relationship, explicitly declared that the decision was "a direct result of the letter sent by you to President Joe Biden late last month." OSBA noted that although "the letter purported to be sent on behalf of state associations and school board members across the nation," that "could not be further from the truth." Had OSBA been consulted, they claim they "would have strongly disagreed" with the content of the letter.



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“OSBA believes strongly in the value of parental and community discussion at school board meetings, and we reject the labeling of parents as domestic terrorists,” the group wrote, adding that although actual disruptions, threats, and violence should not be permitted, “such interference should be dealt with at the local level, not by federal officials.”

“The NSBA letter,” OSBA asserted, “demonstrated just how out of touch the national association is with the concerns of local school boards and the principle of local control.”

In fact, NSBA appears not to have consulted state or local boards at all. For that matter, those who issued the letter — NSBA president Viola Garcia and interim executive director and CEO Chip Slaven — did not consult NSBA’s board of directors, either. Perhaps they were too busy chatting with the Biden administration, which was only too happy to have yet another fig leaf for suppressing dissent.

In a statement announcing its withdrawal from NSBA, the [Pennsylvania School Boards Association \(PSBA\)](#) said the letter to Biden was the “final straw” causing PSBA to break with NSBA, whose value “has been questioned numerous times over the past several years.”

“This misguided approach has made our work and that of many school boards more difficult,” argued PSBA. “It has fomented more disputes and cast partisanship on our work on behalf of school directors.”

PSBA, too, made clear its opposition to threats and violence against school boards. “However,” it stated, “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.”

Clearly, the NSBA letter spoke not for school boards nationwide but for those who stand to benefit from federal intervention in such matters, namely the Biden administration and those aligned with the signers of the letter. Is it merely a coincidence, then, that one of those signers, Garcia, was just [appointed](#) by Education Secretary Miguel Cardona to the Governing Board of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)?



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