



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: AASB MEMBERSHIP**

**FROM: SALLY SMITH, J.D.**   
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**SHANNON CAULEY**  
**PRESIDENT** 

**DATE: OCTOBER 8, 2021**

**SUBJECT: NSBA CONTROVERSY**

Late last week the National School Boards Association (NSBA) issued a letter to President Joe Biden requesting “Federal Assistance to Stop Threats and Acts of Violence Against Public School Children, Public School Board Members, and Other Public School District Officials and Educators.” The letter requests federal intervention of such incidents, suggesting some behavior could be hate crimes and domestic terrorism. In response to this letter, the U.S. Justice Department announced it was convening a task force, among other actions. The NSBA letter and the DOJ response have created a firestorm of comment in the media and on social media platforms.

AASB is extremely concerned about lack of civil discourse at board meetings and threats to public officials and school employees. We believe any criminal activity should be investigated by *local* law enforcement agencies; however, we do not believe there is a need for federal intervention at this juncture.

NSBA is a national association composed of state school board associations across the country. While the AASB is a member of NSBA, members were not consulted about the need for federal intervention nor are we aware of any state making that request. In fact, the letter is inconsistent with NSBA’s support for local control. The decision by NSBA to write this letter is not the first disagreement AASB has had with its national association. In fact, AASB is among at least a dozen states which are trying to impact essential changes in NSBA governance and policy. While AASB believes in working within the system for positive change and has been doing so for years, NSBA has been very slow to respond, so the AASB board is reevaluating the benefits of membership in NSBA. Alabama school leaders need a strong national voice and network, and if we believe that cannot be provided to you through membership in NSBA, AASB will explore other options.

We thought it important our members not only know where AASB stands on the letter, but also that our concerns go beyond this incident.

We know you are leading in challenging times. AASB supports you in the difficult decisions you must make. There is great community interest – and in some cases – disagreement -- with those decisions, but it is best that these decisions be made in -- and by -- the community. We applaud you for providing valuable and dedicated service to your community.

