



# Issue Backgrounder & Rationale: Proposed Bylaws Amendment on National Membership

SPECIAL DELEGATE ASSEMBLY CALLED FOR TIMELY ACTION  
SEPTEMBER 13, 2022, 6 P.M., VIA ZOOM

## Background

Iowa has been a long-standing member of the National School Boards Association (NSBA), which is a federation of state school boards associations. Iowa school boards voted many years ago to commit to IASB's participation by adopting bylaws language making membership in NSBA mandatory:

*Article XII, Section 1: The corporation shall be affiliated with the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and participate in the activities thereof.*

Networking and collaborating with other state school boards associations through NSBA has brought many values over time, from sharing resources, to organized federal advocacy, to value-added services for IASB members such as a national conference.

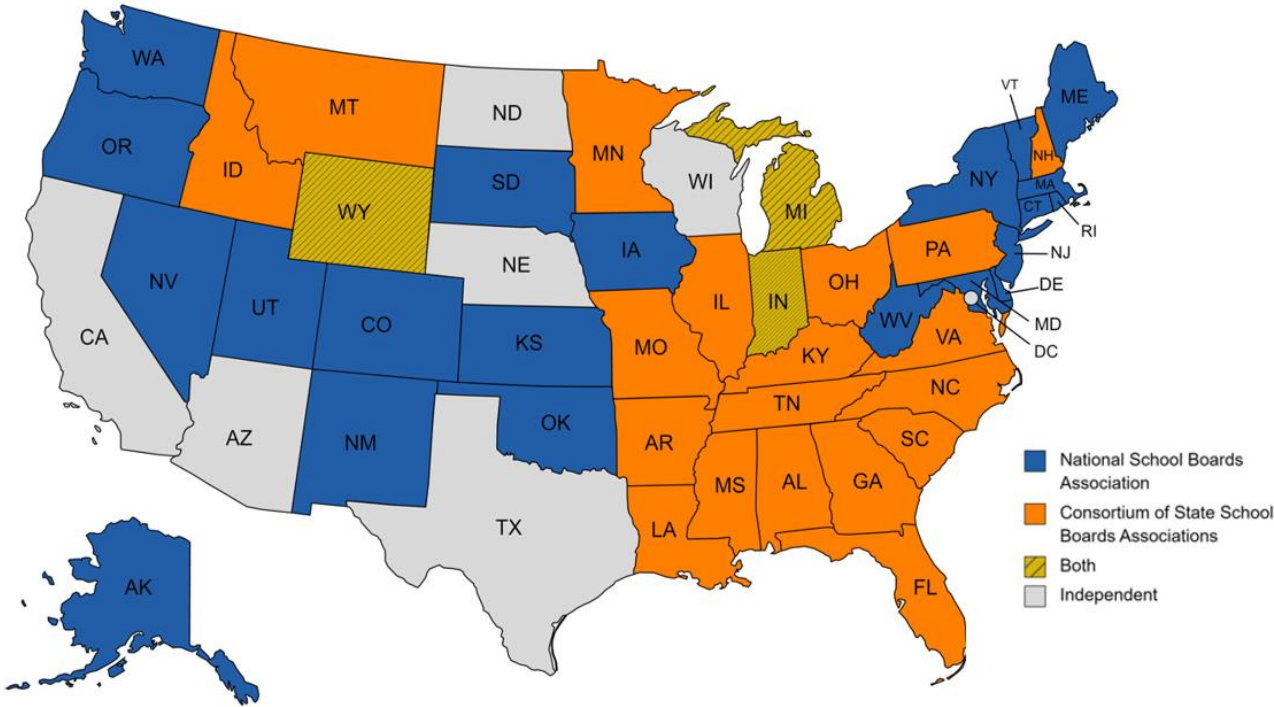
**The national context has changed significantly; the IASB Board of Directors can no longer recommend membership in NSBA for 2022–23.**

In recent years, many states have expressed concerns about return on investment, a lack of communication with and involvement of the members, and financial management of NSBA. In 2019 and 2020, 18 states formalized their concerns in written letters to NSBA. By July 2021, one state had withdrawn, and several others were delaying renewal in order to press for change. In September 2021, NSBA leaders initiated a controversial action ("Letter to Biden") without member involvement or support, causing additional states to withdraw.

As of July 2022, 25 state school boards associations have withdrawn from NSBA. Twenty-two states have founded a new organization, the Consortium of State School Boards Associations (COSSBA). Three states are members of both. Six states are not currently part of a national organization.

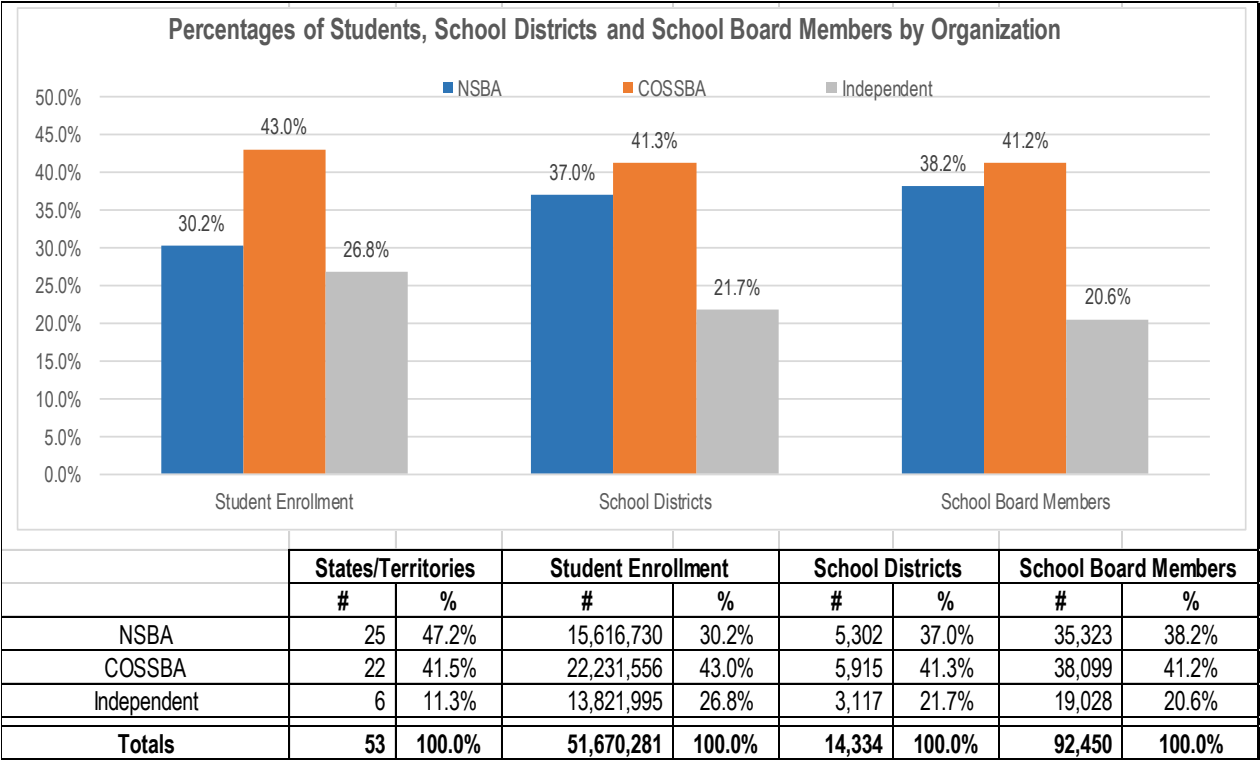
# Memberships of State School Boards Associations

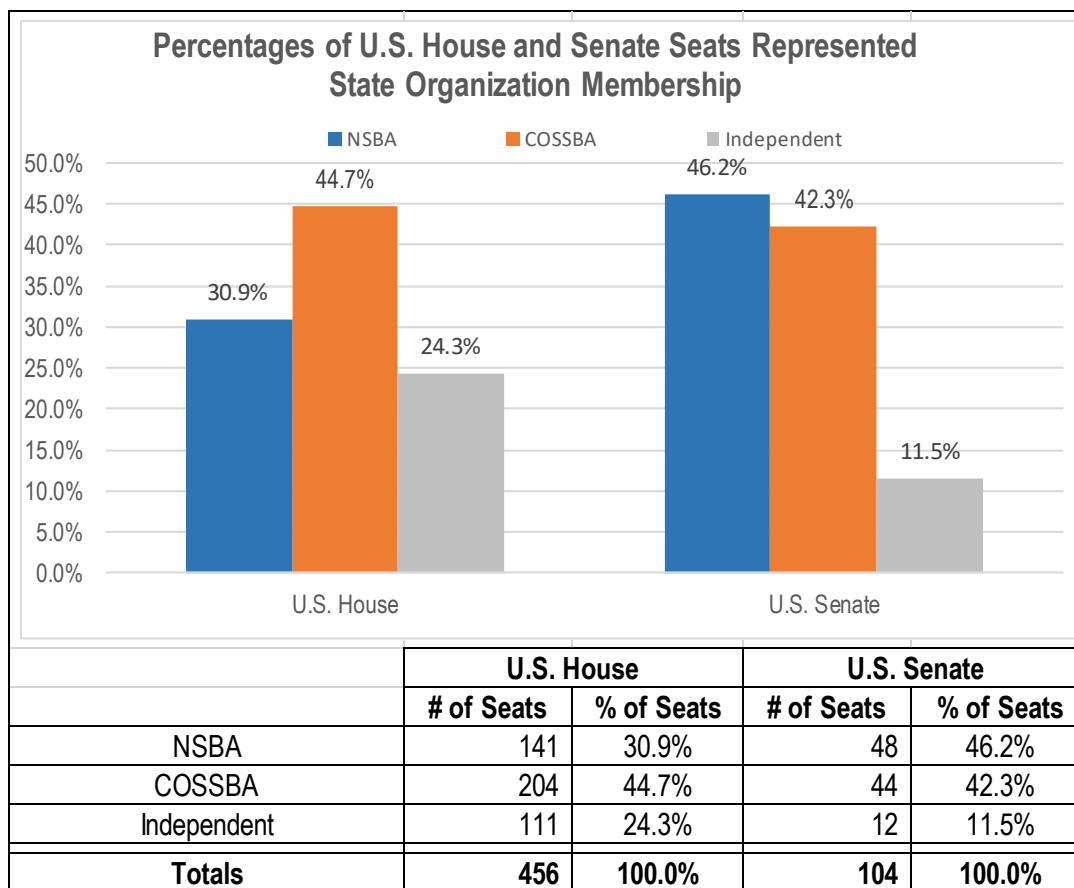
AS OF JULY 2022



## National Association Representation

AS OF JULY 2022





**Source Notes:** IASB analysis from various data sources. Three states are members of both NSBA and COSSBA and their state amounts are included in both association totals. NSBA data includes the U.S. Virgin Islands. Data does not include Hawaii and Washington, D.C., which have not typically been members at the national level.

The IASB Board of Directors has actively monitored the national context, conducting extensive due diligence on how Iowa should respond. As the data above shows, NSBA’s representation and scope are substantially lessened. Significant staffing cuts have occurred, with no communication on the impact on services. In addition, our prior concerns on the financial condition and viability of NSBA are now elevated. An analysis of financial documents shows negative net assets, limited cash reserves, additional liabilities, a high operating cost structure, and lack of projections beyond December 2022.

In July, the IASB Board came to agreement that we cannot recommend renewal of IASB’s membership in NSBA for 2022–23, costing \$68,512, as a fiscally responsible use of member resources. This payment is due by October 1, so we must take action, or we will be committed financially to an organization that isn’t currently in the position to provide the services and support we need.

On July 21, the IASB Board voted:

- To convene a special Delegate Assembly on September 13, 2022, to propose a bylaws amendment, granting the IASB Board authority and flexibility to determine participation in national associations representing state school boards associations. *See separate handout for complete bylaws language and details on the meeting.*

- To defer action on NSBA membership renewal for 2022–23 until the IASB Board meeting on September 20–21, 2022, after the special Delegate Assembly has considered the proposed bylaws amendment.

**The IASB Executive Committee has recommended that IASB join the 22 states in the new organization, COSSBA, for 2022–23, subject to passage of the bylaws change allowing Iowa to withdraw from NSBA.**

Our Executive Committee, which led the due diligence process, found the new organization is operating in innovative ways that will allow us to better pursue IASB goals of collaboration among states, federal advocacy, and enhanced services to our members. First-year dues to COSSBA would be \$34,256.

Initial IASB Board discussions indicate high support for this direction, so we feel it's important to be transparent. We welcome your input directly or via [IASBBoard@ia-sb.org](mailto:IASBBoard@ia-sb.org).

**In unity there is strength.** IASB's objective must be to build up a single organization, even as we navigate the current fragmentation. There is greater opportunity and influence through unified effort among all states.

The recommended bylaws change would grant the IASB Board authority to make decisions annually, as we actively participate and closely monitor the situation. It also allows flexibility should the organizations merge and/or rename. We are committed to leading in efforts to reunify the states in a single network over time.

**We ask for support of Iowa school boards to approve the bylaws amendment as proposed, and your participation on September 13 so we can move forward in a timely way.**

On behalf of the IASB Board of Directors,



**Jim Green**  
IASB Board President

**Liz Brennan**  
IASB Board President-Elect

**Amy Jurrens**  
Chair, Governance & Bylaws