



Texas Association of School Boards

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Serving Texas Schools Since 1949

November 9, 2021

Hon. Mayes Middleton, Chairman
Texas Freedom Caucus
P.O. Box 806
Austin, Texas 78767-0806

Representative Middleton:

Thank you for contacting the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB). We respectfully offer the following response to the letter that the Texas Freedom Caucus sent to TASB on Oct. 29, 2021:

First, please know that we understand and appreciate the extent to which some community members – here in Texas and across our nation – are upset about the National School Board Association’s letter to the Biden Administration. Frontline educators are working incredibly hard to support students and parents as our great State recovers from the pandemic, and it pains us to see any distraction from this work.

Our position at TASB has always been that school board meetings should be places where parents and community members are welcomed and provided the opportunity to speak and openly share their opinions and concerns on how the schools in their communities are being governed. In fact, having served almost 30 years in the U.S. Army and more than 20 years as a school board member here in Texas, there is nothing more important to me than serving those who depend on us to provide the best education possible and being responsive and accountable to the communities who elect us.

My time in military service, combined with the many lessons learned from my father who peacefully marched with Martin Luther King Jr., taught me the importance of respectful and civil debate. That’s why I’d be remiss not to say that further discussion is needed on how school board meetings should be places where everyone feels safe and welcome to share ideas and perspectives in an open and productive search for solutions. We need all voices to be heard if we’re to achieve a better future for our students and schools.

Finally, with regard to your questions about TASB’s continued membership in the NSBA, please know that we continue to monitor this issue closely – listening to member input, monitoring community sentiment, and watching how the NSBA moves forward from here. Like most state school board associations, we have provided clear feedback to the NSBA that their letter to the Biden Administration missed the mark — causing further division in some already divided communities.

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Moving forward, we're committed to helping ensure that the NSBA is more representative of its member states and develops a clearer process for gathering input from its members before distributing significant communications like their Sept. 29 letter. Associations — like communities — can grow stronger when they are able to work through difficult issues and come to a greater understanding.

That's our focus right now because Texas voices matter, and here at TASB we need them heard at the national level on important education issues such as special education funding, school accountability, and career and technical education.

Should you have any other questions, we'd welcome the opportunity to talk with you more about our work at TASB and our longstanding commitment to the schoolchildren of Texas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ted Beard', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ted Beard
President

cc: Rep. Matt Schaefer
Rep. Matt Krause
Rep. Brisco Cain
Rep. Gary Gates
Rep. Matt Shaheen
Rep. Valoree Swanson
Rep. Steve Toth
Rep. Cody Vasut
Rep. James White