

Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

August 13, 2026

Agenda Item:	National Association of State Boards of Education Membership
State Board Goal(s):	All Goals
State Board Role/Authority:	The State Board promotes effective and educational opportunities for all students in Iowa.
Presenter(s):	President John Robbins State Board of Education Paolo DeMaria, President and CEO National Association of State Boards of Education Tina Wahlert, Administrator Division of PK-12 Learning
Attachment(s):	One
Recommendation:	It is recommended the State Board hear and discuss this information.
Background:	The State Board seeks to evaluate the return on investment of \$29,130 in membership dues paid for by general funds appropriated to the Department. The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) states its mission is to “develop, support, and empower citizen leaders on state boards of education to strengthen public education systems so students of all backgrounds and circumstances are prepared to succeed in school, work and life.” NASBE-stated benefits include “peer-to-peer interaction, expertise, publications, training and technical assistance, a national voice, selected project support, and leadership opportunities.” Note: Membership dues paid for with public funds are strictly prohibited from supporting lobbying activities.

Benefits of Membership National Association of State Boards of Education

The nonprofit, nonpartisan **National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)** is the only organization focused on meeting the needs and supporting the work of state boards of education. NASBE's mission is to develop, support, and empower citizen leaders on state boards of education to strengthen public education systems so students of all backgrounds and circumstances are prepared to succeed in school, work, and life.

By and For State Boards of Education

State boards are uniquely positioned to reflect the citizen voice at the intersection of legislative policy making and state agency implementation. Boards are focused, deliberative and collaborative as they amplify legal requirements and work to create the conditions for a state's education system to grow, improve and excel. They are situated to ask questions, reflect on data and research, convene partners and stakeholders, prioritize and plan, and enact policies, always working in sync within the complex eco-system of the education sector.

The role and needs of state boards can best be met and supported by an organization that is uniquely designed and governed by them, and with them in mind. There is no other option that affords the board-centric information and peer-to-peer interaction opportunities that NASBE offers. The knowledge and perspective that comes with such interactions in combination with customized expertise can help increase boards' effectiveness, impact, and influence. To this end NASBE focuses on the following.:

- Creating opportunities for state board members to network and learn from each other, and share interests, advice, lessons and goals as they seek to advance equity and excellence in education;
- Building state board members' understanding of key education issues, practices, and challenges and the role of state boards in addressing them;
- Inspiring boards to identify priorities, engage partners, ask questions, examine data and evidence, identify strategies and actions, and support implementation to improve state education systems;
- Providing direct services and training to boards to build their capacity to operate effectively; and
- Synthesizing and communicating the perspective of state boards so they can impact federal policy deliberations and actions toward prioritizing state leadership of public education.

The Benefits of Membership

There are many benefits to a state board's membership in NASBE. Among these are the following:

Peer-to-Peer Interaction. This is the benefit that our members value the most! NASBE hosts encounters, meetings and events each year for board members to engage with peers from other states as well as national experts. Membership includes the following:

- The *"NASBE Member Exchange"* provides a monthly virtual opportunity for board members to join with each other across the country to gain insight into shared state policy issues and interact around

their challenges and experiences. This is a very popular and useful NASBE experience that no other organization offers.

- Periodic *Area Meetings* that bring together board members in the same geographic area to discuss issues of shared interest and learn from each other.
- Invitations to webinars on emerging issues and topics of interest in education.
- Discounted registration for NASBE's Annual Conference.
- Two free registrations and travel stipends to the New Member Institute.
- Access to special interest meetings and convenings that bring together state board members and national policy experts to examine key policy issues.

Expertise. NASBE's team knows how boards operate and is able to connect boards to the resources, research, and leading experts needed to navigate the policymaking process. NASBE leverages an extensive system of partners, coalitions, networks and connections to bring even more expertise to bear. NASBE not only brings boards together, it connects advocacy, research, and practice through a lens of pragmatic board action. State boards often turn to NASBE's experts for thought partnership on particular issues of policy or practice. NASBE's team can also offer personalized support on board operations, constituent engagement, goal setting, or policy review.

Publications. Members want and need thought-provoking, practical, actionable, research-based information about the latest issues in education and on their role and functioning. The wide range of NASBE publications respond to those needs.

- *State Education Standard.* This journal, written by subject-matter experts, provides insight into education policy issues of significance. An editorial advisory board comprising state board members reads and comments on drafts of each major article of the Standard prior to its approval for publication.
- *Education Leaders Reports* cover hot topics as well as over-the-horizon thinking on education. They provide background on policy issues, relevant research, and practical steps that the research findings imply for state policymaking and practice.
- *State Innovations* provide concise examples of the policymaking experiences of particular state boards of education. These reports serve as a source of new ideas for other states' policymaking, contacts to enable cross-state networking on key issues, and benchmarking.
- *Policy Updates* are two-page briefs on changes in federal education policy, state policy impacts, and trends in education.
- *Power of the Question* reports are designed to present boards with a set of questions they may want to ask on key education issues before them.
- *Boardsmanship Reviews* offer practical ideas on how to enhance the effectiveness and impact of a state board of education.

Training and Technical Assistance. NASBE offers member boards tools and resources to support them in effective leadership. Among the varied needs of state boards supported by NASBE are the following:

- strategic planning
- assistance with state superintendent hiring and evaluation
- support for task forces and working groups
- boardsmanship
- board self-evaluation
- leading for equity and excellence

A National Voice. As the national voice of state board members, NASBE has long represented its membership on critical education issues before Congress, the U.S. Department of Education, and other federal agencies.

Selected Project Support. On selected policy and practice issues, NASBE often forms study groups or networks to assist state boards and their members to dive deep into subjects and further their state work. In some cases, these activities are accompanied by stipends. Stipends may be used to cover in-state meetings, technical assistance, and board professional development.

Leadership Opportunities. State boards are encouraged to nominate members to serve on the Board of Directors to lead on education issues and governance on a national scale.

Testimonials: Here's what past and present members have said about the value of their membership in NASBE:

"NASBE provides a wealth of benefits that stretch from top-notch professional development to serving as a prominent voice in shaping national education policy. More crucially, NASBE offers a forum where state education leaders from diverse regions and backgrounds can come together and not only learn from one another but create a common vision for public education and what's best for children, regardless of whether they come from rural, urban, red, blue, north, south, or even non-states like the District of Columbia. Not only is NASBE great bang for the (minimal) buck, it is an amazing group of people."

"I am a better state board member because of the training, counsel, and interaction with NASBE. NASBE has also been a direct support to our state. The Kansas State Board of Education developed stronger relationships with our school administrators, especially those in small school districts, through activities and programs underwritten by a NASBE stipend. NASBE provides state board members with the supports necessary to meet the challenges of our times. I cannot imagine serving my state without the support and fellowship of NASBE."

"NASBE was instrumental in designing the process for evaluating our state superintendent, leading us to identify goals and metrics based on our strategic plan. The partnership with NASBE enabled us to set up an effective means of self-evaluation and holding state leadership accountable."

"When I was a local district board member, participation in our state school board association was a tremendous benefit for me. Now that I'm a state board member, the opportunities provided by NASBE for me are so valuable in helping me to be the best I can be. Other public officials I've known benefit from their organizations, so it only makes sense for me to do the same with NASBE."

For More Information

Contact Paolo DeMaria, NASBE's president and CEO at paolo.demaria@nasbe.org with membership questions.