



April 14, 2022

To: Members of the Florida School Boards Association

From: Andrea Messina, FSBA Executive Director

RE: FSBA Named Founding Member of Consortium of State School Boards Associations (COSSBA)

On April 10, 2022, in Raleigh, North Carolina, our association, along with 21 other founding school boards associations, signed a resolution to officially form the Consortium of State School Boards Associations (COSSBA). Representing FSBA at the Founding Meeting was Beverly Slough, from St. Johns County School District, who was appointed by the FSBA Board of Directors to serve in this role, and me, your Executive Director.

COSSBA is a voluntary, non-partisan, national alliance of state school boards associations. We believe that the governance of public schools by highly effective locally accountable public school boards is critical for the advancement and success of public education throughout the United States. COSSBA strives to provide member-focused information that is powered by collaboration and driven by shared commitment, shared resources, and shared responsibility. It is a consortium, founded by state school boards associations to support, promote, and strengthen each other as we serve our local school districts and board members, so they can provide excellence in local school board governance resulting in access to high quality educational opportunities for ALL students.

The signing of the resolution was an important step in formalizing the organization and allows the transitional governing body to move forward with full development of relevant programming and events through shared resources, federal advocacy, and alliance groups. More information about the services and focus of COSSBA can be found on the website at www.cossba.org.

Planning is underway for a full complement of training and networking opportunities including a Spring 2023 inaugural conference, a late summer/early fall 2022 Urban Institute (see more below), association leadership event in the winter of 2023 and a Federal Advocacy Conference in August/September 2023. These will provide networking opportunities for school board members and association leaders and will enhance the effectiveness of COSSBA's work through training, peer-to-peer information sharing, and interactively engaging around the issues that directly impact boards' ability to govern, set policy, and improve educational outcomes.

As a complement and supplement to the professional development and training offered, COSSBA's Urban Boards Alliance (UBA) will provide a national program of training, resources, and networking that supports and equips school boards with the requisite knowledge, skills, training, and experiences to



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address and improve the educational outcomes of students in challenging environments. The recognition that these environments are not unique to urban school districts, but also impact students in and out of the classroom in rural, urban, and suburban districts, is critical to the success of all students in our schools. COSSBA is planning an inaugural conference of the UBA in late summer/early fall 2022 that will help all school boards and governance teams to better understand the issues and share best practices to effectively support and serve all students. Participation in the UBA is included as a benefit of membership in COSSBA and as such, is available to all FSBA member districts.

There is still much work underway that will require the collaboration and talents of each member association. The willingness of members to share resources and work together to build and fortify this Consortium has been refreshing as we strive to find common ground and to build effective coalitions.

The 22 founding state school boards associations of COSSBA recognize that what lies ahead of us must be met with the understanding that the challenges faced by today's students are not bound by geography, race, class, or socioeconomic status. Overcoming these challenges and empowering our students to excel in any environment requires us to move forward in a way that is focused and responsive, transparent, and efficient, reflective and relevant, representative and accountable, and unified. This is the path that COSSBA has chosen and the one that COSSBA believes will lead to the advancement and success of public school education for all students in the United States.

The next formal update on the progress of COSSBA will be released in early June. As the Consortium continues to evolve, updates and information about conferences, professional development events, advocacy, services, and resources, will be added to the website at www.cossba.org.

We are excited to embark on this collaboration and are confident that you, our members, will benefit from this affiliation.

Sincerely,

Andrea Messina
Executive Director
Florida School Boards Association



Frequently Asked Questions

How is COSSBA different from any other national organization?

COSSBA is an alliance of state school boards associations formed by state school boards associations to support, promote, and strengthen each other in support of excellence in local school board governance resulting in high quality public education and access to educational opportunities for every student. Our focus is on building and maintaining a unified Consortium that is flexible, focused, responsive, relevant, collaborative, transparent, accountable, reflective, and representative of our members.

Who serves on the Transition Steering Committee (TSC)?

Each of the 22 founding state school boards associations make up the TSC. The Illinois Association of School Boards was elected to serve as Chair of the TSC. This structure will remain in place until the launch of the permanent governance structure in January 2023.

What is COSSBA's position on hot topics?

COSSBA is a non-partisan consortium of state school boards associations. The purpose of the body is to enhance the work of state associations. Public policy and advocacy positions **will be formulated** and based on position statements and resolutions approved by the Annual Business Session during the annual convention planned for Spring 2023. Thus, at this time, there is no position on hot topics.

Is the Urban Boards Alliance (UBA) exclusive to a particular demographic or to only inner-city or urban boards?

The UBA is not exclusive to a particular demographic or to only inner-city boards. UBA exists to provide support to rural, suburban, and urban boards that serve students in challenging environments and with issues such as:

- equity, literacy, and student achievement
- school infrastructure
- bullying
- broadband access
- drugs and alcohol
- gangs and violence
- homelessness
- human trafficking
- food insecurity
- suicide
- trauma
- socioeconomics
- demographics
- mental health
- poverty