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SCSBA and MASC announce joint civility initiative

The South Carolina School Boards Association (SCSBA) and the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) recently announced a joint civility initiative in a press conference in Columbia. The effort encourages local elected officials — both those in municipal government and those serving on school boards — to adopt a civility policy for their meetings and their interactions with one another.

MASC Executive Director Todd Glover; SCSBA Board President Gail Hughes, who is also chair of the Dorchester School District Two Board of Trustees; MASC Board President Rick Osbon, who is also mayor of the City of Aiken; and SCSBA Executive Director Scott Price announced the partnership. Board members and staff of both organizations were also present.

Both associations are in an optimal position to promote good leadership at the level of government closest to residents' lives, Price said, calling attention to the cross-section of local communities found at school board meetings across the state.

“For SCSBA, it is a wonderful and timely opportunity to re-energize the civility initiative launched in February 2020 just before the pandemic shut things down and forced a pivot to other priorities,” said Price. “With students as a focal point, educators, school boards and members recognize a teachable moment when they see one. Due to their unique role as school boards, modeling behavior they wish to see exhibited by students is part of their job description.”

In 2021, the MASC's board of directors adopted a strategic plan which included restoring civility in government as a top priority. Since then, the Association has included education and training opportunities, a civility pledge and civility procedures for city and town councils to adopt at meetings.

Glover said the two groups coming together, communicating and seeing they had a common interest in restoring civility to public meetings was itself an example of civil cooperation.

“We hope this partnership will begin a course in our country which will allow us to return civil discourse to the democracies of South Carolina, and eventually the United States,” he said.

The video of the press conference is available on the [MASC's website](#) and [SCSBA's website](#) along with other civility resources.

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The mission of the South Carolina School Boards Association is to be the leading voice advocating for quality public education while ensuring excellence in school board performance through training and service.