

Putting the roles and responsibilities of boards in the Act so everyone is clear what boards can do and what is expected of them

Possible roles and responsibilities

We have taken the suggestions from submissions and drafted some possible roles and responsibilities for boards. The following would be put into the Act to reflect the long-held expectations of boards and apply standard governance roles to a school setting:

1. a statement that the board is the governing body of the school
2. a list of roles and responsibilities covering the following areas:
 - ensuring every learner is able to attain his or her highest possible standard of educational achievement
 - setting, monitoring, reporting, and reviewing a strategic plan
 - setting and monitoring policies for management
 - employing staff
 - giving practical effect to the Treaty of Waitangi, including ensuring that all reasonable steps to provide instruction in tikanga Māori and te reo Māori where requested
 - operating in a financially responsible way
 - ensuring a safe physical and emotional environment for staff and students
 - ensuring an inclusive school
 - ensuring that there is consultation and collaboration with families/whānau
 - ensuring collaboration with other schools and entities.

Point to note

We have not included legal obligations that are in other parts of the Act or other legislation.

The board of trustees is responsible for the governance and the control of the management of the school. In 2013 the primary duty was introduced to emphasise that the focus of boards' role should be on raising student achievement.

The board is the employer of all staff in the school, is responsible for setting the school's strategic direction in consultation with parents, staff and students, and ensuring that its school provides a safe environment and quality education for all its students.

Although they aren't responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, boards are responsible for overseeing the management of personnel, curriculum, property, finance and administration.

The roles and responsibilities of boards are not currently in the Act. In addition there is no explicit statement outlining that a board is the governing body of a school. Suggestions from submissions during the consultation last Nov/Dec indicated what the roles and responsibilities of boards should be. Many submitters also said that the difference between governance and management should be clarified.

Question 1

In point two we have listed 10 possible roles and responsibilities for boards. Are any important roles and responsibilities missing?

Question 2

Are there any roles and responsibilities you would change or remove?

Board composition and governance

Some submissions commented on board capability and composition.

A standard board of trustees' membership includes:

- between three and seven parent elected trustees;
- the principal of the school;
- one staff elected trustee;
- one student elected trustee (in schools with students above Year 9);
- co-opted trustees; and
- up to four trustees appointed by the proprietor (in state integrated schools only).

We would like to gain feedback about whether the current statutory composition of boards supports effective governance, and any ideas for improvement. For example, should principals and staff representatives be voting members of boards?

Question 3

What do you think?