More voices, more choices: Rethinking school board elections | Information, for parents and whānau

If your child or whānau member attends school – we want your help to make kura and school board elections work better for you.

Why we are asking for your feedback?

Kura and school boards make important decisions that affect your child and you as a parent or whānau member.

All parents, all staff, and those students in years 9 and above can elect representatives to their kura or school board. So, it's important that school board election processes work well for you and everyone else that participates in the elections. But we know that's not always the case because:
- voter turnout is different in different schools;
- the current process may have contributed to some boards lacking diversity; and
- some children feel like they don't have enough of a say in school decisions.

We want more parents, staff, and students to take part in school board elections. We are hoping that the suggested changes described below will make it easier for people to participate. This may also help boards to better mirror their students and school communities.

To help us make decisions about how to improve school board elections, we are asking you to read our suggested changes and answer the questions below them.

Key suggested change: Allowing kura and schools to run some or all of their election processes electronically, through hui or through the current process

The current election process, which primarily uses the post and paper forms, might not work well for you or your school community. We're not suggesting removing the current way of doing things. But we are thinking about **enabling kura and schools to run some or all of their election processes electronically or through hui.** This way, schools can choose the election processes that work best for you and other parents and whānau.

> Question 1: Does the current school board election process work for you? If yes, in what ways? If not, what doesn't work for you?
>
> Question 2: How can we get election processes to work better for Māori, Pacific, Muslim, Asian, refugee, migrant and disability communities?

Electronic elections

We are considering allowing kura and schools to run their elections electronically. This would mean that your kura or school could use emails, apps and websites to carry out some, or all of its election processes.

> Question 3a: What do you think would be the benefits of electronic elections?
> Question 3b: What do you think would be the challenges of electronic elections?
> Question 3c: What would you expect the school to do to keep your votes safe and secure?

Hui-based elections

We are also considering enabling kura and schools to choose to use hui or meetings to hold their school board elections. This would mean your kura or school could hold unique hui that reflect specific school kaupapa and local tikanga. Schools would work with their whānau and school community to design what this would look like*.*

> Question 4a: What do you think would be the benefits of hui-based elections?
> Question 4b: What do you think would be the challenges of hui-based elections?

Suggested change: Consultation with school communities, including parents and whānau

To ensure that schools choose election processes that work for everyone, we are considering requiring boards to consult school communities (including parents and whānau), students (year 9 and above), and staff on how they would like school board elections to be run.

Question 5: Do you think that schools should have to consult voters and school communities on their election preferences? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Suggested change: Updating the criteria for co-opting and appointing board members

Additional board members can sometimes be co-opted or appointed onto a board. The law currently lists criteria that should be considered when doing this.

As these criteria were established a while ago, we think that they should be updated so that when additional members are chosen, boards have to consider their Tiriti o Waitangi commitments and the need to mirror their school's whānau and communities. For example, the criteria could be updated to specify that, as far as reasonably practicable, boards should reflect:
- Māori students and the school's Māori community, including local iwi and hapū;
- Disabled students and the school's disability community; and
- The genders, sexualities and sexes of the school's students and of the school community.

Question 6: Do you agree that the criteria for co-opting and appointing board members should be updated in this way? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Other suggested changes

We are also suggesting several other changes, such as:
- clarifying casual vacancy procedures; and
- making amendments to election timetables (to increase flexibility and to allow certain election processes to happen faster).

We are also considering making several changes to support student representation and involvement in the school board election process. You can read about the suggested changes in more detail here.

You can read more about these proposed changes [here](#).

How to have your say

Submissions on these proposals close on 16 June. To make a submission you can go to [Education Consultation](#), email legislation.consultation@education.govt.nz or write to:

Education Consultation
Ministry of Education
PO Box 1666
Wellington 6140

Please note that your submission may be released under the Official Information Act.