

More voices, more choices: Rethinking school board elections | Information for staff

Why are we asking for your feedback?

We want your help to make kura and school board elections work better for you.

Kura and school boards play an important role in the educational achievement and wellbeing of ākonga/learners. All parents, all staff, and those students in years 9 and above can elect representatives to their kura or school board.

It's important that the election process works for all voters and school communities. Unfortunately, we know that's not always the case because:

- Voter turnout is variable across schools;
- The current process may have contributed to some boards lacking diversity; and
- Some students 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

At the moment, when it's time to choose a staff representative, you either get issued a notice or you may see notices around your school, letting you know how and by when to choose a staff representative.

We're not suggesting removing the current way of doing things. But we are thinking about allowing 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 their staff.

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 enabling kura and schools to run their elections electronically. This would mean that kura and schools could use emails, apps and websites to carry out some or all of their 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 use hui or meetings to hold their board elections. This would mean kura and schools could hold hui that reflected their specific school kaupapa and local tikanga.

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 staff

To ensure that schools choose an election process that works 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?

Introducing a shorter timetable for staff by-elections

Currently, there is a 63-day timetable for staff elections, including by-elections. We understand that some boards would like to fill a casual vacancy for a staff member faster than is enabled by the current timetables. So, we are thinking about introducing a new month-long timetable for staff by-elections.

Question 6: Do you agree with a new month-long timetable for staff by-elections? 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 7: 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 considering other changes, including clarifying casual vacancy procedures, making changes to strengthen student participation and voice, and some minor technical amendments. You can read more about the suggested changes [here](#).

How to have your say

Submissions on these proposals close on 16 June. To make a submission you can go to [Education Conversation](#), 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.