

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

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 make important decisions that affect you and your whānau. All students in years 9 and above can elect a student representative to their kura or school board. Your student representative helps make sure that your views and needs are heard by the board, so it's important that the election process works for you. Unfortunately, we know that's not always the case because:

- Some students feel like they don't have enough of a say in school decisions;
- The current process may mean that some boards don't have a diverse range of members; and
- Not everyone gets involved in their school board elections.

We want more students to become involved in school board elections. We are hoping that the suggested changes described below will make it easier for you and your classmates to participate in the elections. Your participation may also help boards to better mirror you, their students, and your 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 student 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 student 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 students.

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 disabled students?

Electronic elections

We are thinking about enabling 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, including for the election of student representatives.

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 thinking about enabling kura/schools to choose to use hui or meetings to hold their school board elections. This would mean your kura/school could hold a hui that reflects your school's kaupapa and tikanga to elect board members, including student representatives.

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 students in years 9 and above

To make sure that schools choose an election process that works for you we are thinking about requiring boards to consult students in year 9 and above, staff, and school communities 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: Strengthening student voice

We are thinking about ways to ensure that ākonga/learners can always participate in school board decisions. At the moment, if an election to fill a vacancy for a student representative is unsuccessful, that spot can't be filled until the next student representative election.

We are thinking about requiring boards to either select a student representative or to find a different way for students to have a say about school board decisions, in situations where an election to fill a casual vacancy for a student representative has been unsuccessful.

Question 6a: Do you agree with this suggested change? If yes, why? If not, why not?
Question 6b: What else can be done to strengthen student voice and participation in school board elections?

Suggested change: Introducing a new, shorter timetable for student elections

At the moment there is a 63-day timetable for student representative elections. A shorter timetable may be more interesting for students. So, we are thinking about introducing a new month-long timetable for student representative elections.

Question 7: Do you agree with a new month-long timetable for student representative elections? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Suggested change: Allowing schools to choose when student elections take place

Currently, student representative elections take place every year in September. This might work for some schools, but students may want to elect their student representative at a different time in the year. We are thinking about allowing schools to choose when in the year student representative elections should take place.

Question 8a: What do you think would be the benefits of schools being able to choose when in the year they hold student representative elections?
Question 8b: What do you think would be the challenges of schools being able to choose when in the year they hold student representative elections?

Other suggested changes

We are also making other changes, such as updating criteria for co-opting and appointing board members to be more inclusive and better reflect te Tiriti o Waitangi. You can read more about these and other 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.