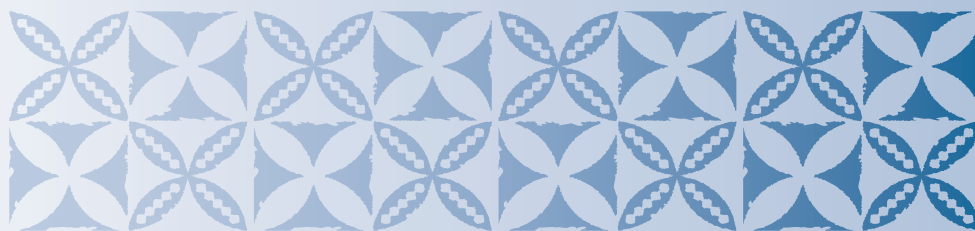


Effective governance

How boards work



Information for school boards of trustees
2013

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Introduction

Boards of trustees provide culturally responsive strategic leadership and direction to schools. They are accountable for the performance of their schools and kura, and the key focus of their role is the improvement of student progress and achievement.

A number of factors influence student achievement, including the board's own performance. *How boards work* provides information on developing good systems and processes so that every decision is focused on making a difference for the students in your school.

After a triennial election is a good time to take a fresh look at how your new governance team will operate, regardless of how many (or few) new trustees you have. It is an opportunity to review the way things are done, including the previous practice of your school's board. This is also a good way to induct your new trustees into what governance is all about.

This publication is part of a family of resources to help you understand the vital role that you play in leading the future direction and performance of your school. It is designed to complement *Effective governance – Working in partnership* (2010), which brings together the key insights about effective governance in schools.

Māori-medium settings that adhere to Te Aho Matua or align to iwi taketake have additional kaupapa and governance responsibilities. For further support contact:

Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa
0800RUNANGA (0800 786 2642)

www.runanga.co.nz

Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa
027 KURAAIWI (027 587 2249)

These guidelines are intended to complement rather than replace other information available to school boards. Throughout the text you will find links to other helpful resources produced by the Ministry, the New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA), and the Education Review Office (ERO).

For further support and guidance, contact your local Ministry of Education office www.minedu.govt.nz/AboutThisSite/ContactUs.aspx and/or the NZSTA www.nzsta.org.nz

Purpose, principles, and practices of effective governance

Effective governance – Working in partnership outlines how school governance structures and processes can support a board's primary focus on student achievement.

An effective and efficient board sets culturally responsive standards of excellence and accountability for its performance, including the way it behaves, its meeting processes, and its aims and targets for student achievement. To set these standards, trustees need to have an understanding of the “3 Ps” of effective governance: purpose, principles, and practices.

The purpose: To govern well, boards need to understand why schools need to be governed and what boards' responsibilities are.

The principles: Effective boards adopt a philosophy of governance that appropriately reflects their community and provides a sound basis for meeting the challenges they will face.

The practices: Using tried and tested governance practices helps boards to govern effectively and to make the best use of the valuable time trustees have together.

This document highlights some of the critical areas that contribute to the effectiveness of school boards of trustees.

Purpose, principles, and practices for kura and Māori-medium students use a kaupapa Māori framework. *Tū Rangatira: Māori Medium Educational Leadership* presents a model of leadership reflecting some of the key leadership roles and practices that contribute to high-quality outcomes for Māori students.

You can download a copy from the Ministry's website at www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/Leadership-development/Professional-information/Tu-rangatira-English

You can also access hard copies from Down the Back of the Chair (0800 660 662) or by email at orders@thechair.minedu.govt.nz

Ask for *Tū Rangatira* ISBN: 978-1-86969-433-3.

Responsibilities

1 The national framework for board accountability

While boards have considerable discretion, they are not autonomous. They are responsible to their community and the Crown for the performance of the school within the law and the national education system. You can find an overview of the legal framework for boards in *Effective governance – Working in partnership*.

Your board must fulfil these legal requirements, monitoring and evaluating your school's performance to make sure it is on track to achieve the aims and targets in your charter and is complying with board and government policy. Each school is different in terms of its character, culture, philosophy, location, catchment, community, and student body. The focus on student success, however, is the same for every school.

2 Focusing on student achievement

Most of our young people are achieving at school. However, some are not – in 2011, 28 percent of school leavers did not attain NCEA Level 2 or its equivalent.¹ Your board plays a vital role in:

- leading the future direction and performance of your school
- making sure that the focus is on continuously improving student progress and achievement within a culturally responsive environment, particularly for those students and groups of students who are not achieving as they should be.

Some boards have found it powerful to have the school vision statement displayed around the school to reinforce the focus on student success. All the tasks and activities that you undertake as a board exist to support that end.

Apart from separate planning and self-review sessions, most of the board's work is carried out at board meetings. To make the most of your meetings, you need to fully understand:

- the role of a school board
- the boundaries between governance and management
- when and what to delegate to the principal
- good meeting procedures
- board timelines.

Key questions for your board

- Do our meeting agendas have a strong student achievement focus, particularly on the targets we have set for our Māori and Pasifika students and our students with special education needs?
- What does improved student achievement look like?
- How will we know if it is happening in our school?
- What kinds of data and evidence should we expect to see?
- How will we use that information to make and support quality decision making in our school?
- How will we know if we are being responsive to the cultural needs of all our students and their families, whānau, and communities?
- Do we understand the difference between governance and management roles in our school?
- Do we keep this difference clear in our meetings?
- How do we evaluate our own (board) performance?
- How do we plan for our own (board) professional development?

¹ Education Counts: <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/indicators/main/education-and-learning-outcomes/1781>

Robust school governance structures and processes will support the board in its primary focus. These structures and processes include:

- strategic leadership and direction through the charter process
- a policy framework that gives direction to guide all school activities
- a 3-year review programme that covers all aspects of school performance
- a current budget that is aligned with the strategic and annual plans
- an effective meeting process that focuses on student progress and achievement
- a succession plan and induction programme for new trustees
- an effective process for appraisal of the principal
- a positive and productive partnership between the board and the principal
- an effective process for working with families, whānau, communities, and iwi
- effective risk-management strategies.

Risk management

Risks can include things like a falling (or rising) school roll and the effect that this might have on staff, students, property, and finance. For more on risk management, see *Effective governance – Working in partnership*, page 17.

The board may delegate the day-to-day implementation of many of its responsibilities to the principal, but you must remember that you can never delegate the board's accountability. For that reason, your board needs to have a sound appraisal cycle in place for the principal and an ongoing review programme.

Where to go for help

Information on principal appraisal can be found on the NZSTA website at www.nzsta.org.nz/search/?searchtext=principal%20appraisal or on the Ministry's website at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/ManagingResources/PerformanceManagement.aspx

3 Priority students

Effective governance – Working in partnership introduced three documents that are designed to help boards with strategies for improvement. These Ministry strategies focus on ways to increase progress and achievement for the national priority groups of Māori, Pasifika, and students with special education needs. These documents can provide boards with useful guidance and insights for their monitoring role.

Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success – The Māori Education Strategy 2008–2012

Ka Hikitia means to “step up” or to “lengthen one’s stride”. The aim of *Ka Hikitia* is to step up the performance of the education system to ensure Māori are achieving education success as Māori.

Ka Hikitia stresses that identity, language, and culture count and are the essential foundation for transforming the education system into one that is high in quality and equity and where all students succeed and achieve.

Ka Hikitia is currently being updated for the next five years. *Ka Hikitia - Accelerating Success 2013–2017* will be publicly released in mid-2013, along with *Tau Mai Te Reo - The Māori Language in Education Strategy 2013–2017*.

Consultation with your school's Māori community is an important part of your board's commitment to your Māori students' success as Māori. You can read more about how to build an educationally powerful partnership with whānau in *Effective governance – Supporting education success as Māori* (for a link to this resource, see “Where to go for help” below).

For Māori-medium settings, *Tū Rangatira* outlines the kaikōtuitui leadership role of nurturing diversity, brokering relationships, and weaving people together to achieve your goals for student success. (See page 34 of *Tū Rangatira: Māori Medium Educational Leadership*.)

Where to go for help

Your school will have printed versions of the *Ka Hikitia 2008–2012* document, or you can access it online at www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/PolicyAndStrategy/KaHikitia.aspx

The Ministry has run webinars about *Ka Hikitia* for boards. You can find transcripts of these online at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/EffectiveGovernance/PublicationsAndResources/WebinarResources.aspx

Tau Mai Te Reo is the Ministry and education sector agencies' Māori Language in Education Strategy. This strategy is due to be released in early to mid-2013.

School planning guidance for kura and Māori-medium settings is available on the Ministry's website at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/SchoolPlanningAndReporting/PublicationsAndResources/ReportingForKuraAndMaoriMediumSettings.aspx

Te Whakamahere Kura – He Aratohu mā ngā Poari Kaitiaki focuses on the kura charter, annual targets, and how to incorporate *Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori* in charters for kura with students in years 1–10. It builds on existing planning and reporting information and resources and complements other information about using *Te Maurautanga o Aotearoa* and *Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori*.

A companion resource in this series, *Effective governance – Supporting education success as Māori*, is also available on the Ministry's website at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards.aspx

Pasifika Education Plan

The *Pasifika Education Plan* is a vision for an education system that works for Pasifika students so that they gain the knowledge and skills necessary to do well for themselves, their communities, Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pacific region, and the world. The plan encourages the education workforce to focus on becoming “Pasifika competent” and to develop systems and processes that build on identities, languages, and cultures.

Consultation for a renewed Pasifika Education Plan was carried out in 2012, and the plan was re-launched in November 2012. Pasifika students' participation and achievement in education has improved markedly in the last five years. The plan aims to not only keep up the momentum but step up the pace of change.

Where to go for help

You can read about the *Pasifika Education Plan* at www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/PasifikaEducationPlan.aspx.

The renewed *Pasifika Education Plan 2013 – 2017* is now available at www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/PasifikaEducation/PasifikaEducationPlan2013.aspx.

A companion resource in this series, *Effective governance – Supporting Pasifika success*, is also available on the Ministry's website at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards.aspx

Success for All – Every School, Every Child

Success for All is the Government's vision for a fully inclusive education system for all students with special education needs. *Success for All* includes everyone – boards of trustees, principals, teachers, students, and their families and whānau. The Government has set a target that all schools will demonstrate inclusive practice by the end of 2014.

Where to go for help

You can access *Success for All* at www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SpecialEducation/OurWorkProgramme/SuccessForAll.aspx

In June 2010, the Education Review Office published the report *Including Students with High Needs*, which includes a special education self-review chart and indicators that provide suggestions for inclusive practice. You can find this at www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Including-Students-with-High-Needs-June-2010

A planning and reporting resource, *School Planning – Supporting Learners with Special Education Needs*, is available on the Ministry of Education's website at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/SchoolPlanningAndReporting/PublicationsAndResources/SupportingSENNeeds.aspx

Effective governance – Building an inclusive school, a resource providing boards with information and advice about how to make schools more inclusive, is available at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards.aspx

Structure and roles

1 Structure of the board

Each school board is made up of a cross-section of the community and represents the school's stakeholders. These stakeholders are not just current students and their families and whānau but also the wider school community. Staff, past students, potential future students, the proprietor, local iwi and hapū, Pasifika and other community groups and organisations, local businesses, the Ministry of Education, and other government agencies all have an interest in your school.

The board includes:

- **the principal**, who is a full member of the board as well as the educational leader of the school, the chief executive, and an employee of the board
- **a staff trustee**, who is nominated and elected by the school's teaching and non-teaching staff
- **a student trustee** (for schools with students above year 9), who is nominated and elected by the students
- **parent-elected trustees** who, whether or not they are actually parents of students at the school, bring a parent/community perspective.

Your board may also have:

- **co-opted trustees**, who may be co-opted for various reasons (for example, because they have an expertise or perspective that is needed by the board or to provide gender or ethnic balance)
- **proprietor's appointees**, who are selected by proprietors of state-integrated schools to help preserve the special character of the school. They are selected to represent the proprietor rather than any other stakeholder group. For example, a state-integrated Catholic school would have proprietor's appointees to ensure that the Catholic character of the school is maintained.

It is important to remember that all board members, whether elected, selected, co-opted, or appointed, have the same voting rights and are on the board to ensure the best possible outcomes for all students. They must base any decisions on all the information at hand and are then collectively responsible for the board's decisions.²

Some schools have the Minister's approval for an alternative governance structure, which can include a combined board for two or more schools or an alternative process for appointing or electing trustees. You can read about alternative governance options on the Ministry's website at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/EffectiveGovernance/FlexibilityBoardStructures/SchoolingStructuresAndGovernanceOptions.aspx

2 Governance and management

The board governs the school³ on behalf of the Crown. Each board is a separate legal and Crown entity.

As governors of the school, your board sets the direction for the school in its charter and policy framework and monitors progress towards achieving your expectations. The principal is delegated responsibility for how the school will achieve the board's expectations, working within the law and the board's policy framework. The principal may, in turn, delegate some of that responsibility to other staff members.

In effective schools, the board and the principal have a clear understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities and work in partnership. Remember that the principal, while a member of the board, is also the board's chief executive and its employee. The principal may make recommendations to the board, but it is the board that makes the final governance decisions. The board can delegate responsibility but cannot delegate accountability.

Effective boards make sure that the principal–board relationship is based on trust and respect, and recognise that the common goal is to get the best possible outcomes for students. Honest and open dialogue and a policy of no surprises from either side are part of an effective working relationship.

While governance and management must share the same vision and expectations, they have different roles and responsibilities. Staff, parents, and whānau also need to understand the roles of the board and the principal, as well as the board's priorities for the school. This will support your whole school community to have a shared understanding of your school's expectations for student achievement – particularly for the national priority groups of Māori, Pasifika, and those students with special education needs.

² See *Effective governance – Working in partnership* page 9 for more information about the board's collective decision making.

³ See section 75 of the Education Act 1989 at <http://www.legislation.govt.nz>

3 Role of the board

The board's role has four main aspects:

- looking forward – designing the future
- looking back – being accountable for the school's performance
- looking out – acting on behalf of the board's stakeholders
- looking in – being a good employer.

Designing the future

Boards influence outcomes, now and in the future. They focus on the “big picture”, particularly in their strategies to improve educational achievement for all students in the school. This means making sure that the aims and targets in your school's charter are focused on those students who are not currently achieving as they need to be – in particular, Māori, Pasifika, and students with special education needs. The school's budget and property plans, approved by the board, should be aligned to these strategies so that they can be implemented in the way you planned.

In the school charter, the board sets the strategic direction for the next 3–5 years, with plans and targets for making progress in the current year. The principal and staff set annual targets for student achievement. The board is responsible for approving and monitoring the implementation of the annual plan and the successful completion of its targets.

Being accountable for school performance

As the board, you need processes that will provide you with feedback, data, and information about how management is achieving your planned outcomes. This will allow you to monitor progress towards achieving the goals and targets you have set for:

- student progress and achievement, within a culturally responsive environment
- performance in a general sense – for example, goals relating to the board's responsibilities under the National Administration Guidelines.

As a Crown entity, the board has legal and policy accountabilities to ensure that the school acts lawfully and fulfils its obligations in the national education system. (See the “Responsibilities” section on page 5 of this document.)

Acting on behalf of the board's stakeholders

In governing the school, the board has an independent, stewardship role. It acts on behalf of those who are not at the board table to ensure that the school continuously improves student achievement. The school's key stakeholders include:

- the school's community, including not only current students, their families and whānau, and school staff but also members of the wider community

- the proprietor (in the case of state-integrated schools), who has a role in the ownership of land and buildings and the special character of the school
- the Crown, which has ownership of and responsibility for schools
- the Ministry of Education, which has a responsibility to the Minister of Education for monitoring school performance.

You should consult with your school's whānau, community, and local iwi regularly so that the community's attitudes and beliefs are reflected in the school's planning and future direction. Encourage your community to be involved in the school's cultural, educational, and social life and provide opportunities for them to express their views on how the board and the school are operating. Every community, and the groups within it, is different, and the board needs to work with its community to find out their preferred ways of communicating.

Boards have various ways of communicating with their stakeholders – for example, being available to parents at occasions such as parent interviews, with focus groups, or through surveys of parents, families, and whānau. This gives the board feedback on how well the school is meeting its students' needs and how effectively it communicates with families and whānau. This information informs the board and guides its decisions about changes and new targets.

Being a good employer

The board of trustees is the legal employer of all staff at the school. You must have policies and procedures that meet all the requirements of your role as an employer. A useful resource for boards on this topic, *Effective governance – Recruiting and managing school staff*, is available at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/EffectiveGovernance/PublicationsAndResources/RecruitingAndManagingSchoolStaff.aspx

In most cases, the board will delegate some of this responsibility to the principal. However, you need to be aware that you cannot delegate accountability. The board, as the employer, is ultimately responsible.

The board is also responsible for ensuring that the principal is appraised annually. The principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff are appraised annually.

A safe environment for students

Your board is also responsible for providing a safe physical and emotional environment for the children and young people in your school. You should have policies and procedures in place for this.

Where to go for help

The Ministry provides resources to support boards and principals in setting goals and targets in their school's annual charter. These documents are available on the Ministry's website at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/SchoolPlanningAndReporting/Planning.aspx and on TKI at <http://assessment.tki.org.nz/Using-evidence-for-learning/Target-setting>

Information about your responsibilities and guidelines to best employment practice as employers are available at:

www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SchoolEmployment/Employers.aspx

www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/SchoolEmployment/Employers/Bullying.aspx

www.nzsta.org.nz/board-as-employers

Effective governance – Recruiting and managing school staff is available on the Ministry's website at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/EffectiveGovernance/PublicationsAndResources/RecruitingAndManagingSchoolStaff.aspx

4 Trustee roles

All trustees, regardless of how they came to be board members, have an equal voice, equal vote, equal accountability, and equal responsibility. They are elected, selected, appointed, or co-opted to make decisions in the best interests of all students at the school.

Trustees must bring their individual judgement to board decisions and not take direction from any individual or group. They must avoid any potential conflict of interest arising from any link with an individual or group. Conflicts can arise in relation to financial decisions, complaints, or staff discipline. Advice on how to manage conflicts of interest is available at www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/SchoolOperations/SchoolFinances/ConflictOfInterestInformationForSchoolTrustees.aspx

Some specific roles within the board are explained below.

The presiding trustee

Boards of trustees are required to appoint a trustee to preside at board meetings. This is outlined in Schedule 6 of the Education Act 1989. This appointment must be made at the first board meeting in any year, unless it is a trustee election year, in which case it must be at the first meeting after the election. The presiding trustee is commonly referred to as the board chairperson or "Chair".

Any trustee can be elected as Chair, **except** the principal, staff trustee, and the student trustee.⁴

The Act does not set out a role for the Chair other than to preside at board meetings. However, the Chair is usually responsible for developing and maintaining a productive working relationship with the principal. The Chair also has a casting vote in board decisions. It is best to exercise this vote carefully. A Chair will usually use their casting vote strategically to preserve the status quo so that the issue can be revisited later, perhaps after further research.

The Chair should always recognise that their role is one of servant-leader and that they are acting on behalf of the whole board. It is up to the board to decide the Chair's role and delegations. You should consider documenting these in a "Role of the Chair" policy.

The staff and student trustees

Sections 94 and 97 of the Education Act 1989 set out the legislative requirements for staff and student trustees. Unless the principal is the only member of the school's staff, all state and state-integrated schools must have a staff trustee. Likewise, schools that have full-time students above year 9 must have a student trustee.

The staff and student trustees are first and foremost trustees. They are elected to bring a staff or student perspective to the board in the same way that parent-elected trustees bring a parent and community view (as opposed to the views of a particular group or agency).

Good practice suggests that staff or student trustees should not be required to provide individual reports at each board meeting unless specifically requested by the board. Parent-elected trustees do not report on the day-to-day happenings of the parent body or the issues that parents may have with the school. If there are issues relating to the students or staff that the board needs to be aware of, these should come to the board through the principal as the day-to-day manager of the school.

Like all trustees, the staff and student trustees must act in the best interests of the students. They have the same responsibilities and are bound by the same **codes of conduct** as the other trustees. They are part of the board team, rather than representing a single group.

Where to go for help

Read the "Principles of governance" section of *Effective governance – Working in partnership*.

You can find guidance on electing your Chair at www.nzsta.org.nz/board-as-governors/what-is-a-school-trustee-/chair-election/

⁴ Education Act 1989, Schedule 6, clause 7

5 Tools

For a board to work efficiently and effectively, the board, individual trustees, and the principal must understand what they're trying to achieve, the scope of their responsibilities, and the expectations for performance. Each board is responsible for deciding how it structures and carries out its work and for the quality of its performance.

Using good board tools will help. Some examples are discussed below.

The Governance Manual

Many boards compile a Governance Manual that describes the governance roles within their board and the tasks and responsibilities that go with them. This manual can include information about conflicts of interest, delegations to the Chair and any board committees (including who has delegation to speak to the media), board meeting procedure, terms of reference and procedures for the Disciplinary Committee, helpful resources, and a guide to Ministry of Education acronyms. It can also include a code of conduct for trustees. It is especially valuable as part of an induction pack for new trustees, along with a copy of *Effective governance – Working in partnership*.

The workplan

Boards should have a 3–5 year rolling programme of what needs to be done and when, including monitoring and review, legal requirements, Ministry requirements, policy review, and so on.⁵

A workplan does not need to be a difficult exercise – a simple Word table can be used. An example workplan is provided in Figure 1. The example was started by putting in board meeting dates for the year, then adding some “must do” compliance requirements. Developing a plan is board work, in consultation with the principal (or the task could be delegated to the board Chair or a board committee).

The example workplan includes a number of other focus areas, including the school charter, information about the budget, and principal appraisal (or tumuaki appraisal for kura kaupapa Māori).

While this is only a guideline, you can see what the curriculum part of the board workplan might look like for a school using the New Zealand Curriculum or what the curriculum or marau ā kura part might look like for a school or kura using *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*.

Figure 1: Example workplan

[Year]	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Meetings	14 Feb	13 Mar		10 May	12 Jun		14 Aug	11 Sep	9 Oct	13 Nov	11 Dec
Requirements	Appoint Chair	Accounts to Auditor Roll Return		Annual Report	Nat Stds-parent reporting	Roll Return					Nat Stds-parent reporting Charter
Charter	Annual Plan	Draft Annual Report	Aim 1	Aim 2	Aim 3	Community Consultation	Review Arts	Aim 1	Aim 2	Draft Charter	Analysis of Variance
Learner progress & achievement		Māori/Pasifika focus		Special needs focus	All targets		Gifted/talented focus	Māori/Pasifika focus		Analysis of Variance	
Budget	Approved	Monitor		Monitor	Monitor	Mid year review	Monitor	Monitor	Monitor	Next year draft	Draft end of year
Principal/Tumuaki appraisal	Performance agreement signed off				Review of reporting	Mid year progress					Appraisal report
Curriculum	Key Competencies		Area 1		Values		Area 2		Principles	Plan next year's focus area	Area 3
Marau ā kura		Pūtaiao			Hauora & PE				Hangarau	Plan next year's focus area	
Policy	Curriculum/Marau ā kura			Property				Health & Safety	Consultation policy		
Board process/PD		Webinar	Board meetings	Webinar			Planning Retreat	Webinar			

⁵ See *Effective governance – Working in partnership*, page 18, The annual agenda.

School governance structures and processes are part of a system that is designed to support better student achievement, particularly for those groups of students not currently well served by our education system. You will see that Māori and Pasifika students and students with special education needs are a focus in the board's workplan.

You should not forget to plan for and include your board's professional development in your workplan. As well as participating in webinars, the board in Figure 1 plans to hold its own Training and Planning Retreat Day using a contracted facilitator.

Where to go for help

For information about training options and opportunities, go to the page for boards on the Ministry of Education's website at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards.aspx

You could also contact the local Ministry senior adviser for your school, or visit the website of the New Zealand School Trustees Association at www.nzsta.org.nz

Meetings

The board meeting is where your board receives the information you need to be assured that the school is on the right track. It is also a time to discuss any other educational or school matters from a governance perspective and to make any required governance decisions. Make the best use of meetings by making sure the agenda is always strongly focused on student achievement.

The Education Act 1989, Schedule 6:8 and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 Part 7 set out a few rules for the conduct of board meetings. However, each board decides the date, time, location, and format of its meetings.

Board meetings are not public meetings, but they are held in public so that members of the community can attend. The board has the discretion to grant speaking rights to people attending the meeting. Most boards adopt a regular schedule of meetings depending on current issues, board meeting procedures, and current legislation.

Your board should clearly understand the circumstances in which your board can exclude the public from a meeting and the correct process for doing so. Contact the NZSTA helpdesk for further information.

The agenda

Boards usually delegate responsibility for managing the agenda to the Chair. A well-structured agenda, clearly linked into the board's workplan, is a key ingredient for an effective meeting. Having a busy agenda can distract attention from the board's governance focus.

There is no right format for your agenda, but the example in Figure 2 may help you. In this example, following the recommendations of a review, the fictitious Kiwi Park Board has been trialling a new approach to agenda setting. Three features of this new approach are:

- Anyone who wants to put items on the agenda is required to indicate how much time will be needed. That allows the Chair to manage the meeting in line with their board meeting policy, which states that meetings will finish by 9.30 p.m.
- The main part of the agenda is split into three areas: strategic decisions, strategic discussions, and monitoring and review. Details are included on the agenda along with any motions that will be put to the meeting. It could also include any recommendations based on the evidence being presented.
- The action list from the previous meeting is left until just before the end of the current meeting. By that time, it is usually obvious what did and didn't get followed up. Any outstanding matters can be quickly identified and either kept on the action list or added to the next agenda.

For further information on agendas, see the table on page 19 of *Effective governance – Working in partnership*.

Figure 2: Example agenda

Kiwi Park School BOT Meeting, 7 p.m., 12 June 2012	
Attendance:	5 mins
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present • Apologies • Declaration of Interests 	
Confirmation of minutes	5–15 mins
Strategic decisions	15–30 mins
Strategic discussions	45–60 mins
Monitoring and review	30–45 mins
1. Student achievement 2. Other	
Board administration:	5–15 mins
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action list from last meeting • Identification of agenda items for next meeting 	
Meeting closure/evaluation	5–15 mins

You could consider having a policy reference beside each agenda item so that trustees can identify the board's expectations in that area.⁶ This helps to keep the meeting focused on governance.

Cutting back the agenda to highlight these functions and putting a time allocation on each item help to keep things on track. The board should think carefully about the order of the agenda, so that the most important aspects of the meeting are dealt with at the beginning, when trustees are relatively fresh.

A pivotal part of each board meeting should be the principal's report. This report should cover at least one strategic aim and describe the progress being made towards meeting the annual aims and targets; in particular, for student achievement. For your board to be an active and effective participant in the change process, it is essential for you to critique and challenge the data analysis and assumptions in these reports.

Minutes

Minutes of meetings, including public-excluded meetings, are the official record of the board's meeting process and the decisions made. Minutes typically include who was at the meeting (whether there was a quorum), whether a report was presented, if a legal issue (such as a potential conflict of interest) was discussed, if a particular aspect of an issue was considered, or whether a person arrived late (or left early) or was excluded from part of the meeting because of a conflict of interest.

As a Crown entity, your board is subject to the Official Information Act 1982. Having clear, accurate minutes is very important if your board is ever challenged about a decision it has made. Apart from that, minutes are a very practical tool for keeping track of the board's work.

Any member of the public has the right to inspect and request a copy of the minutes under Section 51 of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Evaluating your meetings

The last item on the example agenda is closure and evaluation. The various types of board self-review are discussed later in this resource, but good self-review for a board includes looking at the effectiveness of its own processes, such as meetings. The Kiwi Park Board has developed an ongoing strategy for this by conducting a debrief or survey at the end of each meeting.

This debrief looks at questions such as:

- What worked well in this meeting?
- Did we achieve the expected outcomes?
- Did we work well as a team?
- Did everyone participate?
- Did we make the best of our board members' capabilities?
- What didn't work well?
- What could we do to improve our meetings?

Once each term, the Chair carries out an evaluation by collating this feedback and writing a report that is circulated before the next meeting. The feedback is used to make adjustments that will improve the effectiveness of future meetings.

This activity is part of an inquiry approach, which means thinking about everything the board undertakes through a "self-review" or "continuous improvement" lens instead of continuing to do things the way they've always been done.

⁶ *Effective governance – Working in partnership*, page 9

6 Committees

Just as boards can structure their meetings as they choose, they can also choose to divide the work between trustees in various ways. However, it is important to remember that the board is collectively responsible for any decisions, no matter how the work is divided. Some things are too important to delegate; for example, the whole board should participate in governance discussions and decisions about student achievement.

Some boards use committees. If you choose to do this, you need to set clear terms of reference for the committees and document exactly what your board is delegating to them. Boards need to be particularly careful that such committees are not doing management or operational work but are focused only on governance.

There are two different types of board committee – the standing committee and the ad hoc committee.

The standing committee

This committee provides specialised assistance and advice to the board. For example, a standing committee might deal with issues of student discipline or capital works. Sometimes a particular function is performed by a single trustee rather than by a small group of trustees. In this situation, the function is usually referred to as a portfolio. For example, a trustee might hold the finance or property portfolio.

The ad hoc committee

An ad hoc committee is formed to handle a specific situation or issue that does not fall within the responsibilities of a standing committee. When the task is completed, the committee ceases to exist. The terms of reference for this committee usually require it to present the board with advice and recommendations for the board to consider and ratify. For example, an ad hoc committee might review the board's policy manual.

Dos and don'ts of committees

There are some things to be mindful of when forming committees.

- **Do** make sure that committees are not duplicating board work.
- **Do** ensure that the collective wisdom of the whole board is used whenever possible.
- **Do** ensure that the terms of reference and delegations for all committees are formally documented at a board meeting.
- **Don't** delegate too much work to committees. The other trustees will have less knowledge and understanding of particular issues, while still being accountable for the outcomes.
- **Don't** allow board committees to do the work of school staff or become another layer of management.

7 The importance of good record keeping

It is very important to keep a clear and accurate record of all the board's meetings, decisions, and correspondence. This is not only expected practice, it is a legal requirement under section 17 of the Public Records Act 2005.

The need to keep good records applies to all board meetings – full-board meetings, public-excluded meetings, board committee meetings, student disciplinary meetings, and any meetings with staff about their employment.

Record keeping is especially important when managing complaints. Not having good records can put the board in a difficult position if it needs to revisit a past event and justify a decision or action. For further advice on managing complaints, contact the New Zealand School Trustees Association.

All board records and documentation need to be kept secure but readily retrievable. An information pack about requirements for the retention and disposal of school records, including student records, can be downloaded at www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/PublicationsAndResources/Circulars/Circulars2006/Circular200619.aspx.

Reviewing performance

1 Self-review

National Administration Guideline (NAG) 2 requires the board, along with the principal and teaching staff, to maintain an ongoing programme of self-review focused on continually raising student achievement.

The Education Review Office has identified three types of review.

A strategic review relates mainly to the charter and includes community expectations, values, vision, and strategic aims for the next 3–5 years.

A regular review is cyclical, so it includes those things that occur each year, such as the budget, policy reviews, and student progress and achievement.

An emergent review occurs when there are unplanned issues to examine or new initiatives – for example, a change in government policy, new local initiatives, or an incident or event indicating that a current policy needs to be urgently reviewed.

How each review is carried out may differ, so it makes sense that the board, in consultation with the principal, develops a report format for each type of review. To do this effectively, the board needs to identify all the required areas for review over the next three-year period and develop a workplan.

As part of a process of continuous improvement, effective schools should be:

- setting challenging but achievable aims and targets based on evidence
- planning
- taking action
- evaluating outcomes
- using outcomes for planning next steps.

Self-review must be meaningful, real, and strategic. If the board takes no action on the results of the review, then the review has been wasted.

2 Monitoring progress and achievement

Using school data effectively to improve culturally responsive leadership and teacher practices is critical to ensuring that all students, especially the priority groups, achieve educational success. The key to success is how the data are used to inform what you do next. This applies from the board right down through the senior management and staff of your school.

Figure 3 illustrates three phases of self-review:

- **What** did we decide to do and how?
- **So what** do the results tell us?
- **Now what** are we going to do about it?

Effective self-review relies on receiving good quality information and data in the reports from your principal.

Figure 3: Board monitoring

What?

- What are we trying to achieve?
- What are the targets that we are using as the basis for determining progress?
- What information do we need?
- How, when and from whom will the information come?

So what?

- Did we receive the agreed information?
- Were the results what we expected?
- Is the school on track to meet its targets?
- What other questions do the data raise?
- What were the results for the target groups?

Now what?

- What information do we need?
- Do we need to instigate a review?
- Are other governance decisions required?
- Is management follow-up required?
- What will we do to improve?

3 Example of a review

Figure 4 is an example of a review programme or cycle for a school with students in years 1–8. It incorporates the three types of review identified by the Education Review Office (ERO) – strategic, regular, and emergent.

Strategic review

The board in this example decided to review its annual reporting in 2012 to ensure that it had incorporated the additional requirements to report against National Standards.

The annual report itself is, of course, compiled and considered every year. Schools or kura using *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* were not required to set targets in relation to Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori until 2012, so this annual reporting review would be more relevant for them in 2013.

Regular review

This type of review relates to those things that occur each year – for example, student progress and achievement, the budget, and principal appraisal. It also includes reviews in which a different aspect of something, such as curriculum or marau ā kura policy or board process, is reviewed each year.

Emergent review

This type of review takes place when there are unplanned issues to examine or new initiatives to integrate (perhaps as a result of changing government policy), the board

has a particular concern (for example, the number of suspensions), or the school has been given an ERO report. You can see that the columns for 2013 and 2014 in the last section of Figure 4 have been left blank. Because emergent reviews usually consider issues that are unexpected, they can't be planned for as easily as the other types of review.

The programme in this example is a rolling one. Much of what is shown under 2012 could be transferred to 2015 and any emergent issues could be replaced with new ones as they arise. If your board has nothing like this review plan, it doesn't necessarily mean that planning and review isn't happening in a systematic way in your school. However, documenting your planning is vital. Not only does documentation provide evidence of what is happening, it means that the process will carry on, even if the membership of your board or school management team changes.

This year's review activities are carried into the board's annual workplan and dates are set for reporting to the board.

Some elements of the workplan warrant a closer look. The workplan in Figure 1, for example, shows the areas of strategic review in the three-year plan, as well as the elements of regular review. This means that the board will regularly review or monitor student progress and achievement. The board workplan identifies some specific groups of students to be monitored, as well as progress towards the targets contained in the charter.

Figure 4: An example of a review cycle

Area of Review	2012 Focus	2013 Focus	2014 Focus
Charter	Annual reporting	Strategic aims and goals	Vision and Values
Strategic Aims/Goals	Monitoring of each Aim/Goal at least twice a year with variance reporting at every meeting		
Learner Progress & Achievement	Improvement targets	Improvement targets	Improvement targets
Budget	Monitoring	Monitoring	Monitoring
Principal Appraisal	Policy	Reporting to the Board	Professional Development
Learner Progress & Achievement	School-based curriculum review	Embedding literacy and numeracy across the curriculum	Achieving the vision for our learners
Marau ā kura	School or kura-based curriculum review	Graduate profile	Consultation on values and attitudes
Policy	Curriculum (NAG 1) Property (NAG 4)	Compliance (NAG 6) Health & Safety (NAG 5)	Personnel (NAG 3) Finance (NAG 4)
Board Process	Succession Planning	Trustee induction Delegations	Meetings
Learner Progress & Achievement	National Standards/Ngā Whanaketanga Rumaki Māori/NCEA		
Local Initiatives	Response to ERO report		

Where to go for help

There are a number of self-review tools available to help boards. One example is the ERO self-review tool, which is available at <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/National-Standards/Self-review-tools>

You can find the ERO evaluation indicators for reviews in Te Aho Matua kura kaupapa Māori at www.ero.govt.nz/Review-Process/Frameworks-and-Evaluation-Indicators-for-ERO-Reviews

Policy review

When reviewing policies, you can start by asking:

- Is the policy still relevant or needed?
- Is the policy aligned to the board's definition of governance?
- Does it relate to an area in which a policy is needed to ensure effective management of the school?

If the answer is yes:

- Is it leading to the outcomes that the board expects?
- Are we actually doing what the management procedures relating to each policy say we should be doing? Is there evidence to support that?

If the answer to all these questions is yes, then it may be a case of “don't fix it if it's not broken”. The review may, however, show up things that could be done better or differently. In that case, you may need to ask:

- What do we need to change?
- Is it a policy change or a recommendation to management about a change or development in procedure or practice?

Who will carry out the policy review will depend on the nature of the policy and whether it is about the functioning of the board or the management of the school. The reviewer could be a trustee, a committee of the board, or someone from outside – perhaps a member of the community who has specific expertise, or a contracted specialist.

Professional development, support, and information for boards

Investing in your trustees' professional development (PD) is critical to being an effective board. Just as you budget each year for PD for your staff, you should budget for trustees to attend PD and networking opportunities.

This is as important for experienced trustees as it is for new trustees. Effective boards are those where every trustee is engaged and productive and is committed to the ongoing improvement of the school's practice and processes.

Online learning and PD opportunities

Webinars and e-workshops

The Ministry of Education runs free webinars and e-workshops for boards on a variety of subjects of general interest to boards or in response to changes in legislation or requirements for boards. Trustees can choose to "attend" the webinar at home, or the whole board can participate together. These webinars are designed to provide flexible opportunities for PD, especially for trustees in rural and remote areas.

You will find transcripts of some past webinars at www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards/EffectiveGovernance/PublicationsAndResources/WebinarResources.aspx

The Ministry's free e-workshops are designed for small groups of participants to consider issues in more depth, by phone and computer. They allow you to discuss your school's individual situation openly with the trainer and the other participants.

For further information on webinars and e-workshops, you can email training.services@minedu.govt.nz

Face-to-face professional development and support

Contact the senior adviser for your school at your local Ministry office to discuss PD for your board or if you want support in a particular area (for example, setting targets in your charter or strengthening your strategic planning). Your senior adviser will work with you to develop a plan. Depending on the circumstances, the Ministry may subsidise or cover the cost. Discuss this with your senior adviser.

There are also opportunities for groups of boards to work together. For example, in 2012:

- the Ministry arranged for a group of boards to work with an independent facilitator to look at how they were responding to students with special needs and to develop a shared understanding of how to be fully inclusive
- a mentor worked with a group of boards as they discussed how to improve transitions for students between their schools (primary, intermediate, and secondary) and how to improve community perceptions of their schools
- a group of boards worked with several facilitators and the Ministry to develop interactive workshops about the board's role in raising student achievement, the role of the Chair, and induction for new trustees.

New Zealand School Trustees Association

The New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) is an important partner in the governance relationship. NZSTA has two roles. In its representative role, it advocates for boards of trustees (the majority of school boards of trustees are members of NZSTA) and ensures that the Minister of Education and the Ministry are made aware of boards' collective views and concerns. Member boards receive a regular newsletter, *STA News*, covering current issues and events.

NZSTA also delivers services under its core contract with the Ministry of Education. Note that these services are available to all boards of trustees, whether or not they are NZSTA members. This includes the Helpdesk (0800 STAHelp, 0800 782 435) for general advice and the Industrial Adviser service for industrial and personnel advice. You can find more details of this at www.nzsta.org.nz/nzsta-services/industrial-and-personnel-advisors

Under this service contract, NZSTA also provides services for **managing board elections**, sits at the **bargaining table** during negotiations with teacher and other unions, and provides boards with **advice** on matters that affect boards' obligations – for example, changes to policy or legislation.

NZSTA's **professional development** arm provides and co-ordinates training opportunities for individual boards or groups. Contact your local NZSTA co-ordinator through www.nzsta.org.nz/region-locator or visit <http://training.nzsta.org.nz/upcoming-courses>

Each year NZSTA runs a **national conference** at which trustees from all over the country can network, talk, and learn. For details of the next conference, go to www.nzsta.org.nz.

Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa (TRN) fulfils a specific function as the kaitiaki of Te Aho Matua, that applies to schools that have been designated as kura kaupapa Māori under part 12 of the Education Act 1989. This role is established under section 155B of the Act. TRN delivers a service for management support for kura kaupapa Māori and kaitiaki support for Education Review Office/Te Aho Matua reviews.

Ngā Kura ā Iwi o Aotearoa (NKAI) is an independent body of iwi kura whose philosophy, curriculum, and practices derive from and belong to iwi, and their reo (dialect) is the tuakana language of instruction. NKAI assists with developing and strengthening iwi curriculum in kura ā iwi, kura wellness, and tumuaki and kaikōtuitui – strengthening leadership for their kura.

Other sources of information

Publications

There are many publications available for you to increase your understanding of how your governance role works to raise student achievement.

The Education Review Office publishes Education Evaluation Reports on national educational issues on its website at www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports

These reports are based on information compiled by ERO through its reviews of individual schools and early childhood services. They are particularly relevant to the year in which they are published. You can email ERO if you would like an older report, or for a full list of reports.

Websites

Education Review Office

The *Guidelines for Board Assurance Statement*, which includes a checklist that supports board self-review, is available from the ERO website at www.ero.govt.nz

Ministry of Education

The Ministry's board landing page has links to information and resources for boards, including the Planning and Reporting and Effective Governance resources.

www.minedu.govt.nz/Boards.aspx

NZSTA

This website has important information, news, and events for boards of trustees.

www.nzsta.org.nz

Ruia

This resource has interactive tools and case studies that support school leaders to improve outcomes for Māori students by working in partnership with whānau.

<http://partnerships.ruia.educationalleaders.govt.nz>

Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI)

TKI is a bilingual portal plus web community that provides educational material for teachers, school managers, and the wider education community. Boards will find it interesting.

www.tki.org.nz



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