**Giving students an equal voice:
2021 Student Representative Elections**

*Media Release*

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern’s foray into politics began with a belief that girls should be able to wear pants. “I ran for the school Board of Trustees because I thought girls should be able to wear pants as their school uniform”, she said in a recently-rediscovered [video clip](https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/politics/2020/08/internet-unearths-decade-old-interview-with-jacinda-ardern-simon-bridges-on-kids-tv-show.html) from 2010.

And now, students across New Zealand have the opportunity to follow in her footsteps by standing for election and voting in the September Student Representative elections.

Standing for election or voting for their student representative is often the first real experience young people have of participating in a democratic process.

“Student representatives have equal standing, voice, accountabilities and voting rights on the board. We find real value in being able to share their knowledge around the board table and they bring different points of view and experiences, which influences better outcomes for the whole school community,” said (board spokesperson name.)

The idea of being a young person on a school board might seem daunting, but student representatives get plenty of help and support to learn about and fulfil their role. The New Zealand School Trustees Association (NZSTA) provides training and learning opportunities, guidance and resources. Many principals and board chairs also take an active interest in supporting students to succeed.

As well as having a voice on how their school is governed, being a student representative provides valuable, real-world knowledge and experience for students. Just look at what it’s done for Jacinda!

***Ends***

Notes for media:

* Boards of most state and state-integrated schools with students above Year 9 must hold a student representative election in September each year
* NZSTA has created a video to help promote the role of student trustees. Media is welcome to share this resource; you can download it [here](https://vimeo.com/451727567)

*+ Add contact details for media spokesperson here:
+ Media always appreciate images so try to include one of your students engaging at school*