

 SCHOOL  
TRUSTEE  
ELECTIONS

# 2020 Mid-Term Election Planner



Step forward  
for our schools



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I'm stepping  
forward to  
share my  
skills



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This booklet  
is a very important  
planning tool  
for boards  
organising their  
**board member**  
campaigns.

# Foreword

Mā mātou e rāranga to mātauranga

Let us weave together the future of tomorrow

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā hau e whā tēna koutou tēna  
koutou tēna koutou katoa

Raising our children and tamariki to be the best people they can be is a job that needs many people's contribution if it is to be done well.

Family, school and the wider community all have a contribution to make. Each of us have our own basket of skills, experience and know-how to draw from. To nurture and raise our children to be the best people they can be requires us to gather contributions from many baskets. Like a shared meal, the contributions of many add up to a banquet that is more flavourful and more sustaining than each single contribution suggests.

The role of school boards is largely invisible, but incredibly important. It governs the school, protecting and upholding the school's mission, vision and values as reflected in the school charter. School boards put community ownership of their local school at the heart of our education system.

New Zealand's practice of directly engaging parents, staff and students in democratically electing their own school board is world leading. Triennial (three-yearly) elections for school boards have been held in every New Zealand state and state-integrated school since 1989, under similar procedures to parliamentary and local government elections. They involve the second largest number of voters of any democratic process in New Zealand, and the largest number of candidates - larger even than our parliamentary elections.

Taking part in this election process puts you at the heart of New Zealand's democratic system, as well as at the heart of our children's education and wellbeing.

Our election planner provides practical help for boards to run a successful election, that is - one that returns an effective school board that reflects the best skills, experience and know-how that your school community has to offer. To do this you will need to generate real interest and participation in your local community.

The decisions that you make on behalf of every student in your school as well as the informed decisions you make to support your principal and staff are critical.

Our children deserve the best!

Kō te ahurei ō te tāmaiti arahia ō tātou māhi

Let the uniqueness of the child guide us in our work

Ngā mihi

Na

Lorraine Kerr MNZM

President

New Zealand School Trustees Association

# The election campaign

The election theme is "Step forward for our schools".

School boards play a critically important role in New Zealand's schools and by extension, the wider community. This year we are encouraging people to step forward for their children, grandchildren and community to make a difference. The aim of this campaign is to raise awareness and understanding of the benefits of being a school board member and attract new people to represent their community on the school board.

To help raise awareness and understanding about the upcoming elections in your community, we have produced a suite of promotional material that is available on the [trustee election website](#).

## You can use it to:

- Promote the election to parents and the wider community
- Support and encourage others to stand
- Encourage parents to cast their vote
- Your school board can invite members of the community to join their board meetings to grow a better understanding about the role of a school board.

## Here are the key things you should aim to achieve with the promotion:

- The school and community are well informed about the election process and the role of board members
- Nominations have a balance of skills and experiences, gender and ethnicity
- A voting election is required
- There is a good level of parent participation in the voting
- Elected board members represent their community

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I'm stepping forward  
for my community



# Timetable of action

The next five pages give boards an outline of tasks they should be working on each month to prepare for the elections.

Please note where a date is marked as legislative this is for schools using the recommended election date of 4 December, 2020.

September		
Task	Comment	Date
Select an election date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure this is recorded in the board meeting minutes</li> <li>The recommended election date is 4 December, 2020. The majority of boards find it easiest to co-ordinate their elections to take advantage of the publicity, information and support focused around this timeline. To view the election schedule using the common election date see the <a href="#">trustee election website homepage</a>.</li> <li>Boards may choose their election date as long as it is 18 months after the month of their triennial election. If your triennial election was in June 2019 this means your mid-term election must be in December 2020. For assistance with creating an election schedule see the <a href="#">election planning tool</a> on the trustee election website.</li> </ul>	Ensure it is on the agenda for your August Board meeting (suggested)
Appoint a returning officer and ensure they are registered and trained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure your returning officer has registered on the <a href="#">trustee election website</a> to give them access to forms, key information and resources.</li> <li>Ensure your returning officer has completed the <a href="#">online training modules</a>.</li> <li>For more information on appointing a returning officer see the <a href="#">trustee election website</a>.</li> </ul>	By mid-September (suggested) By 2nd October (legislative)
Appoint an election organiser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be a current board member but cannot be one who is re-standing.</li> <li>For more information on appointing an election organiser see the <a href="#">trustee election website</a>.</li> </ul>	By mid-September (suggested)
Elections campaign planning and launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use an event to get your campaign started.</li> <li>Prepare for election promotion.</li> <li>Plan events and opportunities to reach potential trustees.</li> <li>Make sure everyone coming to your school gets the election message.</li> </ul>	By end of September (suggested)
Start approaching potential board members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk to potential board members and encourage them to stand.</li> <li>Network with the wider community.</li> <li>Identify respected community leaders who can encourage potential board members.</li> <li>Hold community-wide meetings.</li> <li>Gain support from local iwi and community groups.</li> </ul>	Throughout September and October
Start campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get articles in the school newsletter. Send a special note home to parents and caregivers reminding them about the upcoming election.</li> <li>Ensure all staff are aware of the campaign and are encouraged to discuss with parents and students.</li> <li>Acknowledge existing board members publicly for their work – be specific about what has been achieved.</li> <li>Make sure you are campaigning for both parent and staff representatives</li> </ul>	By mid-October (suggested)

## October

Task	Comment	Date
Continue campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send out information flyers/brochures to your school community.</li> <li>• Invite prospective board members to come along and observe a board meeting.</li> <li>• Hold special election social events and information sessions – include the wider community.</li> <li>• Generate articles in the school newsletter.</li> <li>• Help your election organiser think of good media stories.</li> <li>• Put up posters at school and in the community.</li> <li>• Encourage people to attend a local Kōrari workshop.</li> <li>• Send out letters to parents and caregivers inviting them to stand for election.</li> <li>• Encourage a word-of-mouth campaign.</li> <li>• Distribute information on the opportunities, challenges and rewards of being a board member.</li> <li>• Publicise the school's achievements and the future plans for the school - make this something that people want to be part of.</li> <li>• Gain support from local iwi, church and community leaders.</li> <li>• Target your campaign to the skills and attributes that you require on your board.</li> <li>• Make sure you are campaigning for both parent and staff representatives.</li> <li>• Display candidate profiles at school.</li> <li>• Organise 'meet the candidate' events.</li> <li>• Tell the media about interesting trustees who may make a good news story.</li> <li>• Gain support from local iwi, church and community leaders.</li> <li>• Tell parents and staff how important it is that they vote.</li> <li>• Ensure elections brochures/flyers are sent to all parents – teachers could consider assigning a homework assignment for students to pass these onto their parents.</li> <li>• Make sure you are campaigning for both parent and staff representatives.</li> </ul>	Throughout September and October
Prepare for the call for nominations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominations must be called for by 11 October, 2020 (legislative).</li> <li>• Mark the day with an event.</li> <li>• Make sure everyone knows what is involved.</li> <li>• Make sure you can be contacted if anyone has questions.</li> </ul>	Early October
Call for nominations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominations must be called for by 11 October, 2020</li> <li>• There is more information on encouraging people to nominate themselves or someone they know in this election planner</li> </ul>	Throughout September and October
Ensure your returning officer is appointed, registered and trained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure your returning officer updates the number of nominations on the <a href="#">trustee elections website</a> on a weekly basis</li> <li>• Ensure your returning officer keeps the board informed of nominations received</li> </ul>	Throughout September and up until 11 October, 2020
Contact NZTSA's Election Advice Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If fewer than 3 valid nominations are received following the close of nominations, you should contact the <a href="#">NZSTA election advice team</a>.</li> </ul>	16 October, 2020 (suggested)

## November

Task	Comment	Date
Nominations close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure your returning officer closes nominations at 4pm, 1 November, 2020</li> <li>• After nominations close the returning officer should advise the board if a voting election is required</li> </ul>	1 November, 2020 (legislative)
Distribute voting papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure your returning officer is organised to distribute voting papers by Friday 6 November, 2020</li> </ul>	6 November, 2020 (legislative)
Encourage parents and staff to vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure they are aware of the voting deadline</li> </ul>	from 6 November until 4 December, 2020

## December

Task	Comment	Date
Election Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voting closes at 4pm on Friday 4 December, 2020</li> </ul>	4 December, 2020 (legislative)
Count votes and declare results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Returning officers must count votes and declare the election results</li> <li>Ensure election results are sent to the board chair, local media and made available on the school's website, social media channels and newsletter</li> <li>Ensure successful/unsuccessful candidates are advised</li> </ul>	10 December, 2020 (legislative)
Appendices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the returning officer has completed <a href="#">appendix 1</a> and <a href="#">appendix 2</a> on the trustee election website.</li> </ul>	10 December, 2020, (suggested)
Board members take office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new board member/s take office on 11 December, 2020</li> <li>Congratulate the incoming board</li> <li>Send a letter of confirmation to the new board members with information regarding the induction process and first meeting details</li> <li>Consider a hand over meeting with the new board</li> </ul>	11 December, 2020 (legislative)
Thank you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thank helpers</li> <li>Pay tribute to leaving board members</li> </ul>	By 20 December, 2020

# Encouraging people to stand

The best way to encourage people to stand is to make sure they hear from existing board members about the difference they can make for their school and for all students at their school.

## Assistance from the community

There are many community groups you can contact to spread the message - groups such as:

- Parents and caregivers at your school.
- Parent groups at your school and in your local community.
- Māori community, iwi, hapu, marae.
- Pasifika communities.
- Refugee and migrant communities.
- Contributing schools and early childhood centres.
- Churches in your area.
- Grey Power and Probus.
- Service organisations eg, Lions, Rotary.
- Rural sector organisations.
- Business groups such as local Chamber of Commerce.

Tell them about recent and future initiatives at the school, what improvements the school board has made, a little about existing board members, and outline how important it is for children's education to have an effective board. Encourage them either to stand, nominate someone, or support someone to stand.

Many of these organisations have people with skills and experiences that would be great on your board. People like the chair of the marae committee have effective networks with a wide range of people. Remember that there are often retired people whose experiences and skills could contribute strongly to your board. You could encourage community organisations to include information in their newsletters.

Thinking about the diverse nature of your school community will also help you raise the profile of the election, as well as encourage people to stand. Link in with existing community events and spread the message. You could also hold your own community meetings to discuss the election. This will help you to reach a wider audience.

Make an effort to involve all community groups, and include the PTA, contributing schools and early childhood centres to ensure they are informed and involved.

## Learn more about the role of a school board.

Kōrari is a programme designed for people who have never been on a school board and would like to learn about the role of the board and what it's like to be a board member. Please encourage people in your community to register for Kōrari on the trustee elections website.

## Hold a special evening (two weeks before nominations open)

### Preparation

- Ask students to design posters to promote the event and put them up around the school and the community.
- Make some of the posters into invitations and send them out to all families at the school.

### The event itself

- Have refreshments in the hall or a classroom.
- Board chair and principal address parents and students.
- Give parents a survey to indicate their interest in standing.

## A letter from the board

A board letter to parents can report on the present term of the board and encourage people to support the elections and to think about standing. It could cover:

- What being a board member is all about.
- Achievements of the board.
- Thank you to staff, parents, PTA, board members, students.
- Outline of election with key dates.
- The vision and future planning for the school.
- Where to find election information.
- Information on forthcoming election events.

## School activities

School activities should all be used to inform people of the upcoming election and encourage them to think about putting their name forward for nomination. Make sure there is an announcement about the election at any of your school's functions; use events like "meet the teachers" to put across the election message. If you are holding a planning or consultation evening, it's an ideal time to encourage parent support of the board.

Swimming sports and athletics days are ideal events for a special mention about the election. Parents, caregivers and other family and whanau members who are attending such events could be the people who might stand as another way of contributing more to the school. Ensure there is personal encouragement, as well as general information available.

School performances will draw them in

- Invite people to a student performance at the school.
- Have information available to take away.
- Have everyone on the current board there to introduce themselves and talk informally about the board.
- Follow up likely candidates within 48 hours.
- Send out more information as needed.
- Invite potential candidates to a board meeting.

## Word of mouth

Using word of mouth is a powerful way to communicate. Encourage the board to discuss the skills and experiences that are useful for board members to have and to have represented around the board table. Consider the skills, competencies, gender and ethnicity requirements that you would like.

Ask each of your board members to identify people they think have the ability to be a great board member using the criteria that has been identified. Ask them to talk to these people about standing for election. They might consider helping these people fill in a nomination form or offer to nominate them to show how strongly they believe in their abilities (if they are on the parent roll).

People feel good that other people have noticed them and consider they have the skills and experience to become a board member.

Even if they decide they don't want to stand, it will encourage them to talk to others - "I can't but I know someone else who would be excellent".

Remember to consider grandparents, church groups, iwi, etc.

## Student enrolments

Enrolment of students is an excellent opportunity to hand people a simple message telling them about the election and to encourage them to think about whether they have what it takes to be an effective board member.

New parents can be invited to attend a board meeting to see how things work.

## School newsletters

School newsletters are an effective way to reach your school community. They can publicise election information, key dates and encourage people to stand. You may ask for a regular spot in the newsletter from now until the election date.

You can use the election banner which is available on the [trustee election website](#). Use return slips asking parents to respond to invitations etc. Special newsletters about the elections can be quickly produced and distributed.

See the trustee elections website for downloadable [promotional material](#) that you can personalise.

## School staff

School staff, particularly office staff, are pivotal people in the election process. Often these members of staff are the first port of call for visitors to the school and can be valuable in ensuring pamphlets and hand outs are available and people are guided for more information.

## Encouraging people to vote

If there are more valid nominations received than the number of positions to be filled, a voting election will be held.

Regular notices in your newsletters and around the school, and teachers reminding parents to vote will be critical during this time.

## Publicising the election results

The returning officer is responsible for counting the votes and declaring the results.

While creating and releasing the formal election notices is the returning officer's job, use the election results as an opportunity to introduce your board to the community through your newsletter or newspaper stories.

Publish a profile of the new board in the school newsletter. Ensure those people who stood but were unsuccessful are thanked for their efforts. Think about the opportunity to co-opt members to your board if the required skills, gender and ethnicity are missing.

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I'm stepping forward  
for my mokopuna

