

# 2022 Triennial Elections: Checklist for school boards



## This is your month-by-month plan to prompt the right actions at the right time

The triennial school board elections are New Zealand's largest democratic event, with around 2500 schools participating and many thousands of New Zealanders campaigning to **'get on board'** and make a difference for their community.

Boards are responsible for all aspects of the election at their kura or school, including:

- appointing a Returning Officer
- meeting key dates
- providing information to candidates and the wider school community
- promoting the elections.

Luckily, it's not as daunting as it seems. That's because NZSTA is right here to support you, every step of the way. Our goal is to ensure boards have all the information and resources they need to comply with regulations and statutory obligations, promote participation in the election and attract candidates who reflect the diversity within their community.

The following checklist details the election timeframe, and the actions boards will need to undertake to ensure they host compliant, successful elections for parent and staff representatives.

You should print off a copy of the entire Election Planner and ensure each month's tasks are included in your Board Meeting agenda.



## At your board's MAY 2022 meeting:

Agree and fix an election date.	The recommended date is 7 September, 2022.
Discuss the appointment of a Returning Officer (RO).	This is a board's key elections resource.
Discuss appointing an 'election organiser'. This can be a board member or an external appointment.	This role will provide support to your RO and help keep the board informed about election processes and progress.
Determine which elections your Returning Officer is going to run e.g. Parent, Staff and/or Student elections.	You may choose to have an accredited provider run some of your elections, or to have someone different from your appointed RO run the Student Elections.

### In summary, the most important things for boards this month:

- **Succession planning:** as elected representatives, board members transition on and off boards. As a board you can co-opt extra members on to the board to start working on the strategic plan. In order to ensure the seamless delivery of board services and to promote a positive culture, boards should plan for member induction, recruitment, retention and training. Find out more [here](#).
- Your **staff representative election** – irrespective of when your current staff rep was appointed, all boards holding triennial elections **must** also hold a staff rep election; this is a legislative requirement.

When appointing your RO, you must be clear that they are responsible for conducting two elements of the election – parent elections and staff representative elections. This should be detailed in your **RO's letter of appointment**.

**Election promotion:** it's the board's responsibility to promote the elections within their school community. NZSTA is currently updating **promotional resources** and we will also support your efforts with a nationwide media campaign.

### Key dates:

The 2022 Triennial Elections **must** be held on, or during the period from, **5 September 2022 until 23 September 2022**.

The 'common' or recommended Election Day date is **Wednesday 7 September 2022**. Using this date is optional for school boards, but it ensures that key dates in the election timetable fall on weekdays and during term time.

All communications will direct boards and ROs to the [online election planner tool](#) which automatically populates key dates for the 2022 Triennial Elections timetable.

## At your board's JUNE 2022 meeting:

One of the key projects for this year will be the hosting of the 2022 Triennial School Board Elections.

Returning Officer (RO) recruitment - attract, train, support	Recruiting an RO in June will ensure adequate time for training and induction. Make sure they are registered on the <b>School Board Elections website</b> so they can access information, training and resources.
Determine the number of positions available (parent members and one staff representative)	All elected board members must step down from the board unless they are in the staggered election cycle. Board members who wish to remain on the board must be re-elected.
Have a <b>promotion plan</b> in place so you can engage and support great candidates to 'get on board!'	Boards are responsible for promoting the elections. Use your knowledge of, and connections within, your community to generate interest in becoming a board member. Check out the <b>school board promotional resources</b> .
Discuss with the board the key responsibilities for your RO.	Discuss and confirm with the board the key responsibilities for your RO and confirm whether your RO is going to run both elements of the triennial elections. Ensure that these details are captured in their <b>letter of appointment</b> .
Start putting your community engagement and promotional plan into action.	Board members are connected to their community - now's the time to use your connections to generate interest and awareness in the elections. Start by putting notices in your school newsletter and website. We have lots of resources and ideas on the <b>school board election website</b> .

### In summary, the most important things for boards this month:

- **Recruit your RO** - this is a critical responsibility for your board.
- Determine **how many** (and **the type** of) positions that need to be filled.
- Start **planning your promotion**: boards work best when they reflect the diversity within their school community. Now's the time to start planning how you can support your school and community to get involved.
- Start conversations in your community about becoming a school board member. Identify potential candidates, ensure school staff are aware of the opportunities for them to stand and use school distribution channels (think newsletters, websites and Facebook pages) to encourage people to 'get on board!'

NZSTA is always here to help - we have a dedicated team of advisors who can help you with all aspects of your election planning - take a look at the [school board elections website](#) or get in touch for information and advice: [electionsadvice@nzsta.org.nz](mailto:electionsadvice@nzsta.org.nz)

## At your board's JULY 2022 meeting:

Your Returning Officer (RO) must be appointed by <b>Wednesday 6 July</b> .	Ensure your <b>letter of appointment</b> clearly defines the tasks/responsibilities expected of your RO (incl running both aspects of the triennial elections, being parent elections and staff rep elections).
Induction and training for your RO.	Introduce them at the Board's next meeting and nurture key relationships (e.g., with the presiding member (chair) and Election Organiser). Ensure you have a plan for their <b>training</b> and ongoing support.
Provide them with NZSTA's <b>Returning Officer's Handbook</b> .	The <b>RO Handbook</b> is a comprehensive guide to all aspects of the election process. It includes relevant legislation and regulations, as well as detailing all the actions that ROs need to complete.
Continue to push for new board candidates.	Now's the time to do as much as you can to grab the attention of your school community. Check out ideas for school newsletter notices, website alerts and Facebook posts <a href="#">here</a> .
Schools and Kura with students Year 9 and above should appoint their RO for student elections by the end of July.	This could be the same RO as the parent elections or someone different. Election funding is not provided to boards to run student elections. However, boards still need to appoint a returning officer to deliver their student election and can still decide to pay a fee from their own board funds. This returning officer needs to register <a href="#">here</a> .
RO closes main roll: <b>Wednesday 13 July</b> .	
RO calls for nominations: <b>by Friday 15 July</b> .	The parent election notice calling for nominations must go out before <b>Friday July 15</b>
Count and discuss nominations half-way through this month.	If you haven't received any/enough nominations, then boost your promotion efforts and use your contacts to shoulder tap potential candidates.
Use school channels to distribute information about upcoming election processes.	Schools have established channels to communicate with their community - ask them to publish updates and key dates (e.g. notices that the roll is open for inspection, calls for nominations etc.) in school newsletters, website and social media platforms.
RO's to check that nominations are valid.	RO's need to check nominations are valid and keep a list displayed in the school office of all candidates.

## In summary, the most important things for boards in July:

- **Appoint your RO** and register them on the [school board elections website](#). Introduce your RO to your board and ensure they have access to training and support. There's a number of actions they need to complete this month.
- **Call for nominations** (don't forget to include staff representatives!) and do an extra promo boost if your nominations are low.
- If you're concerned you don't have enough nominations, get in touch with NZSTA now.
- NZSTA is running a nationwide 'Nominate Campaign' from July to August. However, your school should also campaign for candidates in your area. You can access campaign resources and messages [here](#).
- Interested candidates can find out further information on our website [here](#), and our **Guide** for community members on the role of school boards.

**NOTE - nominations close on Wednesday 31 August.**

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## At your board's AUGUST 2022 meeting:

RO issues voting papers by <b>Wednesday 10 August</b> .	If you did not receive enough nominations to fill all the positions available, then these positions become casual vacancies which will need to be filled by a selection process or by holding a by-election. For help, get in touch with NZSTA now: <a href="mailto:electionsadvice@nzsta.org.nz">electionsadvice@nzsta.org.nz</a> .
Voting papers must be issued by <b>Wednesday 10 August</b> .	If the board receives the same number of, or less, nominations as there are vacant positions, then these nominees are duly elected and take office 7 days later.  The election is now over and the RO can declare the results to the board.
Update all your board's relevant governance documentation and develop/review your board member manual.	
Plan your board's induction programme for new board members.	For resources to assist with this check out the <a href="#">succession planning</a> section of the school board elections website
Student elections commence	For schools and Kura with students Year 9 and above, an RO for Student elections must be appointed by Monday 22 August. It is recommended that the main roll is closed on Monday 29 August and nominations close on Wednesday 31 August.

## In summary, the most important things for boards this month:

- **Close nominations** – if you don't have enough to fill your positions, get in touch with the team at NZSTA.
- **Update your board's governance documentation and board member manual** – they are key resources to help new members understand their role and make a successful contribution to your board.
- Review your **induction programme** for new board members.

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## At your board's SEPTEMBER 2022 meeting:

Student elections nominations close Tuesday 6 September.	Nominations must be in the hands of the returning officer by noon. If there is only one nomination, the candidate will be duly elected. If more than one candidate voting commences <b>Monday 12 September</b>
Election day: <b>Wednesday 7 September</b> .	Votes can be accepted up until 4pm on this date. Postal votes can be accepted until <b>Monday 12 September</b> .
RO counts votes on <b>Tuesday 13 September</b> .	
RO declares results before board takes office.	<b>This action is the responsibility of your RO.</b> This is done via <b>Appendix 1</b> for a voting election after the voting process is completed; OR after nominations close if there is no voting election.
Board takes office on <b>Wednesday 14 September</b> .	
Recommended student representative election day <b>Wednesday 21 September</b> .	Votes will be counted by Tuesday 27 September with the Student Board Member taking office on <b>Wednesday 28 September</b> .
The presiding member (chair) must ensure all new board members complete Appendix 2.	

## In summary, the most important things for boards this month:

- The RO's role is to ensure that you comply with regulations accepting physical votes up until 4pm on election day; and accepting postal votes for 5 days after your election day.
- Let everyone know about your new board members! This is a great way to acknowledge their success and to thank your school community for participating
- Ensure your RO completes Appendix 1 - this triggers a range of actions, including receiving **MoE funding** as part of your ops grant (for hosting a voting election)

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