

 **SCHOOL  
TRUSTEE  
ELECTIONS**

# 2019 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 schools'  
trustee election  
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 their 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.

If you are reading this election planner then you are already a school trustee. Whether you intend to stand again, or whether you are moving on to other challenges, thank you for the time and the effort you have put in as a school trustee over the past three years.

The role of the school board of trustees is largely invisible, but incredibly important. The board of trustees governs the school, protecting and upholding the school's mission, vision and values as reflected in the school charter. School boards of trustees 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 of trustees is world leading. Triennial (three-yearly) elections for boards of trustees 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.

Over the past three years, your board of trustees has worked to make sure your school provides the best possible education to the children at your school. Now is the time for your board to reflect on the skills and knowledge the board needs to build on the progress you have made over the past three years, and how you will engage your school community to encourage the people who have skills, experience and know-how to stand for the 2019 board of trustee elections. This is particularly important when that experience and know-how may be different from your own. Your planning should ensure that the incoming board reflects the diverse nature of your local community and that there is a good gender and ethnic balance around the board table.

Our election planner provides practical help for boards of trustees to run a successful election, that is - one that returns an effective board of trustees 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**

Nga 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 trustee 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 trustees;
- 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; and
- Elected trustees represent their community.

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I’m stepping forward for my community



# Timetable of action

The next four 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 common election date of 7 June 2019.

March		
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 common election date is 7 June 2019. National promotion and publicity will target this date. 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 an election date between 17 May 2019 and 21 June 2019. For assistance with creating an election schedule see the <a href="#">election planning tool</a> on the trustee election website.</li> </ul>	By end of March (suggested)
Appoint a returning officer	<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 end of March (suggested) 1 May 2019 (legislative)
Appoint a trustee 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 a trustee organiser see the <a href="#">trustee election website</a>.</li> </ul>	By end of March (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 March (suggested)
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 trustees publicly for their work – be specific about what has been achieved.</li> <li>Remind parents of board achievements.</li> <li>Make sure you are campaigning for both parent and staff trustees</li> </ul>	By end of March (suggested)

## April

Task	Comment	Date
Start approaching potential trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to potential trustees and encourage them to stand.</li> <li>• Network with the wider community.</li> <li>• Identify respected community leaders who can encourage potential trustees.</li> <li>• Contact community groups. Hold community-wide meetings.</li> <li>• Gain support from local iwi and community leaders.</li> </ul>	Throughout April 2019
Continue campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send out information flyers/brochures to your school community.</li> <li>• Invite prospective trustees 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>• Consider short interviews with current trustees about their experience as a trustee.</li> <li>• Help your election organiser think of good media stories</li> <li>• Put up posters at school and in the community</li> <li>• Send out letters to parents and caregivers inviting them to stand</li> <li>• Encourage a word-of-mouth campaign</li> <li>• Distribute information on the opportunities, challenges and rewards of being a trustee.</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>• 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>• 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 trustees</li> </ul>	Throughout April 2019
Ensure your returning officer is appointed, 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> </ul>	By end of April (if not done already)
Prepare for the call for nominations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominations must be called for by 10 May 2019 (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>	Throughout April 2019

## May

Task	Comment	Date
Continue campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 trustees</li> </ul>	Throughout May 2019
Call for nominations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominations must be called for by 10 May 2019</li> <li>• For more information on encouraging people to nominate themselves or someone they know see pages 10-12 of this election planner</li> </ul>	10 May 2019 (legislative)
Update nominations received	<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 May 2019
Contact NZSTA's Election Advice team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If fewer than 3 valid nominations are received by 20 May 2019 you should contact the <a href="#">NZSTA election advice team</a>.</li> </ul>	20 May 2019 (suggested)
Nominations close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure your returning officer closes nominations at noon, 24 May 2019</li> <li>• After nominations close the returning officer should advise the board if a voting election is required</li> </ul>	24 May 2019 (legislative)
Distribute voting papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure your returning officer is organised to distribute voting papers by 29 May 2019</li> </ul>	29 May 2019 (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>	Late May

## June

Task	Comment	Date
Encourage parents and staff to vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure they are aware of the voting deadline</li> </ul>	29 May - 7 June 2019
Election Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Voting closes at noon on 7 June 2019</li> </ul>	7 June 2019 (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, the media and made available for the school newsletter</li> <li>Ensure successful/unsuccessful candidates are advised</li> </ul>	13 June 2019 (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>	13 June 2019
Trustees take office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new trustees take office on 14 June 2019</li> <li>Congratulate the incoming board</li> <li>Send a letter of confirmation to the new trustees with information regarding the induction process and first meeting details</li> <li>Consider a hand over meeting with the new board</li> </ul>	14 June 2019 (legislative)
Thank you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thank helpers</li> <li>Pay tribute to leaving board members</li> </ul>	By the end of June 2019



# Encouraging people to stand

The best way to encourage people to stand is to make sure they hear from existing trustees 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.
- Maori 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 trustees have made, a little about existing trustees, 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 trusteeship. 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 trustee

Kōrari is a programme designed for parents who have never been on a school board and would like to learn about the role of a trustee. Please encourage parents 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.
- Whereabouts of election information.
- Information on forthcoming election events.

## School activities

School activities should all be used to inform parents 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 and caregivers 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.
- Offer refreshments.
- Have information available both on the night and to take away.
- Have everyone on the current board there to introduce themselves and talk informally about the board.
- Have someone follow up likely candidates within 48 hours.
- Send out more information as needed.
- Invite potential candidates to a board meeting.
- Visit potential candidates at home.

## Word of mouth

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

Ask each of your trustees to single out five people they think have the ability to be a trustee using the criteria that have been identified. Ask them to talk to these people about the election and about standing as a trustee. 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).

Ask those five to talk to another five people and so on.

Each of these people should be able to pass on an information flyer/brochure - or an invitation to a school activity that is focused on the election.

It is important that you identify gaps in your 'word of mouth chain' and then work out how you will effectively ensure this group or these individuals also get the message.

Schools that have had large numbers of candidates standing in previous elections say this is one of the most effective tools.

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

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 trustee.

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 to the right information.

## School answer phone messages

Answer phones are great for getting your message across. The school answer phone could have a short sharp message that changes during the campaign, such as:

"The school trustee election is being held in June 2019"

"We need people to step forward for our school. Nominate yourself or someone you know to stand for election. For more information contact..."

"Look out for nomination papers in xxxxxx if you are on the parent roll or get one by contacting..."

"We need people to vote contact xxxxx if you are on the parent roll and have not received your voting papers"

## Local media

**Local media**, particularly community radio and newspapers, should be kept informed about your activities and about the election (refer to the [Promoting the elections](#) page on the trustee elections website). Ensure your local newspapers are supplied with stories and are given interesting angles on the election.

## Advertisements

Advertisements are needed to call for nominations. During the time nominations are open there will be nationwide advertisements organised centrally. It is strongly recommended that boards co-ordinate their own local advertising alongside the national campaign which should result in a strong election message being heard by the community.

## Signs, banners and posters

Signs, banners and posters encouraging people to participate in the election can be displayed around the school and its neighbourhood. NZSTA has provided a [downloadable poster](#) that can be personalised with your school logo and details, or perhaps children can design bright posters. Local shops, churches, marae, doctors rooms, Plunket, and libraries may be prepared to display the signs. Remember, the wider community offers a pool of talented people with a variety of skills and experiences who may be willing to stand for election to the board. The election banner can also be downloaded from the [trustee election website](#).

## Information flyers

**Information flyers** will be sent to all schools. These are also available to download off the [trustee elections website](#). Parents and the wider community can be given a copy and the flyers should be available at all election events. Social events are good avenues for parents to talk with current trustees. Consider giving flyers to your local churches, marae, doctors, dentists, libraries, etc.

## A recruitment campaign

- Organise a design competition in the community about the role of the board.
- Create bumper stickers.
- Design an information fact sheet for students and encourage them to get their parents involved.
- Run a careers expo with a parents event to follow – report back about the school’s performance, academic outcomes and remind parents that great boards make great schools.
- Market the board to the local community.
- Design an information sheet for teachers and encourage them to engage with parents regarding the role of the board.

## Board meetings

Board meetings are an opportunity for parents, and whānau to be able to observe a board meeting to see how the board works. It is important that people who attend these events feel welcomed and have the opportunity to ask questions with trustees afterwards.

## School open days

School open days are an opportunity for parents to see the school in action. They can see the work their children are doing and hear about the election from current board members at an informal social gathering.

## Local businesses

Local businesses may be prepared to sponsor an advertisement in the local media publicising key election dates. A request for sponsorship could go out in the school’s newsletter or through parent contacts. The businesses should be offered public acknowledgement of their support in the advert.

## Outline the role of the board

Provide potential candidates an outline of the role of the board including professional development. Encourage outgoing trustees to make themselves available to support potential trustees including when they are newly elected.

# 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

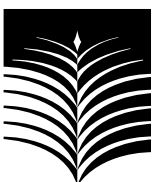
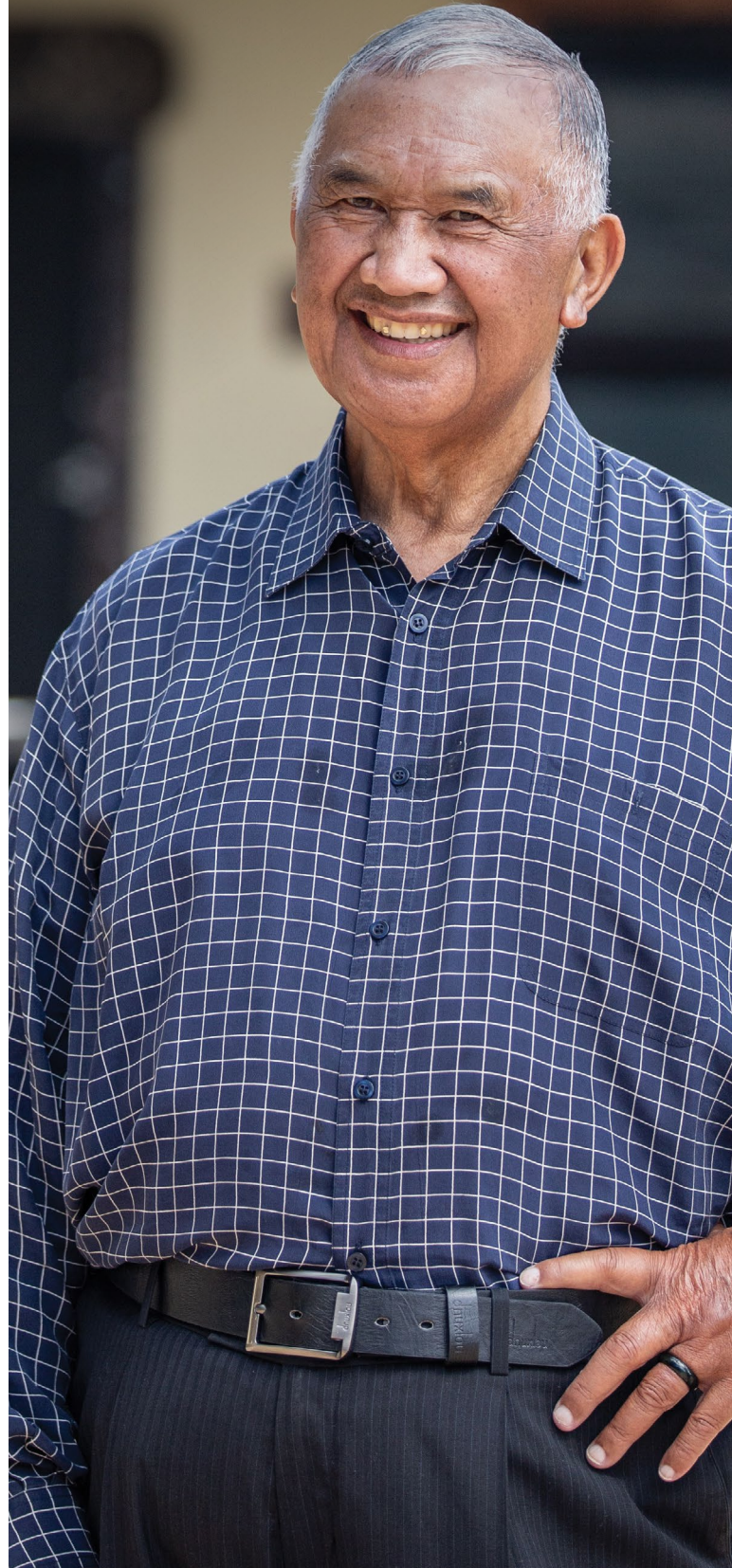
The returning officer is responsible for counting the votes and declaring the results.

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



**NZSTA**  
e tipu e rea



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA