

An overview of changes for school boards

A range of changes to the Education Act 1989 take effect, starting from 19 May 2017. These resources also include further changes to the Education Act in 2018.

Why was it changed?

The Education Act, like any legislation, was in need of review due to the changing educational environment we operate in. Previously, the roles and responsibilities of boards of trustees were spread throughout the Act. The changes explicitly define the board as the governing body of the school and bring most of the governance powers and functions of boards together in one place.

What do I need to know?

Changes for boards of trustees and school operations are being implemented across a series of dates from 19 May 2017 to 1 January 2020.

The following are some key elements boards need to know about.

Governance: The previous section 75 (Powers and functions of boards) did not use the words 'governance' and 'governing', but these have now been introduced, and outline that 'the Board is the governing body of the school and *is responsible for the governance of the school, including setting the policies by which the school is to be controlled and managed*'. This statement and many of the board's powers and functions are now found in [Schedule 6](#) of the Act, which will assist boards in better clarifying their work and focus.

Board's objective in governing school: The previous Section 75 stated that boards must perform their function and exercise their powers so as to ensure that *'every student is able to attain his or her highest level of educational achievement'*. This requirement has been moved to the Sixth Schedule and expanded to include, that boards must *"ensure that the school is a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff, and is inclusive of and caters for students with differing needs"*. It also refers to the board complying with new areas around education priorities, curriculum statements and measures of performance.

Where do I get advice?

NZSTA will continue to update and advise you with factsheets, newsletters, and through our website.

You can call **0800 782 435** or email actupdates@nzsta.org.nz.

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National Education and Learning Priorities: The Minister will issue statements of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) for the early and compulsory education sectors, which will remain in effect for up to five years and are designed to:

- Focus on helping each child and young person to attain educational achievement to the best of their potential
- Promote development in each child and young person of the following abilities and attributes:
 - o Resilience, determination, confidence, and creative and critical thinking
 - o Good social skills and the ability to form good relationships
 - o Participation in community life and fulfilment of civic and social responsibilities
 - o Preparedness for work
- Instill in each child and young person an appreciation of the importance of the following:
 - o The diversity of society: cultural knowledge, identity and the different official languages
 - o The Treaty of Waitangi and te reo Māori

Boards need to be fully aware of these priorities and ensure they are embedded in their school's planning and teaching programmes.

Planning and reporting: Existing charter requirements are replaced with new sections on strategic and annual implementation plans, as well as new reporting requirements for boards and schools. These are designed to be less complex and detailed and more focused on lifting achievement and educational outcomes. Parents and whānau will also receive more useful information on the school's aims and progress towards achieving them. These new requirements do not come into effect until 1 January 2020. NZSTA will keep boards fully informed and provide extensive information and professional development for trustees.

Introduction of cohort entry: From 3 July 2017 schools have been able to adopt and introduce a cohort entry policy allowing new-entrant students to start school at the beginning of the school term closest to their fifth birthday. Before introducing this, boards of trustees '*must take all reasonable steps to discover and consider the views of the following persons about the policy and whether it is generally acceptable,*' parents of students at the school, employees of the board at the school, early childhood services in the local community, and parents of prospective students of the school.

A bill before Parliament if passed, will restrict application of a cohort entry policy by requiring a child to start school not earlier than their 5th birthday.

Other new provisions: These include matters concerning combining of boards, alternative constitutions, annual reporting, communities of learning, state integrated schools, designated character schools, communities of online learning, enrolment schemes, new levels of intervention, working with agencies and use of off-site locations.

Refer to fact sheets/[webpage](#) for full information.

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