
Gov 1 THE BOARD'S ROLE

**Link to: *Schedule of Trustee Responsibilities*
*Schedule of Chair Responsibilities***

- **Background**

Section 75 of the Education Act 1989 states that *“except to the extent that any enactment or the general law of New Zealand provides otherwise, a school’s Board has complete discretion to control the management of the school as it thinks fit.”*

This needs to be read in conjunction with Section 76, which states that *“a school’s principal is the Board’s chief executive in relation to the school’s control and management”* and that the principal *“has complete discretion to manage... the school’s day-to-day administration”* subject to the board’s general policy directions.

It is important for board members to note and be aware of the difference between “control of management” and “performing the management” – this is the essential difference between governance and management. There are no clear boundaries between these tasks, and the specifics are left to individual boards to determine. However, it is clear from the various guidelines to boards that have been produced by both the Ministry of Education and NZ School Trustees’ Association that the main focus of a board should be on the longer term direction and strategic focus of their school, and that a board should avoid doing tasks (in their capacity as Board members) which are the job of the principal.

Clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of both the board and the principal goes a long way to ensuring that everyone understands and agrees on what is expected of them. This decreases the potential for inaccurate assumptions, frustrations or conflict arising in relation to the working relationship among board members and between the board and the principal.

-
- 1.1 The Board of Trustees is entrusted to work on behalf of the Minister of Education and the school community to ensure the efficient and effective operation of Waihopai School for the benefit of all its students. It uses the strategic plan, budget and its policies as key tools in performing these tasks.
 - 1.2 The Board emphasizes strategic leadership rather than administrative detail and ensures that the school management is appropriately organised to implement and report on the school’s strategic direction and policies.
 - 1.3 Creation of the best learning environment possible and enhancement of student achievement is the Board’s main focus.
 - 1.4 The specific responsibilities of Board members and the Chair are elaborated upon in a Schedule of Responsibilities for each.

1.5 The Board employs the Principal to manage the school on its behalf. The Board manages the Principal to ensure that its objectives relating to school operation are met. It does this primarily by:

- a. establishing and maintaining clear policy directions and specific delegations to guide the Principal in the day-to-day running of the school.
- b. approving the annual plan and budget presented by the Principal, and requiring the Principal to report regularly on these.
- c. entering into an annual performance agreement with the Principal, and assessing the Principal's performance against this.
- d. making resolutions at Board meetings to give the principal guidance and direction on specific matters when necessary.