



Communication for effective governance

In state-integrated schools, the Proprietor and the Board share a fundamental responsibility to foster an environment where every student can achieve their full potential. This partnership is anchored in a collective commitment to both educational excellence and the preservation of the school's unique special character.

The success of this vision relies on robust, transparent communication between both parties. By establishing clear channels for communication and mutual understanding, the Proprietor and the Board create an integrated governance system that ensures special character is safeguarded and maintained.

State Integrated School Board Professional Development
and Learning Series



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Communication Protocols

Effective governance relies on clear and consistent communication channels between the Proprietor and the Board. The following protocols ensure a harmonious and proactive partnership:

01

Regular Liaison & Joint Planning

Termly meetings between the Board Presiding Member and Proprietor Chair, including an annual joint planning session covering key areas: roll, staffing, property, and special character.

03

Timely Information Exchange

A mutual commitment to promptly provide information regarding decisions or developments that impact either party.

02

Pre-statement Consultation

Both parties will consult prior to any media or public statements that could materially affect the other's reputation or operations.

04

Proactive approaches to resolving tensions

Review the content below for suggested approaches that can prevent tensions arising between the proprietor and the school board.





Property

Typical tensions between the Proprietor and Board — with proactive approaches to prevent or resolve issues.

Unclear Responsibilities

Maintain a written property responsibilities schedule (integration vs operational) agreed by Proprietor and Board; review annually and attach to the Property Plan / 10YPP.

Urgent Repairs & Communication

Agree an urgent works protocol (who contacts whom, expected response times, temporary room relocations); schedule an annual joint maintenance meeting with a shared 10YPP timetable.

Approval Delays

Set clear approval thresholds and timelines; use a simple project proposal template so information is complete first time; include a standing item on capital projects at joint meetings.

Maintenance Priorities

Share the Proprietor-wide prioritisation criteria; hold an annual joint maintenance meeting to discuss priorities, rationale and trade-offs, and record agreed actions.

Use of Unintegrated Spaces

The Proprietor may allow the school to use non-integrated facilities but can require the Board to pay an agreed rental or contribution for their use.

Staffing & Appointments

Typical tensions between the Proprietor and Board, with proactive approaches to prevent or resolve issues.

Candidate Suitability Disputes Agree written selection criteria (including special character expectations) before advertising; ensure panel members understand the balance of professional and special character requirements; debrief after key appointments. Refer to legislation to ensure compliance.	Attestation vs Appointment Confusion Distinguish applicant acceptability requirements vs appointment requirements clearly. Provide induction for Board and panel members on legal aspects of special character roles. Use a process map showing attestation within the appointment timeline. For secondary/Area schools, ensure a Proprietor appointee sits on any Appointments Panel for a tagged position.	Post-Appointment Special Character Disputes Ensure role descriptions and codes of conduct explicitly reference special character expectations; address issues early through professional growth, formation and support; follow agreed HR and complaints processes with Proprietor input.	Proprietor Representation on Panels Ensure the number or proportion of teaching positions tagged in the School's Integration Agreement is understood by both parties.
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Enrolments

Typical tensions between the Proprietor and Board, with proactive approaches to prevent or resolve issues.

Community Demand Pressure

Maintain an up-to-date, Board-approved enrolment policy aligned with the Integration Agreement; communicate clearly that spaces are limited and preference criteria apply; regularly review roll data and projections with the Proprietor. If the school is at 85%+ of its maximum roll, consider requesting the Ministry of Education to initiate an enrolment scheme.

Inconsistent Preference Certificates

Ensure preference criteria and processes are clearly documented and available to whānau; provide training for those issuing certificates; periodically review samples with the Bishop and the Proprietor (Catholic schools) or with the Proprietor or parish/faith authority (non-Catholic schools).

Parent Appeals on Preference Decisions

Publish a simple appeals/queries process (who to contact, expected timeframes); keep written records of decisions and reasons; involve the Bishop and the Proprietor or parish/faith authority where appropriate.

Roll Returns & Waiting List Communication

Agree a termly reporting schedule: roll returns, waiting list summary, projected enrolments; keep a shared, updated waiting-list record accessible to key school and Proprietor personnel. Review waiting lists every year to confirm parents still want to remain on list.

Special Character

Typical tensions between the Proprietor and Board, with proactive approaches to prevent or resolve issues.

Differing Interpretations of Special Character

Anchor decisions in agreed special character documents (Integration Agreement, Proprietor guidelines); hold an annual joint reflection on special character priorities; use shared language and frameworks (e.g. core practices) across Board, Proprietor and leadership.

Unclear Accountability for Outcomes

Establish a regular special character review cycle (e.g. every 3 years) and annual self-review; clarify in writing who is accountable for what (Proprietor, Board, principal); report outcomes and actions through Board and Proprietor.

Resistance to Policy or Practice Changes

Use a consultative approach: explain the theological/legislative rationale, provide draft wording, and allow time for Board and staff feedback; agree implementation timelines and support (formation, resources).

Finance & Operational Matters

Typical tensions between the Proprietor and Board, with proactive approaches to prevent or resolve issues.

Disputes Over Use of Funds

Provide an annual financial briefing with clear explanation of funding sources, attendance dues, and what they may/may not be used for; share summary special character donations (SCD)/Proprietor reports with the Board where appropriate.

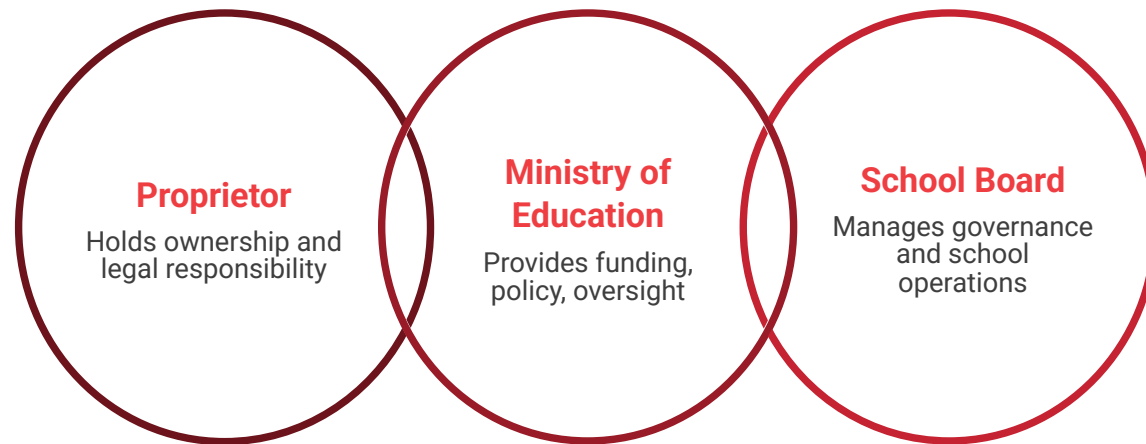
Misunderstanding of Attendance Dues Restrictions

Include a plain-language attendance dues explainer in the governance manual and parental information; provide annual refresher to the Board and key staff; ensure communications to whānau are consistent with Proprietor policy.



Partners and Support

Key Partnerships



State Integrated Schools are communities of partnership. The partners are the Proprietor of the school, the Ministry of Education, and the School Board. Each partner has a legal responsibility to maintain the school's special character.

Support Network

It is important to know who is there to support and guide you in your role as a proprietor board member. Your primary contacts are:



APIS - For free advice and support, training, and workshops.



Ministry of Education