

Effective Partnerships

A successful relationship between a school board and a proprietor trust board is the cornerstone of a thriving educational environment. By aligning strategic visions and sharing a commitment to student outcomes, these two bodies can create a cohesive governance framework that supports long term partnerships.

True partnership relies on a culture of mutual trust and transparency. When both parties operate with clarity and respect, they transform potential friction into a powerful collaborative force, ensuring that the school's special character and academic goals are preserved and enhanced for future generations.



Open Communication

Establish regular, transparent channels for dialogue to ensure both boards are aligned on strategic goals and emerging challenges.



Respecting Boundaries

Maintain a professional understanding of where governance accountabilities sit, fostering a supportive environment that avoids operational overlap.



Roles & Responsibilities

Clearly define and acknowledge the distinct duties of each board to prevent confusion and promote efficient, accountable decision-making.

State Integrated School Board Professional
Development and Learning Series



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Formal Communication and Consultation process

The document provides a checklist to ensure formal communication and consultation processes between a school's Board, Principal, and Proprietor, emphasising agreed protocols for regular updates and prompt sharing of information of common interest, scheduling strategic meetings involving the Proprietor for reviewing special character and planning, aligning strategic plans with the Proprietor's expectations, early consultation on concerns affecting the school's goals, maintaining transparency in property and finance matters, and submitting comprehensive formal reports including strengths, challenges, and supporting documents like ERO reports.

Below is an example of a checklist with suggested approaches to ensure formal processes are in place.

Area	Checklist Items
Clear Communication	Agree on protocols for regular updates between Board Presiding Member (Chair), Principal, and Proprietor's appointees. Share board minutes promptly with the Proprietor or their representative if requested.
Regular Strategic Meetings	Schedule termly or annual meetings to review special character, property priorities, and enrolment trends. Include the Proprietor in long-term planning and major project discussions.
Alignment on Special Character	Ensure strategic plans and policies reflect the Proprietor's expectations. Collaborate on annual special character self-review and share findings early.
Early Consultation	Refer concerns about special character, staffing, or enrolment before they escalate. Seek advice promptly on issues that could affect the school's mission or reputation.
Transparency in Property and Finance	Work closely with the Proprietor on property maintenance and development priorities. Clarify responsibilities for fundraising and ensure compliance with legal requirements.
Formal Reporting	Submit annual reports and compliance attestations as required. Include strengths, challenges, and supporting documents such as ERO reports and self-review findings.

School Governance & Legal Compliance

Four Key Areas for Effective Proprietor-Board Partnership

A successful partnership between the Proprietor and the Board in state-integrated schools relies on collaborative effort across the four key areas of shared focus. Focusing on these four key areas ensures the school operates cohesively, upholds its special character, and delivers high-quality education. Understanding and navigating these areas together builds trust and strengthens governance.

1

Enrolment

Effective enrolment processes require close cooperation on preference criteria and roll management. This ensures decisions are fair, transparent, and aligned with legislative requirements and the school's special character, managing community expectations and supporting lawful, consistent outcomes.

2

Employment

Maintaining strong relationships is vital when overseeing staff in special character positions. Regular reporting and dialogue between the Board, Principal, and Proprietor's representatives support staff's faith commitment, certification, and professional practice as per the Integration Agreement and proprietor guidelines, fostering a collaborative environment.

3

Property

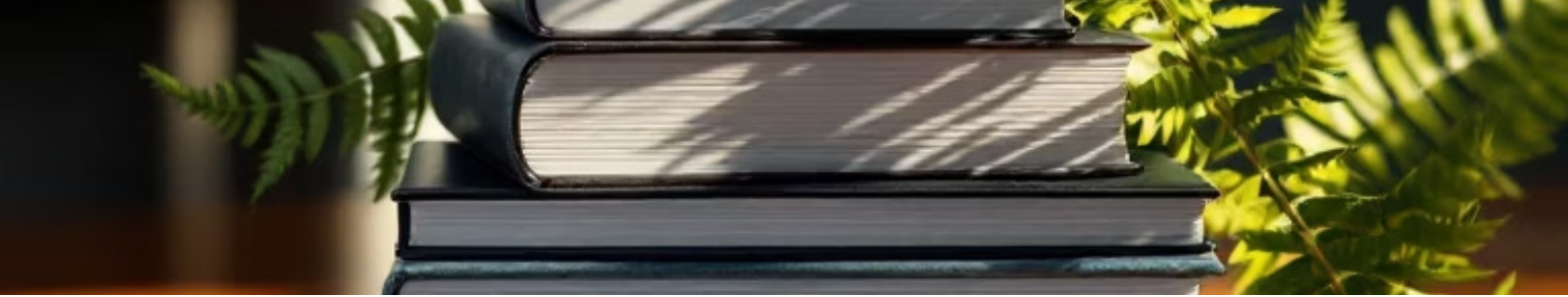
Joint planning for school property maintenance, development, and expansion is essential. The Proprietor's oversight in funding and ensuring facilities align with special character and long-term strategic goals is crucial for providing a suitable and inspiring learning environment.

4

Special Character Teaching & Learning

Embedding the special character within the curriculum, pedagogy, and school culture requires continuous collaboration. This includes joint reviews, self-assessment, and professional development to ensure all teaching and learning reflects the Proprietor's vision and enriches the students' educational experience.

By establishing clear protocols and open communication in each of these areas, both parties can proactively address challenges and reinforce their shared commitment to the school's mission and the well-being of its students.



Leveraging APIS Resources for Enhanced Governance

The APIS website offers a comprehensive range of invaluable resources designed to empower school boards and proprietor trust boards in their critical roles. These documents and presentations serve as practical guides, clarifying responsibilities, fostering effective communication, and ensuring compliance with regulatory frameworks. Regularly engaging with these materials is essential for maintaining robust governance practices and a cohesive partnership.

We encourage all board members to explore the following key resources to strengthen their understanding and operational effectiveness:



Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Understand the foundational agreement outlining the terms and conditions of the partnership between the school board and proprietor, crucial for formalising mutual expectations and commitments.



"Stay in Your Lane" Document

Gain clarity on the distinct roles and responsibilities of each governance entity, preventing overlap and promoting efficient decision-making while respecting individual mandates.

See also [Stay in your lane - a proprietors role](#).



Effective Communication Guide

Learn best practices for open, transparent, and constructive dialogue, ensuring timely information exchange and collaborative problem-solving across all stakeholders.



Understanding the 4 Key Roles Presentation

Access a comprehensive overview of the primary governance roles, detailing their specific functions and how they interrelate to support effective strategic leadership.



Rights and Obligations of the Proprietor

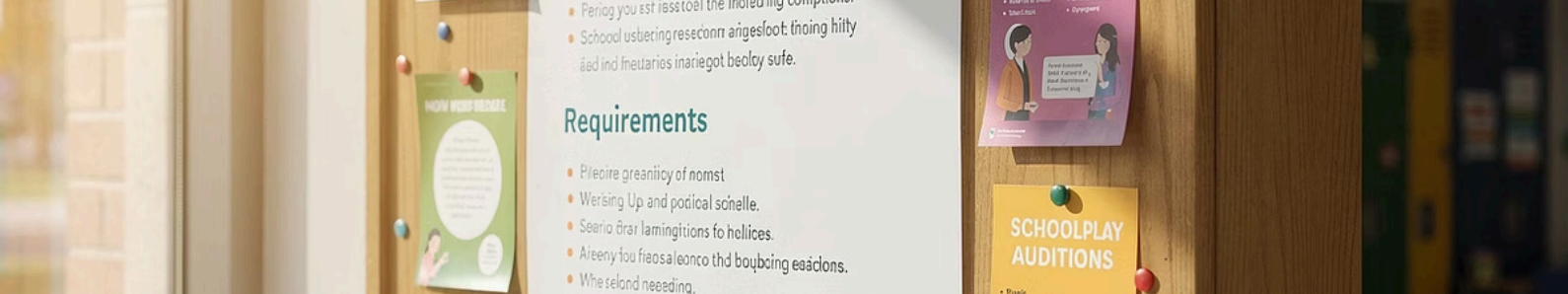
Delve into the legal framework governing the proprietor's duties, ensuring full compliance and proactive management of their responsibilities.



Understanding the governance puzzle

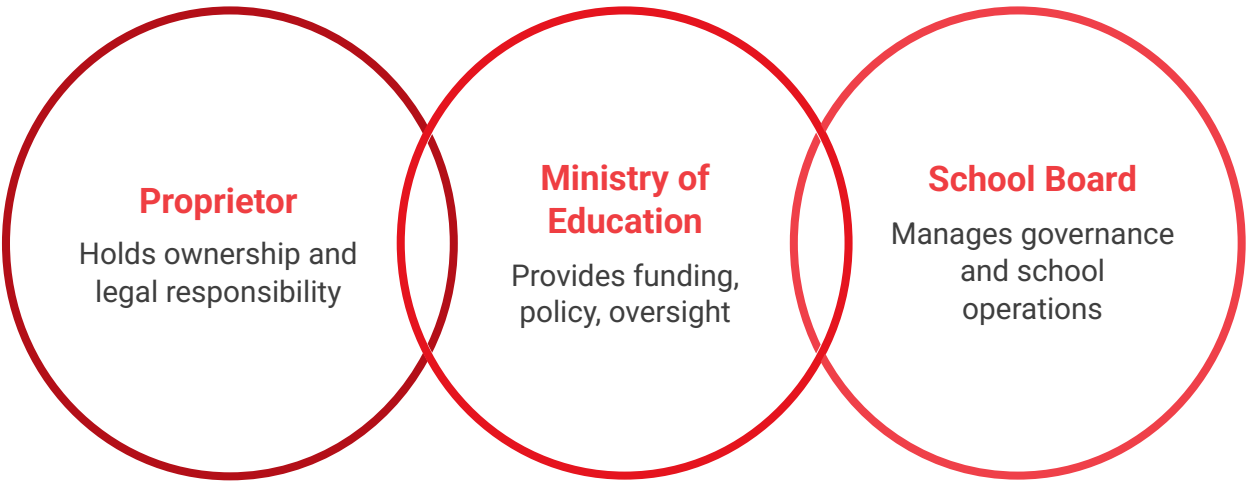
Review this presentation to understand the governance jigsaw which is used to demonstrate the need for the board to organise all of the pieces of the puzzle such as key governance documents, roles, partnerships and policies. Once the puzzle pieces are assembled and organised, the jigsaw reveals a clear picture of what excellent governance looks like.

By thoroughly reviewing these documents, both boards can proactively address potential challenges, streamline operations, and reinforce the shared commitment to the school's special character and educational goals.



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 school board member. Your primary contacts are:



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



Ministry of Education



New Zealand School Boards Association