



Proprietor Trust Board and School Board: Two roles, one vision

Understanding the two distinct governance structures that work together in New Zealand's state-integrated schools.



The Proprietor Board: Guardians of Special Character

Legal Status

The proprietor board often operates as a **Trust** — not a Crown entity. The proprietor owns and manages school property and ensures compliance with special character requirements under the integrated school agreement.

The integration agreement is a binding contract that can only be changed if both parties agree.

Role

Upholds the school's **special character** — its unique religious or philosophical ethos.

Manages the Crown relationship regarding these aspects and owns or oversees the school's physical assets.

Composition

Members are **appointed by the proprietor** through an appointment process as set out in their trust deed or constitution. The term of office and re-election process is also included in the trust deed.

 The proprietors role is not the day to day operations of the school. That is the boards role.

The School Board: Governing the School's Operations

A **Crown entity and statutory body corporate** operating under the Education and Training Act 2020, with a primary objective to ensure every student achieves their highest possible potential.

Role

Sets strategic direction, has oversight of finances, minor maintenance, curriculum, and student well-being. Acts as the **employer of all school staff**.

Composition

Includes **parent-elected members**, the principal, a staff-elected member, and appointed members. In integrated schools, a portion are **appointed by the proprietor**. The **proprietor** can appoint anyone they consider as appropriate to safeguard special character. It **does not** have to be a member of their trust board.

Legal Status

A **Crown entity and body corporate** — accountable to the government and the community, bound by statute and operating within the national education framework.

- ❏ Both boards must work collaboratively — the Proprietor Trust protects *why* the school exists, while the School Board governs *how* it operates day to day. Both boards must respect each others role and boundaries in order to work together effectively for the benefit of all students.



Two Lenses, One Mission: Effective Partnership

Shared responsibility, distinct roles

Both the Proprietor Board and the School Board play an important role in maintaining and preserving the school's special character. They do so from different perspectives and with different responsibilities.

The Proprietor's Lens: Maintaining and preserving special character

The Proprietor Board approaches its role as a steward of the school's special character. Its focus is on safeguarding the founding religious or philosophical ethos, protecting property, and ensuring the school's identity remains faithful to its original purpose. This is a long-term, guardianship role that preserves what is often described as the mission of the school.

The School Board's Lens: Operational Success

In contrast, the School Board views the school through an educational and operational lens. It is responsible to govern the effective day-to-day running of the school, including student achievement, curriculum delivery, staff leadership, and financial sustainability. Its focus is on delivering quality education within the state system, while operating in a way that respects and reflects the special character.

Together, the two boards work in partnership, each within its own mandate, to ensure the school thrives in harmony, as a faith-based or education philosophy community and as a high-performing school environment.