



Work of the Board in a State Integrated School

The work of the board is to ensure that every student achieves their highest possible educational outcomes supported by the particular faith or philosophy of the school. All Board members have responsibility for the protection of the special character of the school as set out in the school's integration agreement and strategic plan.

The Board's focus on student achievement, a collective understanding of governance, and the Proprietor's preservation of special character are interdependent. Together, they form an integrated system vital for ensuring every student reaches their educational potential within state integrated schools.



Understanding the Governance Puzzle

The board must organise all pieces of the governance puzzle; such as key documents, roles, responsibilities, partnerships, and policies. Once assembled and organised, these pieces reveal a clear picture of what excellent governance looks like in state integrated education.

Each component plays a vital role in creating a cohesive framework that supports student achievement and maintains the school's special character.

These components include:-

- Role of the proprietor
- Understanding the legislative framework
- Knowing your integration agreement
- Having a governance framework in place
- Understanding the key partnerships
- Knowing your community

Role of the Proprietor

In a state-integrated school, the Proprietor is the kaitiaki of the vision and special character. They are the steward of the founding purpose that sits behind the school's existence, such as:

- why the school was established
- what it aims to achieve for the students and the wider community,
- and how that purpose should endure over time.

In practice, the Proprietor's role is to keep the school anchored to its integrating agreement and founding intent, so the school's direction does not drift into being "just like any other school," but remains authentic to the distinctive character that justified integration in the first place.

The Proprietor also **"owns" the special character** and is responsible for its guardianship. That means clearly articulating the special character in ways that are understandable and usable: a simple and compelling statement of purpose; the values and beliefs that shape the school's culture; and the non-negotiables that make the school unique.

It also means helping the school community understand what sets the school apart: the worldview it teaches from, the formation or education philosophy commitments it prioritises, the traditions and practices that give it identity, and the outcomes it seeks for students. When the Proprietor does this well, the special character becomes a living "why" that forms the basis of all decision-making.

Alongside this vision and character stewardship, the Proprietor has **rights and responsibilities** in the integrated setting, including interests in the school's property, enrolment, employment and teaching of special character.

Those rights sit alongside governance and operational roles held by the school board under the state system, making it especially important that the Proprietor's "special character custodian" function is explicit, well-communicated, and collaborative.





Legislative Framework

Boards must understand and work within the legal framework set out in the Education and Training Act 2020. Your board must meet these and all other legislative requirements to ensure compliance and effective governance.

Education & Training Act

Primary legislation for school board operations

Powers & Functions

Defines board authority and decision-making

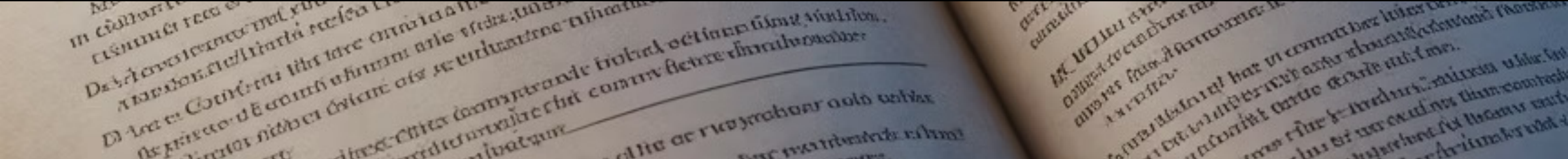


Schedule 6: Integrated

Provisions for state integrated schools

Role of the Principal

Legislative guidance on principal duties



Legislative Framework: Rights and Responsibilities

The Education and Training Act 2020, particularly through **Schedule 6**, establishes a unique partnership between proprietors, the Crown, and school boards. This framework preserves the special character of integrated schools while ensuring they meet national education standards and provide equitable access to quality education. Schedule 6 specifically defines these relationships, outlining the practical implications for all parties.

Integration Agreement The foundational document, strengthened by Schedule 6, that defines your school's special character and establishes the terms of partnership with the Crown	Statutory Rights Legal protections for tagged positions, enrolment preferences, and special character preservation, as detailed in Schedule 6	Governance Partnership Clear delineation of responsibilities between proprietors and school boards, as outlined within Schedule 6
---	---	---

Key Provisions from Schedule 6

Schedule 6 of the Education and Training Act 2020 details critical provisions that guide the operation of integrated schools:

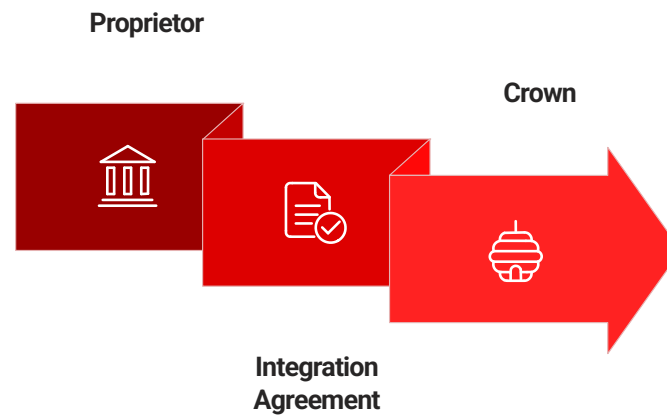
1 Clause 1: Preservation of Special Character Ensures the religious or philosophical beliefs on which the school was established are maintained and protected, underpinning its unique identity.	2 Clause 26: Preference of Enrolment Grants integrated schools the ability to give preference in enrolment to students who identify with the school's special character, within set limits.
3 Clause 39: Powers and Responsibilities of Proprietors Defines the specific rights and duties of proprietors, including managing property, approve staff for special character roles, and ensuring the special character is upheld.	4 Clause 47: Religious Instruction Appointments Empowers proprietors to approve staff members who will provide religious instruction or uphold the school's special character, ensuring alignment with foundational beliefs.



Integration Agreement

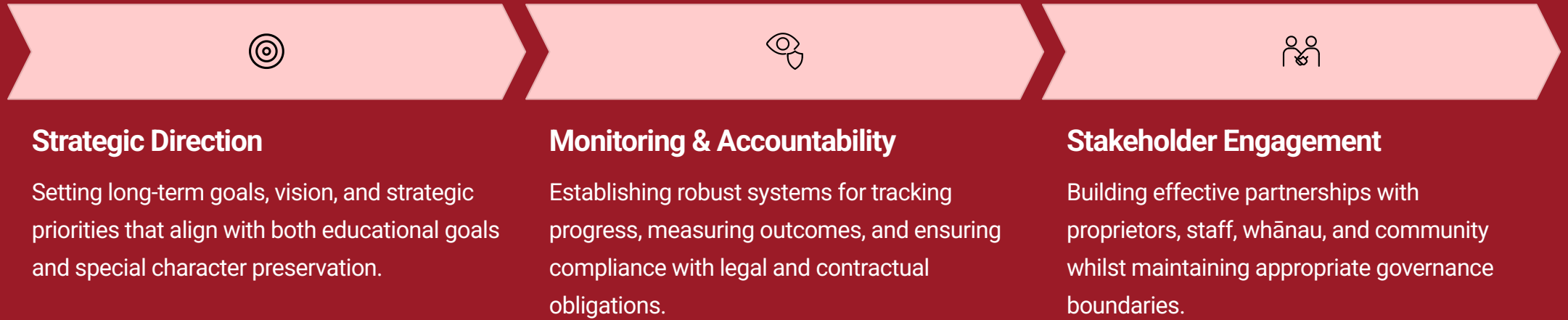
Partnership Between Proprietor and Crown

Every state integrated school has an integration agreement. A school becomes integrated into the state educational system when the Proprietor and the Minister of Education approve the school's Integration Agreement. This agreement establishes a formal partnership between the Proprietor and the Crown, defining the rights and responsibilities of each party.



Governance Framework Structure

The board's role is one of strategic oversight, leadership, direction, and policy setting. The board develops a governance policy framework and processes for decision making, ensures compliance with legal requirements, and puts in place structures for the principal to effectively manage day-to-day operations.



The governance framework provides the blueprint for effective board operations. It delineates the relationship between governance and management, clarifies decision-making authority, and establishes accountability mechanisms. This framework ensures boards operate within legislative requirements whilst maintaining flexibility to respond to local community needs and circumstances. Understanding this framework is essential for new board members and provides ongoing reference for experienced governors navigating complex decisions. You will find a governance policy framework example under Resources on the APIS website.

Key Relationships: Integration Agreement, Proprietor Appointee, and Board Policy

The effective operation of a state integrated school relies on the strong interrelationship between its Integration Agreement, the Proprietor's appointee and the school board's policies. These elements form a symbiotic structure, ensuring both educational achievement and the preservation of special character.



The Guiding Document

The Integration Agreement (IA) is the foundational legal document defining the school's special character. It outlines the values and framework that all board policies and Proprietor decisions must adhere to, acting as the key reference point for governance.



Voice of the Proprietor

The Proprietor's appointee is crucial for upholding the special character outlined in the IA. They ensure the Proprietor's vision is integrated into board discussions and provide essential guidance on how policies reflect the school's unique identity.



Policy in Action

Board policies translate the Integration Agreement and the Proprietor's directives into practical, actionable expectations. They establish clear processes, assign responsibilities, and ensure all operational decisions consistently support the school's special character and educational goals.

Understanding the Integrated School Legal and Policy Framework

The integration agreement sets the legal and structural foundation

The integration agreement is the legally binding document that brings the school into the state system. It outlines the school's special character, governance structure, property obligations, staffing provisions, and the rights of the proprietor. Key points:

- It defines what the special character is and how it must be protected.
- It grants the proprietor specific rights, including representation on the board.
- It sits above board policy. Board policies must align with it.

Think of the integration agreement as the anchor. Everything else must align with it.

Proprietor appointees ensure the special character is protected

Proprietor appointees are appointed by the proprietor under the authority granted in the integration agreement. Their purpose is not the same as other trustees. Core responsibilities:

- Protect and uphold the special character of the school.
- Advise the board on matters that may affect the special character.
- Ensure that board decisions remain consistent with the legal obligations set out in the integration agreement.
- Act as full board members with voting rights.

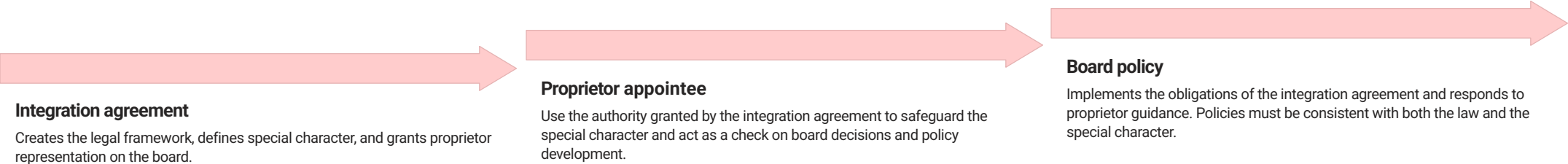
The Proprietor Appointee serves as a vital bridge between the Proprietor and the School Board, ensuring alignment with special character expectations whilst serving the broader interests of the school.

Board policies operationalise obligations

Board policy is the set of rules and procedures that guide how the school operates. Policies must:

Comply with the Education and Training Act. Align with the integration agreement. Incorporate the requirements and expectations of the proprietor regarding special character.

The board creates policy. Proprietor reps help ensure the policies do not compromise the special character or breach the integration agreement.



In practice:

The integration agreement defines the "non negotiables". Proprietor appointees act as guardians of those non negotiables. Board policy translates those obligations into everyday practice.

Know Your Community

The school community is defined in the Education and Training Act 2020 as the parents, families, and whānau of the school's students; the Māori community associated with the school; and any other person or group of persons who the board considers part of the school community.

As a board member, one of your key roles is ensuring the governance of your school aligns with the aspirations and wishes of your school community.



Parents, Families & Whānau

The primary stakeholders who entrust their children's education to the school.



Māori Community

The Māori community associated with the school and their cultural perspectives.



Extended Community

Other persons or groups the board considers part of the school community.



Enrolment Responsibility

As enrolment is the responsibility of the Board (normally carried out by the principal in accordance with Board policy), it is important to know your community and those families likely to enrol at the school. Boards need to understand the enrolment process for their school.

Communication and Consultation

Engaging Your Community

The board needs to know who they need to consult and communicate with, how often and for what. All school community members should know what your board's work involves and how the school is progressing.

Boards and proprietors should aim for communication that is timely, consistent, and accessible. Use plain language, avoid jargon, and provide information in more than one format where possible (e.g., email plus a website notice, translated summaries if needed, and an opportunity for questions). Consultation should also be culturally responsive and inclusive, creating safe ways for people to speak honestly, including those who are less likely to attend meetings or who may feel hesitant to challenge authority.

Finally, good engagement includes closing the loop. After consultation, report back on what was heard, what changed as a result, and what decisions were made. Even when feedback doesn't lead to a change, explaining the reasoning respectfully helps maintain mana, reduces misinformation, and strengthens relationships for next time.

The board is also required to communicate any issues and report annually to the proprietor, ensuring transparency and accountability in all governance activities.

Regular Updates

Keep community informed about board decisions and school progress.

Annual Reporting

Provide comprehensive reports to the school community and proprietor on school performance.

Issue Communication

Promptly address and communicate challenges or concerns.





Communication and Consultation

Tailoring Engagement & Communication

Tailoring Your Approach

Different groups connect in different ways. Adapt your approach: offer face-to-face meetings, short digital updates, translated materials, or utilise trusted intermediaries like community leaders. Tailored engagement ensures inclusive, respectful, and more useful consultation.

Clear Communication About Special Character

Understanding current and prospective enrolments helps clarify the school's special character, expectations, and processes. Families make better decisions when they grasp the school's purpose, values, and daily special character. Proactive communication reduces misunderstandings, supports better-fit enrolments, and builds a connected, informed community.

Communication and Consultation

Know Your Community

Understanding your community is fundamental for effective communication and consultation, enabling better decision-making and future planning.

Why it Matters

Knowing your community also helps you choose the right ways to connect. Foundational for sound communication & consultation, leading to better decisions.

What to Understand

Current and future families, including demographics like population shifts, housing, early childhood pathways, cultural & language needs, and local faith/philosophical communities.

Key Benefits

Anticipate enrolment, plan staffing/property, and protect the school's special character proactively.

Practical Starting Points



Monitor Enrolment Trends

Track feeder pipelines, in-zone/out-of-zone demand, waiting lists, sibling enrolments, and new family origins.



Build Key Relationships

Connect with local early childhood services, community groups, and affiliated special character communities for informed insights.



Embrace Stewardship

This enables effective planning, welcoming families, and clarity on school offerings and expectations, rather than commercial marketing.





Bringing it all together - the Governance Puzzle

The three elements – the Board's focus on student outcomes, a collective understanding of governance, and the Proprietor's preservation of special character – are interdependent. Together, they form an integrated system crucial for ensuring every student reaches their educational potential within state integrated schools.



Work of the Board

The board ensures every student achieves their highest educational outcomes, guided by the school's unique faith or philosophy.



Understanding the Puzzle

Effective governance in state integrated education requires a clear understanding of all its components.

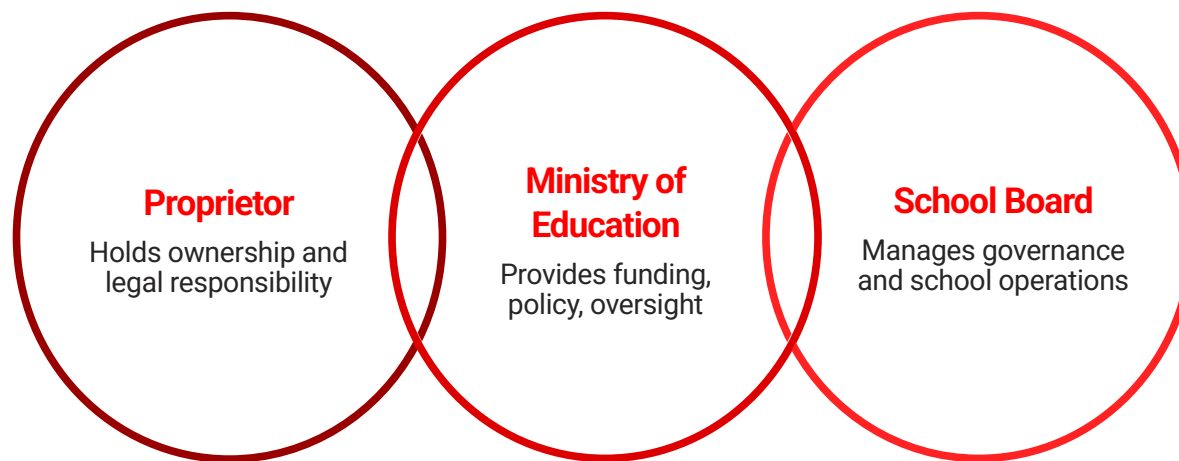


Work of the Proprietor

The proprietor safeguards the school's special character. Effective governance relies on a shared understanding of the proprietor's role, responsibilities, and rights in maintaining this unique identity.

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:



[New Zealand School Boards Association](#)



[Ministry of Education](#)



[APIS](#) - For free advice and support, training, and workshops.