

**School Governance:
An Overview**

September 2007

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Executive summary

In New Zealand schools, boards of trustees have overall responsibility for the successful performance of their school and for fostering student achievement.¹ Since the implementation of a self-managing model for school governance in 1989, there have been changes to the legislative requirements that set out how schools are governed and managed. These include an increased focus on student achievement and better community engagement to determine priorities and targets to improve student achievement.²

The Education Review Office's (ERO's) evaluation indicators,³ note that well-managed and well-led schools will have a clear purpose, use analysed student achievement information to underpin planning and self-review processes, and direct resources towards the desired goals of improving student achievement. The relationship between the indicators of good governance and student achievement is complex and indirect. Good performance against such indicators does not in itself lead to high levels of student achievement. However, poor governance is more likely to correlate with lower than expected levels of achievement.

This report identifies what is working well in terms of governance practices in schools and explores aspects of practice that need strengthening or improvement. It summarises ERO's findings about governance in the education review reports of 673 schools (545 primary and 128 secondary schools) completed between January 2005 and March 2007.

In approximately 60 percent of schools in this study, ERO found that boards were governing their schools well. In a further third of schools, ERO reported on the positive aspects of governance, as well as identifying areas for improvement. ERO identified aspects of governance that needed significant improvement in seven percent of the schools. For a few schools, targeted interventions were recommended to bring about improvements to the quality of governance practice.

ERO's findings highlight some common features of well-governed schools. In these schools:

- governance centred on students with trustees committed to improving student learning and achievement.
- the principal and teachers gave trustees analysed student achievement information that was used to set realistic targets and underpin decision-making, especially in supporting professional development of staff;
- strategic and annual planning had a strong focus on improving student achievement; and
- the principal played a key role in working with trustees and providing strong professional leadership for the board, staff and students.

¹ Education Act 1989 s63 and s75.

² Education Act 1989, s61.

³ Education Review Office, *Evaluation Indicators for Education Reviews in Schools*. See www.ero.govt.nz.

The experience and expertise trustees brought to their roles strengthened the capacity of boards to make decisions that fostered student achievement. Trustees were clear about and shared an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Sound financial, property and personnel policies and procedures guided school operations. Self-review processes were well embedded and robust in evaluating school performance and contributing to ongoing improvement. Regular, focused board training, and improvements made as a result of ERO review report recommendations had a positive impact on the quality of governance.

Successful boards worked collaboratively to strengthen partnerships in the school community. They followed inclusive and responsive consultation processes and acknowledged the needs of diverse school communities. Relationships between the board, principal, staff and the school community were respectful and positive.

In a third of schools in this study, ERO reported on aspects of governance that could be strengthened or improved. Areas for improvement for boards included implementing more in-depth and systematic self-review processes that contribute to focused strategic and annual planning. Such planning needs to be based on well-analysed student achievement information that is regularly reported to the board. Many of the schools did not consult the school community, including their Māori community, in ways that were timely and appropriate.

In many of the schools where governance was not working well, personnel management was an issue, especially in relation to managing the performance of the principal and teachers. The management of finances and property was also a concern for some boards. Regular, targeted training to build trustees' capability to govern more effectively has often been recommended by ERO as a way of addressing the governance issues identified during a review.

In seven percent of the schools, ERO identified aspects of governance that needed significant improvement. In many of these schools, trustees lacked understanding of their roles and responsibilities, which affected their ability to govern the school. Other issues identified by ERO included:

- poor personnel management practices;
- a lack of good quality, analysed student achievement information for board decision making;
- limited self-review processes;
- a breakdown in board, principal, staff and community relationships;
- risks to staff and student safety; and
- non-compliance with specific legislative requirements.

For a few schools, targeted intervention was needed to bring about significant improvement to governance practices.

Next steps

ERO recommends that:

as part of its stocktake of boards of trustees, the Ministry of Education consider:

- the training needs of trustees;
- the accessibility of targeted training for boards; and
- the quality and relevance of training for boards where governance needs to be improved;

and that training and support for boards of trustees specifically target governance practice to:

- improve the rigour of personnel management;
- increase self-review capability;
- help develop inclusive and responsive consultation processes;
- help boards make better use of information to improve student achievement; and
- ensure the provision of a safe and healthy environment for students and staff.

Background

The establishment of boards of trustees was an outcome of the 1988 Taskforce to Review Education Administration.⁴ This taskforce and the resulting Government policy document, *Tomorrow's Schools*⁵, aimed to give communities more say in running their schools and more opportunity to express their expectations about their children's education.

The Education Act 1989 sets out the roles and responsibilities of boards of trustees in the governance and management in schools. Each board is required to prepare and maintain a school charter. The purpose of this charter is to establish the mission, aims, objectives, directions and targets of the board that will give effect to the Government's national education guidelines (which include national administration guidelines) and the board's priorities, and provide a base against which the board's actual performance can later be assessed.⁶

Charters include the school's strategic plan and an annually updated section.⁷ In its annual report, each school presents its evaluation of progress against planned objectives and targets set out in the charter. This evaluation in turn provides the basis for the following year's planning. Recently, planning and reporting processes have helped to establish school direction and provide evidence of improvement.

The national administration guidelines set out the requirements for boards of trustees in terms of planning and reporting. National administration guideline 2⁸ states that each board of trustees, with the principal and teaching staff, is required to:

- (i) develop a strategic plan which documents how they are giving effect to the National Education Guidelines through their policies, plans and programmes, including those for curriculum, assessment and staff professional development;
- (ii) maintain an ongoing programme of self review in relation to the above policies, plans and programmes, including evaluation of information on student achievement; and
- (iii) report to students and their parents on the achievement of individual students, and to the school's community on the achievement of students as a whole and of groups (identified through national administration guideline 1 (iii)),⁹ including the achievement of Māori students against the plans and targets referred to in national administration guideline 1 (v).¹⁰

⁴ Department of Education. *Administering for excellence: Effective administration in education (The Picot Report)*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1998.

⁵ Department of Education. *Tomorrow's schools: The reform of educational administration in New Zealand*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1998.

⁶ Education Act 1989, s61 (2).

⁷ Education Act 1989, s61 (3).

⁸ Ministry of Education, *The National Administration Guidelines*.

⁹ NAG 1 (iii) refers to groups of students: (a) who are not achieving; (b) who are at risk of not achieving; (c) who have special needs (which includes gifted and talented learners, with effect from Term 1 2005).

¹⁰ NAG 1 (v) requires the board to, in consultation with the school's Maori community, develop and make known to the school's community policies, plans and targets for improving the achievement of Maori students.

According to the Ministry of Education¹¹ these changes were introduced to create conditions in which schools' self review is:

- rigorous and focused on student achievement;
- shared with the community; and
- referenced to society's goals for education.

Methodology

This report is based on an analysis of ERO's reporting on governance in the education review reports of 545 primary schools and 128 secondary schools. The schools in this study represent a range of school types, locations, roll sizes and decile group ratings. Detail of this information is included in the appendices.

ERO's reporting on school governance¹²

The extent to which ERO reports on aspects of governance as part of each school's education review varies. Most commonly, reporting on the quality of governance is included as part of ERO's overall evaluation of the school. Each education review report includes ERO's evaluation (also published as a community page) that provides an overall evaluation of the school's performance. This part of the report usually includes evaluative findings about the quality of school governance, as well as the other key findings of the review. Most of the 673 education review reports in this study included findings about school governance as part of ERO's overall evaluation of the school.

ERO sometimes reports on aspects of governance and management as a school priority area. Eight percent of the schools in this study included areas relating to governance and management as a priority for the review. In some of these schools, the board had requested that ERO include a governance and management focus. In other cases, ERO decided to include a focus on governance as a result of initial scoping for the review or because governance issues were identified during the review. Areas reported in relation to governance included board operations, community consultation, school culture, the quality of governance (and in some schools, leadership or management), and strategic planning and self review.

Aspects of governance practice are sometimes included as part of ERO's reporting on other school priority areas. For the schools in this study, school priority areas included the quality of teaching and learning programmes, professional leadership, professional development for teachers, assessment practices, the use of student achievement information and the impact of particular initiatives or programmes within a school. Findings (areas of good performance and areas for improvement) in ERO's reports for individual schools frequently included reference to governance practice such as board support for teacher professional development, targeted funding

¹¹ Ministry of Education, *Planning and Reporting – Frequently Asked Questions*.

See:

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=document&documentid=5133&indexid=7847&indexparentid=1012>.

¹² See: <http://ero.govt.nz/ero/publishing.nsf/Content/ERORevFrameworkSchools>.

for resources, strategic and annual planning linked to curriculum and student achievement, self review, and reporting and use of student achievement information.

All education review reports for the schools in this study included reporting on areas of national interest.¹³ In the time covered by these reports (January 2005 to March 2007), areas of national interest included:

- improving Māori students' achievement;
- career education and guidance;
- the collection and use of assessment information;
- improving Pacific students' achievement;
- improving underachievement;
- the quality of teaching in specific learning areas for specific groups of students; and
- provision for international students and students in hostels.

ERO's findings in these areas often included aspects of governance practice that were working well or needed to be improved.

All education review reports for schools in this study included recommendations focused on improving school performance. These recommendations were usually developed with the school's board of trustees and management.

The reports also included findings about the extent to which boards of trustees complied with legislation. ERO checks the performance of boards by referring to the attestation boards make in a *Board Assurance Statement* and the *Self-Audit Checklist*¹⁴. ERO also investigates in depth five compliance areas that relate directly to student safety.

Framework for evaluating school governance

ERO review officers use evaluative questions as the basis for judgements about the quality of school governance. These are included in ERO's *Framework for Reviews*¹⁵ as part of *Resource B: Chain of Quality and Student Achievement*.

Effective governance

- How coherently does the school focus its efforts on student achievement (including the analysis and use of assessment data along with the alignment of resources, policies and practices) to ensure a high quality of teaching across the school?
- What is the quality of the governance and management relationship and how well are the respective roles of board members and principal understood and acted on?
- How effective is the school's use of financial, property and human resources to support and improve student achievement?
- How transparent to its community are the school's governance processes?

¹³ See: <http://ero.govt.nz/ero/publishing.nsf/Content/NatAreasForReview>.

¹⁴ See <http://ero.govt.nz/ero/publishing.nsf/Content/EROREvFrameworkSchools>.

¹⁵ See <http://ero.govt.nz/ero/publishing.nsf/Content/EROREvFrameworkSchools>.

- How effectively does the school gain input from its community?
- How effective are school strategic planning and self-review processes in bringing about improvements likely to impact on student achievement?
- How effectively does the school monitor and evaluate its performance and take action to secure improvements?
- How well does the board meet its obligations for being a good employer?
- How well does the board support school management to create an environment where teachers can make their greatest impact on student achievement?

ERO's evaluation indicators include process indicators for school governance and management. These relate to:

- professional leadership;
- day-to-day management;
- school-wide planning;
- review and development;
- resource management; and
- personnel management.

These indicators are used by review officers to inform their judgements about aspects of each school's performance.

Findings

ERO's findings about school governance in the 673 (545 primary and 128 secondary) schools in this study are reported in terms of:

- the key features of successfully governed schools; and
- the aspects of governance practice that need strengthening or improving.

Successful governance

An analysis of ERO's reporting on school governance highlights features of successful governance that reflect the increasing emphasis on student achievement and school improvement. These in turn highlight the importance of the contribution a school's community makes in setting targets for student achievement and the significance of evaluating school performance on an ongoing basis.

In approximately 60 percent of schools, ERO found that boards were governing their schools well. ERO's findings highlighted common governance features in these schools. In well-governed schools trustees:

- have an explicit focus on student learning and achievement supported by strong professional leadership;
- bring experience and expertise to their roles and share an understanding of their roles and responsibilities;
- strengthen partnerships in the school community through respectful relationships;
- implement inclusive and responsive consultation processes that acknowledge diverse school communities;

- are involved in strategic and annual planning that focuses on improving student achievement;
- use robust self-review processes to evaluate identified aspects of school performance and to contribute to ongoing improvement; and
- have sound financial, property and personnel policies and procedures to guide the management of these resources.

Successful governance features are reported on separately below and are supported by examples of good practice (in shaded text) drawn from individual schools' education review reports.

Student-centred governance and professional leadership

A key feature of well-governed schools was the strong focus trustees had on student learning and achievement. Trustees were committed to improving outcomes for students. They had a keen interest in students' learning and supported a high quality educational environment for students and staff. Improving student achievement was central to successful governance.

The board had made significant improvements in its operations. It had taken a more active governance role, become more focused on informed reflection about the school's effectiveness in supporting students as learners, and sought more in-depth reporting on student performance. Trustees learnt how to ask significant questions about the effectiveness and quality of teaching and learning. Using the information they received, they engaged in vigorous discussion about how best to support students.

Trustees focused on enhancing outcomes for students, gathered and analysed information on the effectiveness of operations and used the results to improve the quality of their policies and programmes.

The professional leadership of the principal was integral to successful governance. In schools with effective professional leadership, there was a shared vision for the achievement of all students and the board was provided with useful and timely reports on student achievement.

The school was well managed and governed. The principal provided sound leadership and clear direction for the school. A strong management team supported his collegial approach to school improvement.

The principal was an effective leader. The board of trustees and the staff responded well to his open and inclusive approach. The collegial board and staff culture supported the development of the school's vision, management systems and professional discussion.

Governance roles and responsibilities

The experience, expertise and commitment of trustees strengthened boards' capability to govern well. This, coupled with the strong and credible leadership of the chairperson, underpinned sound governance in many schools. Trustees brought a range of complementary skills to their board roles and responsibilities, and implemented these in ways that impacted positively on the quality of governance.

The board chairperson provided effective leadership to a team of committed trustees. Board members brought a range of valuable skills to their roles and worked collaboratively to provide teachers and students with good quality learning resources.

Trustees were generally representative of the diverse community they served. They had a clear understanding of their governance role and brought a variety of relevant skills and experiences to the position.

Trustees sought regular and ongoing training that targeted specific aspects of board operations. Training supported trustees in their roles and responsibilities, helped them keep up to date with change and in the induction of new trustees, and to plan for successive boards. In some schools, training had been undertaken to help the board address issues raised in a previous ERO report.

As most trustees were new to the board, training was sought from several sources to enhance their knowledge about school governance. The board had identified its main function as ensuring positive student outcomes.

In some schools trustees recognised the need to strengthen their capability and build capacity to govern by co-opting expertise on to the board or seeking guidance from an external mentor or advisor.

Relationships

In schools where governance was working well, trustees worked in partnership with the principal, staff, students and the wider school community. Open, supportive and collegial relationships based on mutual respect contributed to a positive and welcoming school culture.

Committed and supportive relationships among the board, principal and staff were evident and assisted trustees to undertake their governance roles purposefully in an atmosphere of collegiality and professional trust.

The ongoing work to develop effective community partnerships by the board, principal, parent groups and staff had increased parents' confidence in the school. Inclusive whānau/family relationships throughout the school made it a supportive place for students.

The school's philosophy of pono (truth), tika (honesty), and aroha (love) permeated all aspects of school life, including the high quality relationships between children, staff, trustees and the community. The board, principal and staff were committed to enhancing learning opportunities and improving outcomes for students.

Responsive community consultation

In well-governed schools, trustees regularly sought the views of the community about a range of school operations. Consultation was used to identify the aspirations that parents and whānau held for their children. Open and purposeful consultation contributed to the development of vision statements, strategic goals and targets for student achievement. Partnerships were strengthened through trustees' genuine commitment to listening and responding to community views. Feedback gained from school communities was used in board decision making.

Board governance was appropriately responsive to the school community. The principal, trustees and staff engaged in ongoing consultation to ensure community perspectives were canvassed. Trustees genuinely considered whānau and student views when decisions were made.

Strong features of the board's practice were its extensive and effective consultation processes and community involvement. This strengthened partnerships between the board, staff and community and resulted in a shared vision and commitment to improving student achievement.

Strategic direction

In well-governed schools, trustees established clear strategic direction that reflected community aspirations. Measurable and appropriate targets for improved student achievement were set annually and progress towards these targets was regularly monitored. Trustees had a strong mandate for raising student achievement that was underpinned by high expectations for all learners.

Trustees were knowledgeable about student achievement and set focused targets for improvement. They used assessment evidence to plan and resource school operations. A strong culture of self review, resulted in regular evaluation of all aspects of management and governance to facilitate better outcomes for students.

Trustees made good use of well-analysed student achievement information provided to them to inform planning and to resource decision making. Well-considered decisions were made based on comprehensive information from a range of sources.

Self review for improvement

Well-governed schools had a strong culture of formal self review. Ongoing review provided a sound basis for decision making. Regular evaluation of all aspects of management and governance was planned and findings used to inform strategic direction.

Rigorous systems of self review, linked to the planning and reporting cycle, led to continuous improvement in teaching practice and board governance. A capable board made sound resourcing decisions with a focus on student achievement. Thorough self review and school operations systems strengthened governance practices.

Robust self review enabled trustees to set challenging targets for student achievement and make sound decisions to promote ongoing school improvement.

Sound financial, property and personnel management

Sound management of finances, assets and property by boards supported effective teaching and learning. Trustees implemented good employer practices and had a strong focus on student safety. Targeted staff professional development was well supported and appropriate teaching resources were provided to support student learning.

The board's sound financial and property management enabled it to maintain ongoing school improvements. The curriculum was well resourced. Property developments in student support services and careers, and health and physical education were evidence of the board's resolve to provide a high quality educational environment.

The board placed priority on teachers receiving extensive professional development in numeracy and literacy. Whole-school professional development promoted consistency and sustainability of new initiatives. This also contributed to a positive environment, where adults worked collegially to improve student learning.

The following example encompasses many of the features described in this section that contribute to successful governance.

The board was highly committed to ongoing school improvement and student achievement. Trustees were well informed about the school's progress in meeting school goals and achievement targets. They contributed a range of skills and had developed a sound framework of policies and procedures to support the management of the school. The board's effective consultation processes strengthened partnerships between the board, staff and community resulting in a shared vision and commitment to improving student achievement.

Strengthening and improving governance

In a third of the schools in this evaluation, ERO's findings included positive aspects of governance, as well as areas for improvement. In a further seven percent of schools, governance practices required significant improvement. ERO also identified issues related to compliance with legislation.

Areas where governance practices could be strengthened or improved relate to:

- self review;
- community consultation;

- board training;
- planning and reporting;
- personnel management;
- relationships and partnerships; and
- a range of compliance issues relevant to specific legislation.

Each area is discussed below in terms of the aspects of practice that needed to be strengthened or improved.

Self review

ERO identified self review as a key area for improvement in the majority of schools where governance could be strengthened. Schools needed to formalise and develop self-review practice as well as undertake regular, ongoing and systematic evaluation of school performance. Reports also highlighted the need for boards to seek and use good quality information, as part of the review process.

Practices identified by ERO to improve self review included:

- developing a formal, robust and rigorous process for self review;
- basing self review on the objectives and targets in the school's strategic and annual plans; and
- using self-review findings to contribute to strategic planning.

ERO also identified the need for boards to review aspects of school operations, including specific policies, plans and practices. Overall, boards needed to improve their capability in evaluating the impact and effectiveness of specific programmes and interventions in raising student achievement.

Community consultation

Another recurring theme for improving governance practices related to boards consulting their school community to guide strategic direction. ERO found that boards in some schools had not yet consulted their Māori community to set targets for improving the achievement of Māori students. Consultation about the content of the health curriculum was also an area for action.

Building effective partnerships between the school and the community was an issue for some schools. ERO found that boards needed to strengthen home-school partnerships and build relationships with members of the school community.

Board training

ERO's reports highlighted the importance of trustees undertaking training targeted at specific aspects of governance. This included training to:

- help trustees fulfil their roles and responsibilities, especially where they were new to their role;
- build capability in strategic planning and self review;
- increase understanding of personnel, finance and property management; and
- help the board make better use of information to improve student achievement.

Planning and reporting¹⁶

In many of the schools where governance needed to be strengthened or improved, ERO identified meeting planning and reporting requirements as an area for improvement. This included:

- meeting requirements for annual reporting in a timely manner;
- developing targets to improve student achievement;
- recording baseline data so that school targets included specific and measurable objectives;
- documenting a planned approach for reporting student achievement to the board;
- using school-wide achievement data to establish evidence-based school improvement targets;
- developing targets related to a larger proportion of the student body; and
- widening the scope of reporting to the board on student achievement.

Personnel management

Personnel management was an aspect of governance practice that needed to be strengthened or improved. Key areas for improvement included developing a performance agreement for the principal and, where appropriate, following a sound process for appraising the principal as a classroom teacher. In some schools, a process for appraising staff and providing a programme of advice and guidance for provisionally registered teachers had yet to be documented and followed. Other concerns related to ensuring that:

- all non-teaching and unregistered employees were vetted¹⁷ by police; and
- the performance management system complied with current legislation.

Relationships

In a few schools, the quality of relationships had a negative impact on the board's ability to govern the school effectively. These issues often related to disharmony and lack of trust between the chairperson and principal. In some instances there was tension between board and staff, and/or board and community. Other problems resulted from:

- poor management of parent concerns and complaints; and
- lack of clarity and distinction between governance and management roles, and responsibilities.

Other issues

Other issues identified by ERO related to health and safety practice, the voluntary payment of fees and other costs, meeting code of practice requirements for the pastoral care of international students, the lack of effective principal or board leadership, poor quality teaching, and ineffective property management.

¹⁶ See: <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout=index&indexid=7847&indexparentid=1012>

¹⁷ Education Act 1989 s78C

Recommendations for improvement

Most reports included recommendations for improvement. Some were targeted at the board and others at managers and staff. Key recommendations for school boards include:

- improving self-review practice;
- developing, reviewing and strengthening strategic direction;
- undertaking training to improve governance capability;
- reviewing and more rigorously implementing performance management systems;
- clarifying and reviewing trustee roles and responsibilities;
- receiving and/or seeking more timely and well-analysed student achievement information;
- consulting groups of parents and whānau in the diverse school community;
- supporting targeted staff professional development through appropriate budgeting; and
- strengthening relationships among all members of the school community.

Self review featured most frequently in these individual reports, with almost half the primary, and a quarter of the secondary school reports, including recommendations for boards to strengthen or improve aspects of self review. Recommendations referred to the need for boards to:

- develop a systematic approach to self review;
- strengthen self-review practices; and
- use self-review information to evaluate programmes and interventions, and set realistic targets for student achievement.

Compliance - meeting requirements

All education review reports of schools in this study included findings about the extent to which legislative requirements were being met. ERO reported on any compliance issues identified during the review based on the board's attestation through the *Board Assurance Statement* and *Self-Audit Checklist*, along with ERO's checking of items that have a potentially high impact on student achievement. Table 1 summarises the key areas of non-compliance and indicates the percentage of the 673 schools (primary and secondary) in the study not meeting legislative requirements.

Table 1: Compliance issues in schools

Compliance Areas	Percentage of primary schools in the study not meeting requirements	Percentage of secondary schools in the study not meeting requirements
Personnel management	23%	39%
Health and safety	17%	24%
Consultation with Māori community	16%	16%
Health consultation	7%	10%
Fees and donations	5%	12%
Code of Practice – International Students	2%	10%
Self review	5%	4%
Planning and reporting	2%	4%
Curriculum related	6%	2%
Other governance related	3%	4%

As shown in Table 1, the key compliance issues for the schools in this study related to personnel management, health and safety, and consultation with the school's Māori community.

Personnel management areas included the issues already listed earlier in this report. Compliance requirements, reported on by ERO, also included the need for boards to:

- comply with conditions in employment contracts for all staff; and
- ensure all teachers employed in the school are registered.

Health and safety compliance issues related to the provision of a safe physical and emotional environment for students and staff. Compliance issues include:

- establishing and maintaining hazard management systems;
- regularly carrying out and recording evacuation drills;
- ensuring risk management processes are implemented for all education outside the classroom activities;
- storing equipment appropriately;
- recording accidents and serious incidents; and
- reviewing all health and safety policies and procedures.

Next review

The timing and nature of the next review for each school in this evaluation, as indicated in all of the education review reports, is summarised in Table 2. For most of the schools in the study (87 percent of the primary and 80 percent of secondary schools) the next review was to be undertaken as part of ERO's regular review cycle, which is currently every three years.

An early return by ERO usually takes the form of a supplementary review and is undertaken where the performance of a school requires further investigation. Nine percent of the primary and eight percent of the secondary schools in this study were to have a supplementary review within 12 months. In a few schools (six primary and 12 secondary), ERO decided that the next review would be within 24 months. For a small number of schools (nine primary and nine secondary), the timing and nature of the next review was to be decided following the receipt of an action plan to address the issues raised in the education review report. ERO offered boards of trustees at these schools post-review assistance workshops to help with the development of these plans.

Table 2: Timing and nature of next review

Review cycle	Primary	Secondary
Regular cycle	87%	80%
Return in 12 months	9%	8%
Return in 24 months	1%	4%
Timing and nature of next review determined on receipt of action plan	2%	7%
Intervention ¹⁸	1%	1%

In a few schools, ERO also made recommendations to the Secretary for Education for intervention, or for the continuation and monitoring of an existing intervention. Issues that prompted such a recommendation relate to ERO's concerns about:

- the quality and effectiveness of school governance;
- the quality of leadership and management;
- the quality of curriculum implementation, including teacher planning and curriculum coverage, and assessment of students' learning;
- the quality of personnel practices, including performance management;
- the quality of strategic planning, self review and quality assurance; and
- the provision of a safe emotional and physical environment.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that boards were governing schools well in over half the schools (60 percent). The key features of successful governance identified in this report do not exist in isolation to one another. Their interdependence strengthens the positive impact that they have on successful governance. For example, there is a strong link between the positive relationships in a school and the way these relationships strengthen partnerships focused on student learning and achievement. Opportunities for parents and whānau to share their aspirations for their children through inclusive and responsive consultation, contribute to the development of the school's clear strategic direction. The implementation of robust and systematic self review promotes ongoing school improvement.

¹⁸ The interventions are set out in Part 7A of the Education Act 1989.

For approximately one third of the schools, ERO identified aspects of governance practice that could be strengthened. The most common area related to improving self review and the use to be made of good quality, well-analysed student achievement information for target setting and sound decision making by trustees. For these schools regular, targeted board training is needed to build and sustain governance capability.

In about seven percent of the schools, governance practice needed substantial improvement, mostly in relation to self review, community consultation, board training, planning and reporting, personnel management and relationships. In many of these schools issues relating to compliance had a negative impact on the quality of governance with personnel management, health and safety, and community consultation featuring most frequently.

For 13 percent of primary schools and 20 percent of secondary schools, ERO indicated an early return to evaluate progress in addressing concerns raised in the education review report. The issues that led to ERO deciding to return to the school to undertake a supplementary review did not always relate to governance specifically. Management concerns and issues associated with the quality of teaching and learning were often the reason for an early ERO review. For a few of these schools ERO recommended that the Secretary for Education consider an intervention under Part 7A of the Education Act 1989.

Next steps

ERO recommends that training and support for boards of trustees specifically target governance practice to:

- improve the rigour of personnel management;
- increase self-review capability;
- help develop inclusive and responsive consultation processes;
- help boards make better use of information to improve student achievement; and
- ensure the provision of a safe and healthy environment for students and staff.

ERO also recommends that the Ministry of Education include a focus on the accessibility and provision of training for trustees as part of its stocktake of boards of trustees. In particular, the Ministry of Education could investigate:

- the training needs of trustees;
- the accessibility of targeted training for boards; and
- the quality and relevance of training for boards where governance needs to be improved.

Appendix 1: Statistics of schools in the sample for this report

Table 1: School types

School type	Number	Percentage of sample	National percentage ¹⁹
Full Primary (Y1-8)	304	45	44
Contributing (Y1-6)	215	32	31
Intermediate (Y7-8)	12	2	5
Secondary (Y7-15)	37	5	4
Composite (Y1-15)	19	3	5
Secondary (Y9-15)	75	11	9
Special School	11	2	2
Total	673	100	100

The sample of schools in this evaluation reflected the national percentages for most school types. There were however less intermediates and slightly more composite schools in the sample.

Table 2: School locality

Locality	Number	Percentage of sample	National percentage
Urban	467	69	71
Rural	206	31	29
Total	673	100	100

The sample of schools in this evaluation closely reflected the national percentages of rural and urban schools.

¹⁹ The national percentage of each school type is based on the total population of schools as at 1 July 2006. For this study it excludes kura kaupapa Māori and The Correspondence School. This applies to locality, decile and roll size in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

Table 3: School decile ranges

Decile²⁰	Number	Percentage of sample	National percentage
Low decile (1-3)	207	31	30
Middle decile (4-7)	274	41	40
High decile (8-10)	192	28	30
Total	673	100	100

The sample of schools in this evaluation closely reflected the national percentages according to decile grouping.

Table 4: Roll size group

Roll size	Number	Percentage of sample	National percentage
Small (0-150 primary, 0-300 secondary)	278	41	44
Medium (151-300 primary, 301-700 secondary)	205	31	27
Large (301+ primary, 701+ secondary)	190	28	29
Total	673	100	100

The sample of schools in this evaluation included slightly less small and medium sized schools than the national percentages.

²⁰ A school's decile indicates the extent to which a school draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10 percent of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities, whereas decile 10 schools are the 10 percent of schools with the lowest proportion of these students.