

## **Board of Trustees Parent Candidates and Elected Representatives for the 2002 Mid-Term Election**

### **Introduction:**

In 1999 a reform process called “Tomorrows Schools” introduced major reform into the administration of state schools in New Zealand. Part of this reform was to introduce Board of Trustees who were to be the governance body for each school. Previously primary schools had to report to Education Boards while secondary schools had Board of Governors.

Board of Trustees are made up of elected parent representatives although they can appoint and or co-opt members to make up the minimum size of a Board.

Initially elected parent representatives were elected for a 3-year term. The problem some schools were finding was that at the end of each 3-year term the turnover of Board members was so high that they lost all the expertise at the end of each 3 year cycle.

2002 saw the introduction of a mid-term (also known as staggered) election option. This new option enables a Board to have half of its parent representatives elected every eighteen months. The inaugural mid-term election was held on 13 September 2002.

### **Analysis of Candidates offering themselves for the Mid-Term Election 2002**

#### **Number of schools involved:**

A total of 315 schools opted for the mid-term election process, where half the Board parent representative positions are put up for re-election.

At the point when the analysis of the election candidates was being undertaken 2 schools were still to hold their mid-term election and therefore are not including in the following analysis.

#### **Number of Candidates:**

The mid-term election only attracted 874 candidates for the 696 positions available. This is an average of 1.26 candidates per position available. This average is only slightly down on the 1.34 average for the 2001 Board of Trustees Election where there were 16,806 candidates for 12,560 positions in the 2455 schools that filed a return. On average all school types attracted slightly more than 1 candidate per position except for special schools where for the 5 positions at special schools, only 3 candidates offered themselves for election.

On average most regions attracted more than one candidate per position except for the Bay of Plenty region which had only 41 candidates for the 44 positions, and the Marlborough region which attracted 21 candidates for the 21 positions.

Because the mid-term election involved only half the parent representative positions, the number of candidates per school correspondingly reduced in comparison to other elections. For the 2002 mid-term election there were 2.8 candidates per school in comparison to 6.8 candidates per school in the 2001 Board election, 7.0 in the 1998 election and 6.7 in the 1995 election. It appears that schools make an effort to try and get enough candidates for the positions available.

Only 41% of the schools involved in the mid-term election had more candidates than positions and therefore needed to hold an election.

### **Experience of Candidates:**

Sixty percent of the candidates had never been on a Board of Trustees before, while just over one-fifth (22%) were currently serving on the Board as parent reps and another 9.6% were currently serving on the Board as co-opted or appointed reps. The balance 8.4% had served on a Board of Trustees at some earlier time in their lives.

Although most regions in New Zealand had a similar pattern to the national average, some regions contrasted. In the Nelson region over 75% of candidates had never served on a Board before, while in the Hawkes Bay region less than half the candidates had never been on a Board before.

Although nationally 60% of candidates had not been on a Board of Trustees at all, for secondary (Yr9-13) schools and intermediates the pattern was very different. Only 30% of secondary (Yr9-13) school candidates had had no previous Board experience and just over half of the intermediate school candidates had had no previous experience.

### **Gender Composition of Candidates**

More male than female candidates offered themselves for the mid-term election of parent representatives on Board of Trustees. Just over 53% of candidates were male. The gender composition varied widely from region to region. In the Gisborne region less than one-third of candidates were male while in the Taranaki region some 72% of candidates were male.

### **Ethnic Composition of Candidates**

The ethnic composition of candidates did not reflect the ethnic makeup of the student population. The following table compares the ethnic composition of the school population and the contrasting ethnic composition of candidates.

Ethnic Group	Composition of Schools (July 2002)	Composition of Candidates
	%	%
Maori	20.4	12.6
Pacific	8.1	1.7
Asian (domestic students only)	6.6	0.7
European/pakeha/other European	61.5	84.3

An interesting thing when looking at the gender composition of candidates by ethnicity is that for Maori candidates, 60% were female. For all other ethnic groups females made up half or less of the candidates.

### **Outcome of the Election**

A total of 10 schools failed to have any candidates for the Board election. A further 175 schools had either the right number of candidates or a fewer number of candidates than the positions available for election and therefore did not need to hold the mid-term election.

In total 620 candidates gained a position as a parent representative on the Board of Trustees of their school.

The following table gives the breakdown of those gaining positions on Boards of Trustees during the September mid-term election.

Male	341
Female	279
Total	620
% male	55
Maori	74
Pacific	6
Asian	5
European/pakeha/other European	531
Other	4
Total	620
% Maori	11.9
% Pacific	1.0
% Asian	0.8
% European/pakeha/other European	85.6

The ethnic composition of those gaining positions on the Boards of Trustees reflected closely the composition of those standing as candidates in the election, except that Maori and Pacific candidates missing out slightly to European/Pakeha candidates.

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