MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
TE TĀHUHU O TE MĀTAURANGA

Briefing Note: Enabling electronic school board elections - Talking points for Social Wellbeing Committee

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
Date:	22 November 2021	**Priority:**	Medium
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	**Round Robin:**	No

Purpose of paper

This paper provides talking points (Annex 1) for your discussion of the paper *Enabling electronic school board elections* at the Social Wellbeing Committee on 24 November 2021.

Summary

- The Cabinet paper seeks policy approvals for proposed amendments to the Education (Board Elections) Regulations 2000 (the Regulations).
- Changes to the Regulations are focused on enabling board elections to be held electronically and further modernising the board election framework. Specifically these proposals are to:
  a) Establish minimum technical and process standards for electronic elections.
  b) Provide for the Ministry of Education to establish a two-stage accreditation scheme to accredit providers of electronic elections.
  c) Require paper alternatives in electronic elections.
  d) Make a number of minor amendments to the Regulations to support the introduction of electronic elections and other modernising changes.

Proactively Released

Proactive release

Agree that this briefing will be proactively released after Cabinet decisions have been made.

Agree / Disagree

Ben O'Meara
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Te Puna Kaupapahere - Policy
22/11/2021

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education

__/__/____

Annexes

Annex 1: Talking points

Proactively Released

1. I am seeking agreement to policy decisions on changes to the Education (Board Elections) Regulations 2000 (the Regulations).

2. The changes will enable the option for school board elections to be held electronically next year.

3. The current Regulations were introduced over twenty years ago. Today, we know that a number of elections are already being held electronically.

Proposals for Cabinet approval

4. I am seeking agreement to the following proposals:

Establishing minimum technical and process standards

5. I am proposing establishing eight minimum technical and process standards for electronic elections in the Regulations. These standards are important to ensure that elections are still safe, secure, secret, auditable and can be validated, even though they are held using electronic processes.

Providing for the Ministry of Education to establish a two-stage accreditation scheme

6. I am proposing to enable the Ministry to establish a two-stage accreditation scheme that will be used to accredit providers of electronic elections. Potential providers will have to meet specific assessment criteria set by the Ministry before they can offer electronic election services to schools.

7. The accreditation scheme is to ensure that electronic elections are run using a consistent standard across the country without placing additional pressure on schools to develop their own standards. A two-stage accreditation system will simplify the process for providers with a proven track record of providing election services. For newer providers, they may need to go through an independent assessment of their software and practices.

A different approach for student elections

8. The technical standards will be used for parent and staff elections, as well as student elections. However, accredited providers will only be required for parent and staff elections. This approach recognises the existing differences in practice between parent and student elections, which, although equally important, are run quite differently.

Requiring paper alternatives

9. I propose requiring paper alternatives to be available in electronic elections. I am aware that many parents, as well as some staff and students, do not have the digital connectivity, devices or electronic literacy required to participate in an electronic election.

10. Increasing participation is one of my highest priorities for this work. It is important that any school that chooses to hold an electronic election does not unintentionally disenfranchise these voters.

Other minor changes to the Regulations

11. I am proposing to make other minor changes to the Regulations, to support the introduction of electronic elections and to further modernise the Regulations. These changes include creating a single fit for purpose election timetable.

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