

Information about the changes to the board objectives set out in section 127 of the Education and Training Act 2020

Paramount objective

Defined in the Education and Training Act 2020 as the highest-priority objective

Objective	Status	Wording of objective from Act	Further information
Achievement	Amended	(1) A board's paramount objective in governing a school is to ensure that every student at the school is able to attain their highest possible standard in educational achievement.	There is now a paramount objective that boards must ensure that 'every student is able to attain their highest possible standard in educational achievement'. This is not a new objective as previously it was one of the five primary board objectives. The key difference is that now it must be a board's highest priority. To meet the paramount objective the board must meet its supporting objectives, discussed below.

Supporting objectives

Defined in the Education and Training Act 2020 as an objective that is essential and supports the paramount objective. Supporting objectives contribute to achieving the paramount objective. Some objectives are new, some have been slightly changed, and some have been carried over unchanged from the previous legislation.

Objective	Status	Wording of objective from Act	Further information
Attendance	New	(2) (a) to give effect to its obligation to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the school's students attend the school when it is open.	While this is a new supporting objective, it is not a new requirement (the new objective reflects the requirement in section 36(2) of the Act). Boards do have new requirements for attendance under new sections 137A, B, C and D of the Act (relating to Attendance Management Plans). Guidance for what the new attendance requirements mean for school boards is available from here: Attendance - Ministry of Education
Monitoring and evaluating students' progress and achievement	New	(2) (b) to ensure that the school uses good quality assessment and aromatawai information to monitor and evaluate students' progress and achievement, including any assessment or aromatawai specified in a foundation curriculum policy statement.	Since 1 January 2023, boards have been required to use good quality assessment or aromatawai information to report to students and parents on students' progress and achievement. This requirement is set out in Regulation 21 of the Education (School Boards) Regulations 2020. Good quality information is defined as that which draws on a range of evidence to evaluate the progress and achievement of each student and builds a comprehensive picture of that student's learning. More information about assessment is available from here: Assessment and Reporting - Tāhūrangi, Ministry of Education Aromatawai - Kauwhata Reo, Ministry of Education Te Ara Tohu - Rangaranga Reo ā-Tā - Kauwhata Reo, Ministry of Education

<p>Student safety and wellbeing</p>	<p>Unchanged</p>	<p>(2) (c) to ensure that the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) is a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff; and (ii) gives effect to relevant student rights set out in this Act, the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, and the Human Rights Act 1993; and (iii) takes all reasonable steps to eliminate racism, stigma, bullying, and any other forms of discrimination within the school. 	<p>The requirement for boards to take all reasonable steps means that boards must exhaust all reasonable paths or actions to achieve the desired outcome – in this case to eliminate racism, stigma, bullying and other forms of discrimination. What this requires in practice will be influenced by the circumstances arising in the school community.</p> <p>Further guidance is available from here:</p> <p>Child Protection in Schools - Ministry of Education</p> <p>Health and Safety Responsibilities for Schools - Ministry of Education</p> <p>Right to Education - Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission</p> <p>Guidance on social cohesion for schools - Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission</p> <p>Bullying Free NZ</p>
<p>Students with differing needs</p>	<p>Unchanged</p>	<p>(2) (d) to ensure that the school is inclusive of, and caters for, students with differing needs.</p>	<p>More information about the role of school boards in ensuring the school is inclusive is available from here:</p> <p>The role of school boards Inclusive Education - Ministry of Education</p>
<p>Equitable outcomes for Māori students, provision of teaching in te Reo Māori, New Zealand's cultural diversity</p>	<p>Amended</p>	<p>(2) (e) to ensure that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) seeks to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students; and (ii) takes all reasonable steps to provide for students to be taught, and to learn, in te reo Māori on request of their parents or immediate caregivers; and (iii) takes reasonable steps to ensure that the policies and practices for the school reflect New Zealand's cultural diversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Subsection 2(e) reflects that school boards do not hold and discharge the Crown's responsibilities in respect of the Treaty. › The Crown retains its Treaty obligations in respect of education, and the recent amendments do not lessen the Crown's Treaty obligations. › A school board may choose to affirm its commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi in its goals/targets, planned actions and policies, for instance, where this reflects the needs of its community or assists the board in its work. › Subsection 2(e)(i) makes seeking to achieve equitable outcomes for Māori students a standalone supporting objective that must be met to achieve the paramount objective of educational achievement. This provides boards with a clear and practical duty. › Subsection 2(e)(ii) amends the previous obligation to take "all reasonable steps to make instruction available in tikanga Māori and te reo Māori" with a new supporting objective to take "all reasonable steps to provide for students to be taught, and to learn, in te reo Māori on request of their parents or immediate caregivers". This ensures that parents or immediate caregivers have the choice to request their children to be taught in te reo Māori, while placing a duty on school boards that is practical to implement. › Subsection 2(e)(iii) amends the previous obligation for boards to reflect local tikanga Māori, mātauranga Māori, in their plans, policies and teaching and learning programmes with a new supporting objective to take "reasonable steps to ensure that the policies and practices for the school reflect New Zealand's cultural diversity". This new supporting objective has similar wording to a previous requirement for boards to reflect New Zealand's cultural diversity in section 133 of the Act, which has now been repealed to avoid duplication. The new supporting objective provides choice for school boards to determine, in consultation with their communities, how they reflect the diversity of New Zealand and their school communities.

<p>Curriculum, teaching and learning, monitoring and reporting students' progress</p>	<p>Amended</p>	<p>(2) (f) to give effect to its obligations in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) any foundation curriculum statements, national curriculum statements, and national performance measures; and (ii) teaching and learning programmes; and (iii) monitoring and reporting students' progress. 	<p>This subsection has been redefined as a supporting objective, but it is not a new requirement. The obligations referenced in this objective are set out in section 90 of the Act.</p> <p>More information curriculum tools, teaching and learning programmes, assessment for learning, whānau engagement is available from here:</p> <p>The New Zealand Curriculum - Ministry of Education Te Mātauranga o Aotearoa - Ministry of Education</p>
<p>Financial responsibility</p>	<p>Amended</p>	<p>(2) (g) to perform its functions and exercise its powers in a way that is financially responsible.</p>	<p>This subsection has been redefined as a supporting objective, but it is not a new requirement.</p> <p>More information about managing school finances is available from here:</p> <p>Day-to-day financial management - Ministry of Education</p>
<p>Community of learning</p>	<p>Amended</p>	<p>(2) (h) if the school is a member of a community of learning that has a community of learning agreement under clause 2 of Schedule 5, to comply with its obligations under the agreement.</p>	<p>This subsection has been redefined as a supporting objective, but it is not a new requirement.</p> <p>Note: From 28 January 2026, there are no funded Communities of Learning in operation. Information about the disestablishment of funding for Communities of Learning (Kāhui Ako) is available from here:</p> <p>Update about Kāhui Ako disestablishment - Ministry of Education</p>
<p>Comply with other legislation</p>	<p>Amended</p>	<p>(2) (i) to comply with all of its other obligations under this or any other legislation.</p>	<p>This subsection has been redefined as a supporting objective, but it is not a new requirement.</p>