

Media release: Pacific people encouraged to stand for boards of trustees

7 March 2010

Pasifika parents are being encouraged to stand for school boards of trustees through three community fono being held in the Wellington region this month.

The fono are part of a joint initiative by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs called Strengthening Pacific Leadership on Boards of Trustees.

Karen Sewell, Secretary for Education said boards are the bridge between schools and communities- their work is vital.

“It has direct consequences for students, teachers, schools and for overall education outcomes. We need more Pasifika representation on our boards” Karen Sewell said.

“We need strong strategic leadership from every board to help lift educational achievement for all young New Zealanders.”

Three fono will be held on 17 and 18 March in Porirua, Lower Hutt and Wellington (details below). The focus will be on giving parents and families a better understanding of what board members do, by listening to experiences of Pasifika parents and community members already on school boards.

Dr. Colin Tukuitonga, Chief Executive of the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs said there are many people in the Pasifika community with the skills that boards required.

“Education is one of the underlying foundations for achieving successful Pacific communities. The education sector is vital for Pacific workforce and leadership development. Changes for Pacific people require Pacific representation at all levels of decision-making and leadership on boards encourages Pacific communities to hold their local schools accountable for their children’s education,” said Dr. Tukuitonga.

The fono will also outline how schools themselves can encourage Pacific people to stand for board elections in May this year. Schools will be encouraged to hold their own fono and use other channels to highlight the advantages of board membership.

Further information:

- Porirua fono, Wednesday 17 March at Porirua College at 6pm.
- Lower Hutt, Thursday 18 March at Hutt Valley High School at 6pm.
- Wellington, Thursday 18 March at Rongotai College at 6pm.

Board elections will be held by 7 May 2010. Those interested in standing for election should contact the office of their local school or New Zealand School Trustees Association on (04) 560 2942.

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