

Principal Selection: A guide for School Associations

Your role in choosing a new principal

School Associations have a formal role in the selection of a new permanent principal. A parent or community member from your School Association will be invited to join the selection panel. They must complete any required training and follow Department processes. This applies only to permanent principals. Acting principals are appointed by the Department.

When is a principal position considered vacant?

A principal position is vacant when the substantive principal:

- Leaves the Department
- Chooses to relinquish the role
- Accepts another permanent position

If a principal takes up an acting role elsewhere, they still retain ownership of their position. In this case, the role is not vacant and is not filled through a selection process.

When a vacancy is advertised

When a permanent principal position is advertised, the School Association Committee is invited to nominate a parent or community representative to join the selection panel. TASSO recommends the committee meet to consider these two things:

1. Who should represent your school community?

The representative must be a parent or community member.

They do not need to be a committee member – another suitable person can be chosen.

The role involves:

- Reading applications
- Being part of shortlisting
- Helping shape interview questions
- Sitting on the interview panel.

2. What matters most to your school community?

It helps if the committee agrees on the qualities they want to see in a principal.

For example:

- Strong communication
- Genuine family engagement
- Leadership in behaviour and wellbeing
- Focus on literacy and numeracy
- Positive school culture

This helps guide the panel representative and shape interview questions.

Important: The process is confidential. The representative must not share information or outcomes until the appointment is publicly announced.

Conflicts of interest

Any committee member who:

- Plans to apply for the role, or
- Has a close personal relationship with an applicant

should step out of discussions and decision-making about the appointment.

