

Invitation for Public Comment

Bering Strait

Regional Education Attendance Area School Board Recasting

Alaska Statutes at AS 14.08.051(c) require that within 90 days of the Federal decennial census, the Commissioner of the Department of Education and Early Development, in consultation with the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development and the local communities, must review the school board apportionment scheme of each Regional Education Attendance Area (REAA) to determine if it meets the standards contained at AS 14.08.051(a). The standard is that each school board member must represent, “as nearly as practicable, an equal number of persons.”

A generally accepted standard for equal representation is that the population represented by each school board member not vary more than plus or minus five percent from the average. The average is determined by taking the total population of the REAA and dividing it by the total number of school board seats. When current representation varies by more than plus or minus five percent, the Commissioner must recast the boundaries of each section to more closely meet the standard.

Under the existing school board apportionment scheme for the Bering Strait REAA, the overall deviation is 19.58 percent. Accordingly, to more closely meet the equal representation standard, the options identified below (*see attached map*) are being put forth for discussion and public comment. One of these options, or an option identified through the public comment process, may be recommended to the Commissioner for adoption as a replacement for the existing apportionment scheme.

The Bering Strait REAA has five sections containing a total of eleven school board seats. Section I has one seat that includes the City of Shishmaref. Section II has two seats and includes the Cities of Brevig Mission, Teller, Wales, and White Mountain, the community of Port Clarence, and the areas east and west of Nome. Section III has two seats and includes the Cities of Elim, Golovin, Koyuk, and Shaktoolik. Section IV has three seats and includes the Cities of Saint Michael, Stebbins, and Unalakleet. Section V has three seats and contains the Cities of Diomedes, Gambell, and Savoonga.

- Option B moves Unalakleet into Section III, assigns three seats to Section III and two seats to Section IV, and has an overall deviation of 18.14%.
- Option C moves Golovin into Section II, Unalakleet into Section III, and Wales into Section V. Three seats are assigned to Section III and two

seats are assigned to Section IV. Option III has an overall deviation of 14.04%.

Based on the REAA's demographic, socio-economic, linguistic, transportation, cultural, and communication considerations, the recommendation for the Bering Strait REAA is to implement Option C.

More information on the REAA recasting can be found at <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/>

If you are interested in the apportionment of the Bering Strait REAA school board, you are invited to submit comments. You may do so verbally or in writing.

Verbal comments may be submitted by calling 907-465-5541 on October 11-15, 2021, between the hours of 10:00 am and noon, or by voicemail at that number.

Written comments should be emailed to reaa.recast.2020@alaska.gov or mailed to:

Attn: REAA Recasting
Robert Pearson
Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development
PO Box 110809
Juneau AK 99811-0809

A public hearing on all recommendations will be held on Oct. 14, 2021 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm by electronic means. The public hearing can be accessed by going to:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83069788829?pwd=NOVRTXE5Y2l4cVBCem9oTjRpM DA3Zz09>

Written comments must be received by October 15, 2021. Notice can be viewed on the State of Alaska web site at

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/News.aspx>