

Invitation for Public Comment

Southeast Island

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 Southeast Island REAA, the overall deviation is 75.48 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.

Under the existing school board apportionment scheme, excepting the portions affected by the creation of the Petersburg Borough, which has absorbed the City of Kupreanof and portions of Mitkof Island, the Southeast Island REAA has two sections containing a total of five school board seats. Section I has one seat and includes the City of Thorne Bay. Section II has four seats and includes the Cities of Coffman Cove, Kasaan, Port Alexander, and Whale Pass and the communities of Edna Bay, Hollis, Hyder, Naukati, Point Baker, and Port Protection. The existing school board apportionment scheme has an overall deviation of 75.48%, which has been greatly exacerbated by the creation of the Petersburg Borough.

- Option B moves the City of Kasaan and the communities of Hollis and Hyder into Section I. In Option B, Section I would have three seats and

Section II would have two seats. Option B has an overall deviation of 13.17%.

- Option C would move the community of Hyder into Section I. In Option C, Section I would have two seats and Section II would have three seats. Option B has an overall deviation of 13.45%

Based on the REAA's demographic, socio-economic, linguistic, transportation, cultural, and communication considerations, the recommendation for the Southeast Island 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 Southeast Island 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=NOVRTXE5Y2l4cVBCem9oTjRpMDA3Zz09>

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>