

Port Townsend School District voters approve reapportionment

By Jeannie McMacken

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PORT TOWNSEND — Voters in the Port Townsend School District overwhelmingly approved the reapportionment of the current five districts into three, with two at-large positions.

The tally after the initial count Tuesday and a second count of ballots Wednesday was 7,381 votes, or 83.99 percent, in favor of the redistricting measure.

Opposition votes numbered 1,407, or 16.01 percent.

The proposition needed a simple majority to pass.

“We were really pleased with the support,” said Superintendent John Polm.

“We worked very hard to get the message out throughout the community in a non-partisan manner.

“This redistricting opens up the opportunity for more people to become involved on the School Board.”

Polm said the next steps are to work with a firm that will take Port Townsend’s census data and draw district boundary lines that will be equal, taking into account neighborhood situations.

“The current districts are drawn with approximately 2,500 residents per district,” he said. “Under the new three district plan, there will be about 4,000 per area.

“The two at-large positions will be filled by anyone in the the entire district. Currently there are approximately 13,000 residents in Port Townsend.”

He noted a small bit of opposition came from those who had concerns about representation in the more rural areas.

“The areas from Kala Point to Discovery Bay and the Hastings area to almost Cape George are the largest geographically right now,” Polm said. “This new redistricting will pick up the population closer to town and merge it into these areas.”

Polm said the at-large positions will be voted on every election and he believes that these seats will increase more access and generate more interest in serving.

“These are four-year terms, and all five positions will be voted on by all voters beginning with the 2019 election,” he said.

Polm said a public hearing will be held before the March board meeting to present the plan and gather community comment.

Once there is a consensus, the district will submit to plan to the county auditor and file for the new process.

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