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Sparta

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school board winners have spoken publicly against the "micro-management" by the board that is causing the friction with Morton — and a new five-member voting bloc ostensibly will now replace the majority of six that has opposed Morton and even censured him over the last year.

"We're thrilled," Dericks said. "We're excited to start moving ahead."

Sullivan said he wishes the candidates luck.

"Obviously, the people spoke," he said.

Frauenpreis said the results were "expected," and he was already "over it" the night of the election.

"At least we got the incumbents out," he said.

In the highly contested race, voters were reluctant to take part in exit polls, saying that it was a "small town." But several spoke anonymously. One woman who has lived in Sparta for only a year said she voted against the incumbents because of the stories she'd

read in newspapers, and because she wanted the "fighting to end." "I tried to vote for ones I haven't seen in the paper fighting," she said. "They need to get a life. They're worse than kindergarten."

Another woman who requested to remain anonymous and whose children have graduated from Sparta schools said she voted against the incumbents because of the recent controversy.

"I think it's just disgusting what's been going on with the school board," she said. "It must be awful for the children."

Thompson said he hopes the public fights and headlines about the board are over.

"Hopefully this will end the hostility, and we can get back to putting the students first," he said. "I think the credit needs to go to the people in Sparta. I think they were ready to see change."

But Morton might be even happier with the April 15 results.

"It's obvious to me the town is tired of the acrimony," he said. "I look forward to working with the new board."

"A new year begins today," he added.

Fredon

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approval for this referendum, especially given that fact that two referendums in recent years, which would have added to the school, were voted down.

The first, a \$7.7 million request, was voted down in early 2005 and nine months later, two questions giving voters options were also rejected.

"We're very pleased, very happy for the students and township," Constantino said on behalf of the school board. "This meets the district's needs now and for

the foreseeable future."

With voter approval, a complete set of renderings can now be done. Once they are approved by the state, the project can be put out for bids and actual work could begin in February or March.

The project will add four new classrooms in a wing on the southeast corner of the existing building, renovate several classrooms, create a new music room, expand the computer and science labs, and update the boiler/heating system and electric service.

Construction is expected to take about 13 months and, Constantino said, "will make this a great place to go to school and a great place to work."

County sees major upsets

By HERALD STAFF

Tuesday's school board elections had huge upsets and sweeps in districts facing social turmoil, and photo finishes in some of the quieter races, according to unofficial results.

Grassroots efforts led to historic change in Hardyston, where Board President Marbeth Boffa was recalled — only the second successful school board recall in state history. Boffa's opponent, Anita Collins, got almost 80 percent of the vote to fill her seat. Meanwhile, the district's other incumbent held his spot.

There was change in Sparta, where two incumbents were voted out in favor of a vocal opposition group's three-person slate, which they say will help ease tensions between the board and administrators.

In Wantage, a perennial for school board clashes, there were 930 write-in votes. The three listed candidates received 766, 366 and 342 votes respectively.

Elections came down to less than a handful of votes in other districts.

Newton, which has residents upset over the lack of a contract for teachers, had no incumbents running for three seats. The fourth-place finisher in the five-candidate race missed his spot on the board by four votes.

A Byram school board candidate lost by a single vote. Virginia Breen Bonker defeated Giselda Mintz, 467-466.

In Frankford, Raymond Castellani III and Christopher DeLima tied with 286 votes, earning them two of the three open seats.

Hopatcong had one incumbent, Clifford Lundin, lose by only two votes while the other two incumbents handily won. The budget was voted down by more than 130.

Stanhope was the only other district to have a budget fail, while a second budget question passed in Hardyston, and a \$5 million construction project referendum in Fredon also passed.

Roberts seeking income tax credit

By TOM HESTER Jr. Associated Press Writer

TRENTON — A top legislator on Tuesday called for replacing property tax rebate checks with a new state income tax credit to help most homeowners with the nation's highest property taxes.

Assembly Speaker Joseph Roberts Jr. described mailing checks as "a prime example of inefficiency and gimmickry in state government."

The checks are meant to help homeowners with property taxes averaging \$6,800 per homeowner, or twice the national average.

"Essential property tax relief needs to be provided in a more efficient way," said Roberts, D-Camden.

"Allowing taxpayers to apply for their property tax rebate through their income tax forms makes common sense."

Roberts said the move would require a one-time delay in delivering relief as the state moves from sending checks in the fall to giving tax credits in the spring.

The change was also separately proposed Tuesday by Assemblywoman Marcia Karrow,

who like Roberts said the move could save money on paper, check printing and postage.

Treasurer David Rousseau estimated it costs about \$12 million to process and send checks. The state sent about 2 million checks last year.

"Let's give it to them right on their taxes and save some sort of money," said Karrow, R-Hunterdon.

But Rousseau said the state would still have to spend money to process the tax credits.

Corzine spokeswoman Lilo Stainton said the governor will "take a serious look at the proposal."

"But there's no reason to believe it would provide any serious savings," Stainton said.

Roberts said he would introduce legislation next month that would either increase a homeowners' income tax refund or cut their income tax liability by the appropriate amount of property tax relief.

Taxpayers not required to file income tax returns would file a form claiming the property tax credit.

Results, district by district

Table with columns for District Name, Candidate Name, Votes, and Percent. Includes districts like ANDOVER REGIONAL, LAFAYETTE, BYRAM, FRANKFORD REGIONAL, FRANKLIN, FREDON, GREEN, HAMBURG, HAMPTON, HARDYSTON, HIGH POINT REGIONAL, HOPATCONG, KITTATINNY REGIONAL, MONTAGUE, NEWTON, OGDENSBURG, SANDYSTON-WALPACK, SPARTA, STANHOPE, STILLWATER, SUSSEX-WANTAGE, VERNON, WALLKILL VALLEY REGIONAL, and MORRIS COUNTY NETCONG BOROUGH.

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Hardyston Continued from Page A1. renew that same contract. Parents alleged the decision was personal and political, and it ultimately led to the effort to recall Boffa, whose term would have expired in 2009. Collins will fill the remainder of the term. Some of those who voted to recall Boffa Tuesday said they did so because they felt she did not satisfactorily answer questions about why Dominic Festante was fired. "It's time for Boffa to go," said John Moriarty. "I never got a great explanation about why Festante was let go." Another voter said, "If you're in public office, you need to answer questions and she didn't." Boffa will have to relinquish her seat as soon as the results are certified. Boffa declined to comment Tuesday evening.



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