

Exit Poll Highlights: December 16, 2008

The exit surveys were distributed by high school social studies students. They were tabulated by sophomores Kristen Faubion, Olivia Pattee, Marlene Beaton, Katlyn Brown, Julia Tine, Penelope Languell, Avery Francois, Nora Houlihan and Cathy Kennedy. Robert Hanlon compiled the comments and analysis.

- ▶ **454 community members completed surveys during the building project vote with 55.7 percent of them against the project and 44.3 percent in favor.** Among the actual 2,320 voters, the final tally was 65 percent against and 35 percent in favor.

A total of 19.6 percent of those who voted also completed an exit survey.

- ▶ **Overall, 80.6% of “yes” voters and 65.1% of “no” voters said they had children.**
- ▶ As with the budget votes, the largest number of “no” votes (43%) and “yes” votes (31.3%) came from the 45-60 age group.
- ▶ Among those over age 61, 21.9% supported the proposal while 29.5% opposed it.
- ▶ **Among the key reasons for opposing the project, 72.3% cited the economy and 68.7 percent cited the artificial turf field.** Reading through the comments, one would see that three themes emerged from the “no” voters:
 - *Bad timing with the economy and state deficit*
 - *Artificial turf field/athletic improvements*
 - *Project should have been separated into propositions*

- ▶ **Maintenance repairs and roof work** were mentioned by several people in comments. Among “yes” voters, 64.7% said they supported them while just 7.9% of “no” voters opposed them. In the comments, several people said maintenance should be done annually and not in a project.
- ▶ **Solar panels were not as popular as one would think with the advent of “green energy.”** Among “yes” voters, 56.7% mentioned them as a reason to support the project while 18.1% of “no” voters cited the solar panels as a reason to oppose the plan.
- ▶ Among sources of information about the project, the *Tartan Report* / school newsletters were the major source for 74.6% of “yes” voters while 65.6% of “no” voters cited newspapers as their most popular source of information. This would likely be a reference to the letters to the editor.
- ▶ Many community members failed to indicate the school where their children attended.

Among those “yes” voters who did indicate a school (124 were marked): 31.4% were high school parents, 29.8% were middle school parents, 14.5% were Glendal parents, 12.1% were Glen-Worden parents, 9.6% were Sacandaga parents and 2.4% were Lincoln parents.

Among those “no” voters who did indicate a school (86 were marked): 43.0% were high school parents, 26.7% were middle school parents, 15% were Glendal parents, 5.8% were Glen-Worden parents, 7.0% were Sacandaga parents and 2.3% were Lincoln parents.

The higher percentage of middle and high school parents may indicate that the bulk of the project was aimed at those two buildings. However, this result also mirrors support and opposition at the annual budget votes.

- ▶ **Turnout at 2,320 was less than the May 2008 budget vote (2,045) and May 2007 budget vote (2,091) but less than the May 2006 budget vote (2,707).**

“YES” voters on the 26.76 million building project*Overview*

- 211 “yes” and 253 “no” voters completed the poll.
That is a ratio of yes-no of 44.3% to 55.7%.

ACTUAL December 16, 2008 vote: yes-no – 811 to 1,509 (35.0% to 65.0%).

Among 211 “yes” voters:

- 99.0% live in Scotia or Glenville; 1% live in Amsterdam; 0% live in Charlton
- 80.6% have children; 19.4% do not have children.
- **Among age groups:** (*Some didn't answer*)
 - 12.9% were ages 18-29
 - 26.4% were ages 30-44
 - 31.3% were ages 45-60
 - 21.9% were ages 61+
- **WHY did you vote as you did on the proposed renovations?**
(*Totals exceed 100% because of multiple answers.*)

I voted YES because of the (*in rank order by percentage supporting*):

MS and HS library media center upgrades - 76.6%

Despite the difficult economic times, I believe the project was prudent and necessary. - 73.6%

Middle school science lab/classroom renovations - 71.1%

High school classroom upgrades - 70.6%

Artificial turf on the current football field - 68.1%

Maintenance, roof work at the elementary schools - 64.7%

Solar energy panels at Sacandaga - 56.7%

- **WHAT were your MAJOR sources of information about the renovation project?**
(*Totals exceed 100% because of multiple answers.*)
 - 74.6% cited district newsletters / *Tartan Report*
 - 17.4% cited the ScotiaGlenvilleSchools.org web site
 - 45.3% cited newspapers - *Daily Gazette, Spotlight* or *Times Union*
 - 22.3% cited friends / neighbors
 - 20.4% cited school staff members
 - 9.4% cited public presentations

“No” voters on the 26.76 million building project

Overview

- 211 “yes” and 253 “no” voters completed the poll. That is a ratio of yes-no of 44.3% to 55.7%.

ACTUAL December 16, 2008 vote: yes-no – 811 to 1,509 (35.0% to 65.0%).

Among 253 “no” voters:

- 99.5% live in Scotia or Glenville; 0% live in Amsterdam; 0.5% live in Charlton
- 65.1% have children; 34.8% do not have children.
- Among age groups:
 - 6.3% were ages 18-29
 - 21.1% were ages 30-44
 - 43.0% were ages 45-60
 - 29.5% were ages 61+
- WHY did you vote as you did on the proposed renovations?
(Totals exceed 100% because of multiple answers.)

I voted NO because of the (in rank order by percentage opposing):

With the difficult economic times, I believe the project was unnecessary. - 72.3%

Artificial turf on the current football field - 68.7%

Solar energy panels at Sacandaga - 18.1%

MS and HS library media center upgrades - 17.4%

High school classroom upgrades - 14.6%

Middle school science lab/classroom renovations - 13.4%

Maintenance, roof work at the elementary schools - 7.9%

- WHAT were your MAJOR sources of information about the renovation project?
(Totals exceed 100% because of multiple answers.)
 - 60.1% cited district newsletters / Tartan Report
 - 17.0% cited the ScotiaGlenvilleSchools.org web site
 - 65.6% cited newspapers - Daily Gazette, Spotlight or Times Union
 - 24.5% cited friends / neighbors
 - 7.1% cited school staff members
 - 19.4% cited public presentations

Comments from December 16, 2008 building project Exit Poll:

Yes voters wrote...

- If this project is voted down by the community, please reschedule a vote next year. Hopefully, the economy will improve.
- Please have a clerk of the works on this project!
- We need to keep our school district in good condition/good education in order to attract homeowners and build a strong community. Keeping our properties well-maintained will ensure a strong, educated populace and save us \$ in the future.
- I voted yes "to not lose government funds."
- My major source of information was "email from Bob Hanlon."
- I voted yes because the "Football and track field and stadium are a disgrace!"
- Hope the students who will benefit appreciate and show their support. Was appalled at the show of support the athletic department/teams receive.
- My major source of information was "information mostly from Pop Warner Football board."
- We feel the BOE spends a very long time and much effort coming to the decision of what to put forth for vote. We trust their decision was reached wisely. Timing is everything – perhaps a list to vote on separate items?
- I voted yes because "grandchildren are in school."
- We need to keep updated and should have made improvements when the state offered funding before. Whenever the state offers assistance, TAKE IT. Probably this time, the state money won't come thru. Last time when you decided we did not need to take advantage of it, BAD MISTAKE. Our library and locker rooms were already deplorable then.
- No pool included?
- I voted yes because of the "New track!!!"
- Education is what makes our future better.
- I voted yes because of the "Track repair."
- The costs to the taxpayers is affordable.
- My major source of information about the project was "wife."
- I voted yes because of "support of education."
- I voted yes because "it was needed and affordable."
- These needs do not go away. They have to be addressed.
- I questioned the moving of the Sac playground. That was my only concern.
- Under major sources of information, this person wrote "PTA meeting."
- I voted yes because I'm hoping these renovations will ensure future work won't be as extensive. No more than modest maintenance projects. I believe things of this sort are necessary to promote quality of life for the students but the taxpayers, as I'm sure, aren't all billionaires.
- I'm not thrilled that educational/academic projects and athletic projects were both involved in this project, but the majority of the items outweighed those I was reticent to endorse (athletic field rehab).

Yes voters wrote...

- The proposal was supposed to be for deferred maintenance projects. It has turned into renovations for library space. The proposal seemed to morph into special interests instead of what we need. Main/repairs/track and shop classroom upgrades. If defeated, please try again.
 - Property values are impacted by quality schools.
 - I believe in the: upgrades to libraries, classroom renovations, solar panels and turf field should be separated on the revote, I suggest this. Also, the artificial turf does cause more knee/ankle injuries - especially to girls.
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No voters wrote...

- My major sources of information were “two pictures at school functions. You didn’t really sell this at all.
- Are you kidding me? As usual, nothing in Scotia is advertised at all. We need a new football field like we need astroturf roofs. Please use your heads - this is the first time I voted and I’ve had years and years of opportunity.
- Limited income seniors can’t afford it - I know some!
- Time to stop spending across NYS and locally.
- I voted no because it was “too much at this time.”

This person also said information was not sufficient.

- Teachers should also take a cut in pay like the rest of us. They are not special.
- I voted no because there was “too much in project.”
- Stop spending money and start being fiscally prudent.
- Seek more cooperative ventures with other school districts and organizations.
- Should have separated our artificial turf as a separate item.
- Why are you having a vote in December? Should have been at same time as May budget vote.
- Stop indulging students and teachers. I graduated from S-G 30+ years ago with very modest resources, students and teachers today are spoiled.
- I voted no because the district is “holding a vote when seniors are away for the winter.”
- Stop spending.
- Taxes are too high already.
- The kids can not do their math or their reading - Do This First.
- It’s the economy stupid!
- No!!! Next time.
- Too much \$
- Funding from the government too uncertain. Grants for bleachers etc. unlikely.

No voters wrote...continued

- The whole school board should be fired for even proposing this spending. What are you people thinking? Guess you aren't!
- Are you out of your mind? We are in a recession, folks!
- You do not even know how much you will get in state aid due to current budget crisis. You must be out of your minds using a reserve fund (savings acct) to help fund this proposal. Get real!
- With the difficult economic circumstances, I'm more concerned that our state is already heavily in debt and therefore less apt to come through with promised funds than I am about taxes being raised.
- It's absurd to propose such a plan in an economic crisis and irresponsible to ask for irrelevant "areas of need." Artificial turf and more seating?? Do the added seats come with heads?
- Parts of this should have been staggered (*writer drew a line to 'roof work'*).
- Totally unnecessary and frivolous.
- The economy!
- This school system is crazy how they spend!
- Need to have many separate propositions. Not just one yes or no.
- Taxes.
- The new labs/sciences would only be pushed for AP students, not the average pupil.
- This district has catered to jocks and athletics long enough. Start pushing more academics.
- Poorly timed.
- In these difficult economic times, it is astounding that such a proposition would be put forth. This is a poor proposal at a poor time for it. I can only think you people have lost your minds.
- I voted no because of "unknown state aid."
- This will promote higher taxes. I can't afford more tax increases. Money is tight.
- Funding money 'from the state' is still taxpayers' monies! This bloated, ill-timed project should never have been brought to a vote! I have voted yes on every operating budget for 30+ years; this is only my second "no" vote. The other was the facilities boondoggle of 1999 (?) - \$27.3 m!
- Didn't we just have a major renovation just a couple of years ago?
- As a parent with limited resources, I can not always provide the best for my children. A school district should also understand this. There are limited funds and these funds should be used to maintain and not just to expand and definitely not to provide the best - artificial turf, etc.
- No more taxes. Figures don't lie; liars do figure.
- I voted no because of the "possibility that we will not get state aid as promised."
- We see what happens to a country run by a bunch of egotistical "AHs" and I feel this district is being run by the same kind of "AHs." Get off your band wagons and start running things in a smart way. But most of you are too presumptuous to see you're stupid.
- The school board should be impeached!
- The school could use a new track - but artificial turf for the football field is silly. This isn't Division I college football, turf is not good on the kids' legs, etc.
- Artificial turf is dangerous for the knees of females, dangerous for female knees!

No voters wrote...continued

- My concern is that the elementary students' needs are considered secondary in this matter: the Sacandaga playground.
- Why not a dome?
- Put it back up with separate votes on each item. Roofs - yes; astro turf - no way; fix track - OK.
- Project was too costly.
- It appears you tried to get a positive vote before we know how the state will handle the huge budget deficit. Try again in May.
- I voted not because of the "difficult times. Project is necessary, but will have to wait."
- School budget too high.
- Spending is out of control.
- We can't afford to live here! NO tax increases!
- Personal opinion.
- Turf was unnecessary.
- No tax increase.
- No more taxes!
- Taxes are too high!
- Irresponsible!
- Poor school performance.
- Keep things simple.
- Taxes are going up due to cuts in aid - \$270 more is too much.
- This voters drew an arrow to the artificial turf reference and wrote "I would have vote yes for the rest."
- Artificial turf my ass!!!
- Athletic costs not separate in budget figures.
- Athletic facilities not a priority. Should have been separated out. Come to the voters with a clean academic proposal. There is no excuse for having one omnibus package. This is my first "no" vote in 20 years.
- It is crazy to upgrade the athletic field when the economy is in such poor shape. You obviously do not "get it."
- Totally irresponsible.
- I think it was wrong to put the artificial turf project on this ballot!
- I feel there is absolutely no forethought about this project, especially in light of the troubled economy. Even though the tax impact appears small, any tax increase is unacceptable, especially to those on fixed incomes - me. I believe people pushing this project have their heads in the sand if they think the money will be coming from the state.
- I am distressed that we are bonding so much maintenance work that should be done annually with support from the annual budget. The budgets now are almost entirely central expenses that leave almost no financial flexibility.

No voters wrote...continued

- We are not made of money. This was a poor time to bring this proposal up. The economy is terrible and people are losing homes and jobs. I believe the board of ed has lost touch with the economy of the state. Be more realistic with your plans. Solar energy was good. Budget school maintenance annually - 1 school at a time. Our taxes are high enough.
- We haven't finished paying for the last big project. We need more responsible debt paying policies. Pay off one bill before incurring another! Just like home.
- I would like to have voted yes but I don't know how this area can afford it at this time. As the taxpayers IRAs and 401Ks tank with the stock market, we still need to support the teachers' retirements too. In fact, as those funds also go down, we need to support their retirements too. Maybe the teacher's union needs to give a little back to the community which supports it.
- Not needed. Let these high paid teachers pay for it.
- I would have voted in favor if the athletic field renovations had been separated.
- I think the school district is crazy looking for this kind of money during an economic crisis that has not even had a complete impact on taxpayers yet. With the worst yet to come beware...
- Too expensive.
- Would have voted for classroom upgrades, but with the state budget cuts, This vote should have been after the budget - so we as voters know the true amount of the tax increases.
- If you had broken up the budget, with the computer and lab equipment, I would have voted yes and so would a lot of people I talked to.
- I voted "no" for several reasons, primarily is the unmitigated gall of the pompous, self-important members of the board who actually think the state is going to come up with the funds - when the state can't even keep themselves solvent! What chutzpah!!!
- Taxes too high.
- Students can access library needs on the internet nowadays. We can't afford what we pay now.
- District could find other costs to pay.
- I find it ridiculous to attack all these projects at the same time. I can't afford a package of cheese. Spending this amount is foolish and greedy!
- Can't afford the high taxes.
- I voted no because of the "track expansion."
- Turf is not good for kids.
- Maintenance should be done regularly a little at a time.
- Should have been listed separately and prioritized, not rolled into one proposal.
- You spend too much money.
- We should have been able to vote separately.
- Taxes are too high!
- Common sense!