

Exit Poll Highlights: May 20, 2008

The exit surveys were distributed by high school social studies students. They were tabulated by sophomores Amanda Smith, Britta Kilbourn, Michelle Schlomberg and Anthony Phillips. Robert Hanlon compiled the comments and analysis.

- ▶ **The number of people who completed polls increased this year after several years of decline:** 425 this year compared with 342 in 2007, versus 461 in 2006, 467 in 2005, 421 in 2004, 613 in 2003, 699 in 2002 and 740 in 2001. That means that 20.8% of those who voted completed a survey, compared with 16.3% last year. Voter turnout dropped by 2.2%, from 2,091 in 2008 to 2,045 in 2007. There has been a steady decline in voter turnout over the past few years. This year's voter turnout was the lowest since 1991, when 1,836 residents voted. This trend has been reflected at all area school districts in recent years.
- ▶ **Parents with school-age children:** 28.4% of "yes" voters were parents with school-age children, a decrease from last year's 40% but still below 2001's 62%. The percentage of "no" voters with school-age children was 23.1%, a drop from last year's 33.3%.

Overall, 55.8% of "yes" voters and 42.8% of "no" voters said they were parents with children from ages pre-school to older than high school.

- ▶ **Parents with "pre-school age" children:** The results show that 15.8% of parents with "pre-school age" children supported the budget, up from last year's 11.0%. The number of "no" parents with "pre-school age" children was 15.4%, up from last year's 12.5%.
- ▶ **Among age groups, a large number of voters identified themselves as being 30-44 and 45-60.** Among yes voters, 28.2% of those completing the exit poll were in the 30-44 age group and 33.6% were in the 45-60 age group. Among no voters, 33.7% were in the 30-44 age group and 25.3% were in the 45-60 age group. Among the 18-29 age group, 12.5% were "yes" voters while 8.4% were "no" voters.
- ▶ **Voters over age 61:** 25.6% of "yes" voters were over age 61, an increase from last year's 22.2%, while 32.6% of "no" voters were in that age group, up from last year's 28.9%.
- ▶ **School identifications:** the highest percentage of "yes" voters had children at the high school, middle school, Glendaal and Glen-Worden, in that order. Among "no" voters, the highest percentages came from the middle school, high school, Glendaal and Sacandaga, in that order.
- ▶ **Under "WHY did you vote as you did...":**
 - Large percentages of "yes" voters, 76.2% and 73.5%, voted as they did, respectively, because "I believe in supporting the schools" and "Despite the difficult economic times, I believe in supporting the schools." The last category was new and reflected SG's acknowledgement of the poor economy.
 - 38.4% of "yes" voters said they have "confidence/trust in the Board of Education" while 31.9% of "no" voters said they had "little confidence/trust" in the BOE. That is about the same percentages as last year.
 - 53.6% of "no" voters cited an "unreasonably high" property tax increase as a reason for voting against the budget; last year, 57.9% cited that reason. As well, 70.1% said they voted against the budget because "economic times are difficult." This, again, was a new category this year.
- ▶ **Under "What were your MAJOR SOURCES of information...":**
 - The *Tartan Report* was listed as the major source of information for most voters: 69.8% of "yes" voters and 49.4% of "no" voters. The next most influential sources of information for "yes" voters were the *Daily Gazette* (34.1%) and *Spotlight* (24.1%) while the next most influential sources of information for "no" voters was the *Daily Gazette* (38.1%) and School Newsletters/School Staff members (26.8%).
 - 19.8% of "yes" voters and 13.4% of "no" voters cited ScotiaGlenvilleSchools.org. These represent an increased use of the web site from last year, when the figures were 13.4% and 9.2%, respectively.
 - A significant source of information for "yes" voters (18.6%) and "no" voters (26.8%) was "school newsletters/staff members" followed by "friends/neighbors" (9.7% of "yes" voters and 18.5% of "no" voters.)
 - **2.1% of "yes" voters and 13.4% of "no" voters said they "didn't feel well informed."**

Exit Poll analysis: May 20, 2008

“YES” voters on the 2008-09 Budget

Overview (figure in parenthesis and underlined is last year’s exit poll results)

- 328 (266) “yes” voters completed the poll and 97 (76) “no” voters completed the poll. That is a ratio of yes-no of 77.2% (76.8%) to 22.8% (23.2%).

ACTUAL May 20, 2008 vote: 1,160 to 885 (56.7% to 43.3%) (2007 budget vote: 1,282-809 – 61% to 39%).

Among 328 (266) “yes” voters:

- 98.2% live in Scotia or Glenville; 1.5% live in Amsterdam; 0.3% live in Charlton
- 78.6% (82.3%) have children; 19.8% (17.6%) do not have children. (Some didn’t answer.)
- Of those with children (duplicate answers, some have children at different levels, some didn’t answer):
 - 15.8% (11.0%) have pre-school age children;
 - 28.4% (40.0%) have school-age children;
 - 55.7% (39.5%) have children older than high school
- Which school do your “school-age” children attend? (Some had multiple answers.)
 - Glendaal: 13.1% (19.0%)
 - Glen-Worden: 10.1% (17.8%)
 - Lincoln: 8.5% (12.0%)
 - Sacandaga: 7.5% (23.8%)
 - Middle School: 28.3% (33.3%)
 - High School: 32.1% (50.0%)
- Among age groups: (Some didn’t answer)
 - 12.5% (8.2%) were ages 18-29
 - 33.6% (33.5%) were ages 45-60
 - 28.2% (27.1%) were ages 30-44
 - 25.6% (22.2%) were ages 61+
- WHY did you vote as you did on the proposed 2008-09 budget?
(Totals exceed 100% because of multiple answers.)
 - 76.2% (68.8%) voted “yes” because “the quality of S-G schools are worth the cost.”
 - 38.4% (41.7%) voted “yes” because “I have confidence / trust in the Board of Education.”
 - 39.3% (47.4%) voted “yes” because “The proposed property tax increase is reasonable.”
 - 73.5% (75.6 - slightly different question) voted “yes” because “Despite difficult economic times, I believe in supporting the schools.”
- WHAT were your MAJOR sources of information about the budget?
(Totals exceed 100% because of multiple answers.)
 - 69.8% (70.9%) cited district newsletters / Tartan Report
 - 19.8% (13.9%) cited the ScotiaGlenvilleSchools.org website
 - 24.1% (26.3%) cited the Scotia-Glenville Spotlight
 - 34.1% (41.3%) cited the Daily Gazette
 - 3.9% (1.1%) cited the Times Union
 - 9.7% (10.5%) cited friends / neighbors
 - 18.6% (22.2%) cited school newsletters / school staff members
 - 3.6% (6.4%) cited public / PTA budget presentations
 - 2.1% (2.2%) said they didn’t feel well informed about the budget

“NO” voters on the 2008-09 Budget

Overview (figure in parenthesis and underlined is last year’s exit poll results)

- 328 (266) “yes” voters completed the poll and 97 (76) “no” voters completed the poll. That is a ratio of yes-no of 77.2% (76.8%) to 22.8% (23.2%).

ACTUAL May 20, 2008 vote: 1,160 to 885 (56.7% to 43.3%) (2007 budget vote: 1,282-809 – 61% to 39%).

Among 97 (76) “no” voters:

- 100% live in Scotia or Glenville; 0% live in Amsterdam; 0% live in Charlton
- 71.0% (69.6%) have children; 29.0% (30.4%) do not have children
- Of those with children (*duplicate answers, some have children at different levels, some didn’t answer*):
 - 15.4% (12.5%) have pre-school age children;
 - 23.1% (33.3%) have school-age children;
 - 61.5% (45.8%) have children older than high school
- Which school do your “school-age” children attend? (*Some had multiple answers*)
 - Glendaal: 11.6% (8.3%)
 - Glen-Worden: 9.3% (10.4%)
 - Lincoln: 4.3% (8.3%)
 - Sacandaga: 10.8% (4.2%)
 - Middle School: 32.6% (22.9%)
 - High School: 26.1% (12.5%)
- Among age groups: (*Some didn’t answer*)
 - 8.4% (2.6%) were ages 18-29;
 - 33.7% (23.7%) were ages 30-44;
 - 25.3% (38.1%) were ages 45-60;
 - 32.6% (28.9%) were ages 61+
- WHY did you vote as you did on the proposed 2008-09 budget?
(*Totals exceed 100% because of multiple answers.*)
 - 39.2% (53.9%) voted “no” because “I am unhappy with the quality / cost of the schools.”
 - 31.9% (38.1%) voted “no” because “I have little confidence / trust in the Board of Education.”
 - 53.6% (57.9%) voted “no” because “The proposed property tax increase is unreasonably high.”
 - 70.1% (Not asked) voted “no” because “Economic times are difficult.”
- WHAT were your MAJOR sources of information about the budget?
(*Totals exceed 100% because of multiple answers.*)
 - 49.4% (50.0%) cited district newsletters / Tartan Report
 - 13.4% (9.2%) cited the ScotiaGlenvilleSchools.org website
 - 21.6% (19.7%) cited the Scotia-Glenville Spotlight
 - 38.1% (35.5%) cited the Daily Gazette
 - 6.1% (3.9) cited the Times Union
 - 18.5% (22.4%) cited friends / neighbors
 - 26.8% (25.0%) cited school newsletters / school staff members
 - 2.1% (6.6%) cited public / PTA budget presentations
 - 13.4% (9.2%) said they didn’t feel well informed about the budget

Comments from May 20, 2008 School Budget Vote Exit Poll:

Yes voters wrote...

- Good schools make good neighborhoods.
- I trust the superintendent, Susan Swartz.
- Hopefully, this will get a boys' swim team.
- I am a student, so it's kind of important.
- Retired SG teacher!
- Great teachers
- Home values increase in a good school district.
- Family works for the district and I wanted them to be paid.
- Please improve our athletic facilities. We are so behind other districts. It's a disservice to our students.
- I'm a teacher too!
- A detailed info sheet listing the particulars of the proposed issues to read as a review before balloting (voting) would be helpful.
- Given the economic climate, I appreciate the Board of Education and teachers' commitment to a quality, well-rounded education. My kids love art, PE, library and music, in addition to their core classes. We hope that more recess time won't be taken from all children for PE. They need to play too!
- I'm a teacher.
- Sign on road - did not see any other info.
- Keeps my property values up by keeping schools up.
- Too many tax increases.
- Word of mouth.
- It's a responsibility.
- OPAL program - only reason. *(this voter supported the budget but not the bus proposal)*
- I hate writing blank checks to schools boards but I do it for the kids. *(this voter supported the budget but not the bus proposal)*
- Not needed *(this voter supported the budget but not the bus proposal)*.
- We need more field trips! Also, the junior high looks exactly the same - carpets/lockers, etc. (except for the new wing). I need to see something more for the increase in taxes all the time! My child is in 7th grade and has been on 1 field trip - UNACCEPTABLE! How about some hands-on learning - not just sit and read, sit-sit-sit! Please consider these things I know several hundreds of people that feel the same way! *(this voter supported the budget but not the bus proposal)*

No voters wrote...

- We pay \$6,500/year in school taxes (\$10,600 combined). We can't pay any more.
- Favorable votes in the past did not come to fruition.
- Was unhappy with how a teacher performed himself.
- I object to board candidates being related to school employees. I think the superintendent is overpaid.
- Let children walk (*in reference to a No vote on the bus proposal*).
- Senior cannot afford these increases.
- I pay over \$6,000/year in school taxes, which is about twice as much as Saratoga County.
- Board candidates should not be related to school employee; it is a conflict of interest even if it not (yet) illegal.
- You need to find another way to pay for teacher retirements and benefits.
- Too many buses already (*in reference to a No vote on the bus proposal*).
- The education system is broken.

You people have no shame. We have one of the worst educational systems in the free world.

I have worked hard all my life, and I would like to enjoy some of the time I have left!! But if you keep taxing the people to death, (I) (we) cannot enjoy even a warm house in the winter!

If we could send our children out of the country, like we have with our manufacturing jobs, I am sure a lot of not most of our parents would jump at the chance. So stop being so needy. You have tenure (a job for life, which I don't agree with, because most of the teachers don't deserve it.)

I am a union man and believe in unions, but yours is WAY out of line and should be BROKEN.

A very unhappy tax payer.

- Fix the old buses (*in reference to a No vote on the bus proposal*).
- (*They voted No because of the*) justification for special education staff increasing.
- Get real!
- Taxes are too high!
- (*They voted No because of*) Myshortpencil.com. This school district spends WAY too much money. Instead of trying to bring programs in-house, they should be pursuing more cooperative arrangements with other school districts and BOCES.
- I already pay a lot of taxes compared to income.
- Teachers need to contribute more to cover their health care costs -- just like the rest of the working world unions.
- Disagree with spending needs to be revised - better transportation for kids is necessary. (*This person voted against the budget but in favor of the bus proposal.*)
- PIG teacher made me (*This person voted against the budget but in favor of the bus proposal.*)
- Wages too high.

No voters wrote...continued

BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Comments that include references to individuals would be omitted from distribution to the public, if so requested.