

## Exit Poll Highlights: May 18, 2010

*The exit surveys were distributed by high school social studies students. They were tabulated by sophomores Colleen McLaughlin, Corey McKenna, Noah Wegener, Meghan Rowledge, Erika Rodbell, Will McMaster, Blake Colyer, Ashley Forshey, Anne Bongermينو, Kevin Arnodt, Kim Connelly, Sarah Dean, Gramm Gordon, Nicole Hoerold, Kerry Lewis, Aurora Phillips, Paige Jones, Alexis Yagielski, Olivia Marola and Michael Nietfeld. Robert Hanlon compiled the comments and analysis.*

- ▶ **The number of people who completed exit polls were 340 (14% of total 2,426 turnout), down from last year's 23% of turnout. Voter turnout was 2,426 this year, up from last year's 2,040.** Over the past few years, turnout was 2,045 in 2008, 2,091 in 2007 and 2,707 in 2006. *Part of the reason for the uptick may have been the contested BOE seats, though other school districts also saw higher turnouts this year because of the focus on lower state education spending.*

Here are the **actual vote percentages from May 2010:**

- ✓ **2010-11 budget – 1,404 (58%) YES and 1,010 (42%) NO**

*Among those completing surveys, 71% supported and 29% opposed the budget. That is typical: YES voters tend to complete the surveys more frequently than NO voters.*

- ✓ **Bus purchases – 1,487 (62%) YES and 917 (38%) NO**

*Among those completing surveys, 70% supported and 30% opposed the bus proposal.*

**It is noteworthy that the number of YES budget voters INCREASED by 151 over May 2009 while the number of NO voters INCREASED 225.**

**On the bus purchase vote, the number of YES voters INCREASED by 260 over May 2009 while the number of NO voters INCREASED 130.**

*As a reminder, the May 2009 vote included a budget plan to REDUCE taxes and two building proposals. The May 2010 budget called for an INCREASE in taxes.*

*The general information below pertains to voters who cast YES or NO votes on the 2010-11 budget. This is not a scientific sample and is based on a small number of responses in some categories.*

- ▶ **Among YES voters, 49.2% had pre-school or school-age children and 50.7% had children older than high school. Among NO voters, 63.3% had pre-school or school-age children and 36.7% had children older than high school.**
- ▶ **Parents with school-age children:** 29.4% “yes” voters were parents with school-age children, a slight decrease from last year's 30.5%. The percentage of “no” voters with school-age children was 40.8%, a jump from last year's 11.8%.
- ▶ **Parents with “pre-school age” children:** The results show that 19.8% of parents with “pre-school age” children supported the budget, up from last year's 13.7%. The number of “no” parents with “pre-school age” children was 22.4%, up from last year's 0%.
- ▶ **Age groups:** Among YES voters, 14% were ages 18-29, 26.7% were in the 30-44 age group, 34.6% were in the 45-60 age group and 24.6% were in the over 61 age group. Among NO voters, 11.6% were in the 18-29 age group, 24.4% were in the 30-44 age group, 26.7% were in the 45-60 age group and 37.2% were over age 61.

**D Under “WHY did you vote as you did...”:**

Respondents could check more than one answer. The figures below indicate how often that choice was selected.

**YES VOTERS**

- 50.5% said they supported the budget because “Despite the difficult economic times, I believe in supporting the schools.”
- 23.5% said the “property tax increase was reasonable.”
- 15% said they “have confidence / trust in the Board of Education.”
- 11% said they voted YES because “the budget reductions did not go too far.”

**NO VOTERS**

- 40.3% said the “economic times are difficult; I can’t afford more.”
- 36.7% said the “proposed tax increase is unreasonably high.”
- 12.9% said they had “little confidence / trust in the Board of Education.”
- 10.1% said the “budget cuts went too far.”

**THREE NEW QUESTIONS on the Exit Poll**

Three questions – #7, 8 and 9 – were new this year to the exit poll:

**7. HOW would you grade the QUALITY of education provided by the Scotia-Glenville School District?**

Those who voted:	A (Highest)	B	C	D	F (Lowest)
YES	44.7%	47.9%	5.9%	1.4%	0.0
NO	26.2%	52.3%	14.2%	4.8%	2.4

**8. HOW would you rate the VALUE per dollar spent on education in the Scotia-Glenville School District?**

Those who voted:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
YES	24.1%	63.8%	10.7%	1.3%
NO	3.4%	34.5%	42.5%	19.5%

Not surprisingly, YES voters felt the quality of education and value for the dollar was higher than did the NO voters.

9. **KNOWING** that the education funding crisis is likely to continue next year, **WHICH THREE** of the following **NON-MANDATED AREAS** would you most like to see **PRESERVED** in the **2011-12 budget?** (*Check your top three only*).

The percentages below show how many of the 241 **YES** voters indicated that they wanted to **PRESERVE** these programs. *Percentages add up to more than 100% because each person could select up to three choices. In most to least order:*

- College-level/ Advanced Placement courses – **44.8%**
- Elective course offerings (*gr. 6-12 courses such as technology, family and consumer sciences, languages*) – **41.1%**
- Student support services (*including nurses, counselors, social workers, psychologists, etc.*) – **36.5%**
- Interscholastic athletics – **31.9%**
- Expanded art and music programs (*beyond mandates*) – **31.9%**
- Enrichment programs (K-8) – **31.1%**
- Class size – **28.6%**
- Extracurricular clubs and activities – **24.5%**
- Classroom technology upgrades – **13.3%**
- Field trips – **8.7%**
- Staff development – **6.2%**
- Bus transportation (*beyond mandates*) – **5.4%**

The percentages below show how many of the 93 **NO** voters indicated that they wanted to **PRESERVE** these programs. *Percentages add up to more than 100% because each person could select up to three choices. In most to least order:*

- College-level/ Advanced Placement courses – **39.8%**
- Classroom technology upgrades – **29.0%**
- Elective course offerings (*gr. 6-12 courses such as technology, family and consumer sciences, languages*) – **27.9%**
- Student support services (*including nurses, counselors, social workers, psychologists, etc.*) – **26.9%**
- Enrichment programs (K-8) – **26.9%**
- Class size – **17.2%**
- Interscholastic athletics – **16.1%**
- Expanded art and music programs (*beyond mandates*) – **15.1%**
- Extracurricular clubs and activities – **14.0%**
- Staff development – **8.6%**
- Field trips – **5.4%**
- Bus transportation (*beyond mandates*) – **5.4%**

► Under “What were your MAJOR SOURCES of information...”:

- The *Tartan Report* was listed as a major source of information for most voters: 63.1% of YES voters and 63.4% of NO voters.
- The next most influential sources of information for YES voters were the *Daily Gazette* (39.0%) and *Spotlight* (25.3%) and for NO voters were also the *Daily Gazette* (48.4%) and *Spotlight* (27.9%).
- 23.6% of YES voters cited “friends/neighbors” while 14.5% of NO voters cited those sources for information.
- 16.2% of YES voters and 16.1% of NO voters cited the [ScotiaGlenvilleSchools.org](http://ScotiaGlenvilleSchools.org) web site.
- The *Times Union* was mentioned by 4.6% of YES voters and 9.7% of NO voters as a source.
- School staff members were cited by 13.3% of YES voters and 4.3% of NO voters.
- Public/PTA presentations were a source of information for 10% of YES voters and 4.3% of NO voters.
- 6.6% of YES voters and 12.9% of NO voters said they did not feel well informed.



## *Yes-Yes voters wrote...*

- I don't like the faculty cuts one bit. Going to a contingency budget would be worse.
- The buildings are gross (HS)
  - Need general upkeep (HS)
  - Paper / garbage outside blowing around the outside.
  - Untrimmed bushes.
  - Just plain dirty! I'm embarrassed at times!
- Schools give our homes and community value.
- I feel the BOE works very hard at presenting a reasonable budget.
- Be very careful about what is said about teachers not allowing reductions. I know they did offer but when not promised that certain areas of program would be preserved, they understandably could not agree.
- I want to support continuation of foreign language programs (esp. German).
- If no (vote for yes), they would have had to propose another budget!
- No sense in voting no.
- Pay me now or pay me later.
- I have a concern for what would happen if it didn't pass.
- I really commend the Board and Superintendent for handling a difficult time and choice with honesty, respect for the taxpayer and student, and as much fair as was possible in these circumstances.
- I am a teacher and know the importance of the budget.
- No other choice (but to vote YES), is there?
- Rethink the gifted and talented program. Is it effective?
- Keep programs that keep our children balanced - music, library, PE.
- Were all areas equally impacted by budget reductions?
- Too many concerts in May! Be family friendly. Concerts are wonderful but are too concentrated.
- I voted yes despite the superintendent, whom I have no confidence in
- Thank you for all you do!
- More efficient use of paper and means of correspondence needed.
- "I voted YES because:" To support programs
- "I voted YES:" despite the fact that I think budget cuts went too far.
- I know that the \$ was tougher this year and the cuts seemed fairly even, however, I was very sorry to see Mrs. Heidenstrom cut (1 teacher for 4 schools cut).
  
- REGARDING QUESTION #7 (QUALITY OF EDUCATION): Look at graduation stats! 83%
- REGARDING QUESTION #7: A person wrote: Do not know
- REGARDING QUESTION #7:

I have 3 in school presently. One went through SciMaTech and receive numerous scholarships for

## *Yes-Yes voters wrote...continued*

college. Because with the offerings, he was accepted at prestigious schools and is well prepared except for writing, which he has not been challenged to do well since elementary school.

My second was not accepted into SciMaTech. I believe it was because he told his OPAL teacher he had turned in a paper which he hadn't. Although he made up the work without credit and fulfilled all requirements, he did not go into the advanced SciMaTech, but has been in advanced math and has been on high honor roll each semester.

My third child is the most talented. She was in OPAL, participated in Odyssey of the Mind, reads continuously, plays three instruments and when entering Middle School was accepted into the Scotia Scholars and BOCES (Young Scholars) English course. Both of these courses were "pull-outs." Between the classwork, two music classes (band and orchestra) and the "specials," she worked very hard but was not invited into SciMaTech. Her team of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ were unsupportive of her schedule and didn't know where she was most of the time. I could write a book on the many times she was penalized for taking these special classes by her core team teachers. She is still a great student but I would S-G a "C" at best or less for \_\_\_\_\_ as they did not support the students (especially \_\_\_\_\_ who refuses to use Edline). I would not advise any parent to enroll their child in these specials as they are not for credit and do not necessarily lead into more advanced classes later.

- REGARDING QUESTION #9 (PRESERVING BUDGET AREAS IN 2011-12): "Extracurricular clubs and activities" - These should be self-supporting.
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: I am very much in favor of clubs and sports but believe that if a stipend is being paid out to a teacher or coach, they should have to show accountability as to what activities they actually have the students do and the time involved. A teacher can lead a club and not set a schedule or activity or even recruit and still be paid.
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: Tech Lab TAs
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: Writer circled "class size" and wrote: @ the elementary level!
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: A person wrote: GIVE
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: A person wrote: New fields
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: A person wrote next to Enrichment Program (K-8): But changed to be more effective.
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: A person wrote: Too hard to just pick 3
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: This question is FAR too generic! For different reasons, every box deserves an X - but not all enrichment programs or sports or support staff (etc) are vital. Forums such as this years would be indicated...
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: A person wrote: science and math, coaching
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: A person wrote: All of the above

## *Yes-No voters wrote...*

- “I voted YES because:” A person wrote: is an idiot
- Get rid of tenure and we’d get better teachers for decent, not inflated salaries. I graduated from here but even back in the stone-age era of the 60’s and when my child graduated in the 90’s, we had mlousy teachers the district was stuck with - Do something about this and you can get 3 new buses without raising the taxes.
- REGARDING QUESTION #9 (PRESERVING BUDGET AREAS IN 2011-12): Cut back on administrators!
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: A person wrote: Teachers contract - pay them what they are worth!
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: Increase in staff and technology in resource room
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: A person wrote: Staff
  
- REGARDING QUESTION #10 (SOURCES OF INFORMATION): A person wrote after “didn’t feel well informed:” Should have looked sooner.
  
- “I Voted NO because:” A person wrote: We don’t/can’t use buses.
- New buses should wait.
- Too many 3/4 empty buses – children should do more walking!
- “I voted YES because:” A person wrote: Important to keep programs.
- Do not know what the proposed property tax will be. Would have appreciated that on the entrance board.
- I support the public schools and programs but am disgusted by the reports of unions that refuse to compromise in the face of crisis. I am disappointed because it appears these unions do not value education, only benefits.
- “I voted YES because:” A person wrote: My wife needs her job at the school.

## *No-No voters wrote...*

- You need to better advertise school meetings, votes, etc. A lot of us do not have email or know people in the area to talk to. Not a very inviting community.
- I want it it a % equation.
- I realize the difficult situation you were in. But the cuts should have made more sense. Why was something totally unnecessary like Drivers Ed restored? What is a “foreign language exploratory course?” Why were there no concessions from the local teachers’ union?
- Too much waste in the system.
- I think cuts could be at the administrative level.
- State, county, feds...we’re broke, the well’s dry and will be until?
- Time to cut all sports, field trips. School is for classroom studies, not traveling on taxpayer dime.
- No social security increase, no budget increase.
- Unions need to make more concessions.
- When unions can make sacrifices as others are doing, I’ll be pleased.
- Classroom size is too small now.
- Teachers need givebacks.
- Cut administrative costs!
- Our taxes have been raised > inflation for years, it’s always too much.
- Taxes too high on a fixed income.
- I’m getting no raise, the teacher’s shouldn’t either.
- All need to give a little in these hard economic times.
- Older people in this district cannot afford the tax increase.
- Fix the old buses! Not new every year.
- Freeze teacher salaries!
- The administration should take a pay cut. Stop the tax increases.
- Do not contribute to retirement/teachers receiving two raises.
- Teach “decrease” to the Bd. and Superintendent.
- It’s obvious that the word “decrease” is alien to the Board and Superintendent. It’s also apparent they are oblivious to the dire economic straits, current and future, since they ignored the situation.
- I recommend class size increases, reduction of the innumerable recesses/year. You dn’t learn much lolling on a break!
- Those who to learn will learn! Those who don’t want to learn will not irrespective of environment or inducements.
- Time is overdue for “Hard Business Decisions,” not Heart Felt comments. Wake up to reality!!
- The dress code is abominable!
  
- REGARDING QUESTION #7 (QUALITY OF EDUCATION): Not enough homework
- REGARDING QUESTION #9 (PRESERVING BUDGET AREAS IN 2011-12): How about concentrating on useful job skills for the private sector?
- REGARDING QUESTION #9: Under standard educational support.

### *No-Yes voters wrote...*

- Huge increase in SGCSD payroll is not appropriate. [www.seethroughNY.org](http://www.seethroughNY.org)
  - Why raise the administrative part of the budget while cutting teachers? Try again.
  - Most of the benefits goes to benefit and pensions.
  - Increasing administrative costs - very top heavy.
  - Not sure why I vote for it (bus prop)
  - I felt that more information pertaining to each of the school board candidates should have been available to us from the district. Not all constituents have access or are aware that the Gazette had an article with their info.
  - Taxes are killing S-G
  - Teachers unwilling to give up raises.
  - Bus safety is important.
  - I want a cost breakdown of the budget.
  - I as a younger homeowner can afford my taxes but I pay \$4600/year. The elderly in our district can not. It is unacceptable to expect the population to pay more. Life districts around SG, to to a 2 payment system for paying taxes.
  - It is time to require the staff to pay part of their hosp insurance like everyone else. Pay into their retirement like everyone else does. The cash cow is dead!
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- REGARDING QUESTION #7 (QUALITY OF EDUCATION): Haven't had a child here since 1993.
  - REGARDING QUESTION #8 (VALUE FOR DOLLAR): Too much goes to union benefits
  - REGARDING QUESTION #9 (PRESERVING BUDGET AREAS IN 2011-12): Let them use their own time (next to 'staff development')

### *Regarding the new voting machines, voters wrote...*

- Bring back the old voting system - this is needlessly time consuming! Newer isn't always better!!
- I miss the flippy voting booths.
- I do not trust the new machines!!!
- Bring back the voting booths please!!!
- Put some sort of wheel chocks on those stations. The wheels moved and I had to catch myself before I fell.
- I am thankful we are going to a form of paper ballot. We need to get back to the constitution.