

## ONLINE REFERENDUM SURVEY SUMMARY

### 1. What is your preference for the types of fields at the Hempsted/Memorial complex?

Memorial	<b>Field Turf</b> (55.1%)	Grass (44.9)
Hempsted	<b>Grass</b> (69.3%)	Field Turf (30.7%)

*Note: While the responses to this question do not indicate that field turf is an overwhelming favorite, respondents seem to think that **Memorial Field** is a preferred site for turf.*

### 2. What field would you prefer as the primary field for varsity football, soccer and field hockey?

<b>Memorial with field turf</b>	(42.2%)
Hempsted with grass	(24.8%)
Hempsted with field turf	(20.0%)
Memorial with grass	(12.8%)

*Note: **Memorial Field** with either a turf or grass surface is the favored site for the primary field with 55% of the respondents preferring Memorial over Hempsted (44.8%).*

### 3. If it is determined that Hempsted will remain as the primary field, bleachers would need to be installed at that site. If the cost of installing the bleachers could be reduced if the home stand bleachers were installed on the side of the field near the snack stand, which of the following best describes your opinion:

<b>It doesn't matter to me on which side the home bleachers are located.</b>	(44.4%)
I would support constructing the bleachers on the snack stand side to save money.	(40.3%)
I would only want the bleachers in their original site.	(15.3%)

*Note: The majority of the respondents (84.7%) would support having the bleachers on the snack stand side of the field if the referendum plan determined that Hempsted would be the primary varsity field.*

### 4. Please rate each of the following on how important it will be to include in the next referendum:

Responses have been banded together to show the percentages of respondents who favor or do not favor the components listed below:

	Very Important	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Unimportant	Unacceptable
Public restrooms	<b>85.1%</b>		4.7%		10.2%
All weather track	<b>82.7%</b>		3.1%		14.2%
Building improvements at the schools	77.0%		15.0%		8.0%
Regrading/sodding of Aaron Decker School	52.4%		20.6%		27.0%
New snack/concession/ ticket stand	49.6%		22.8%		27.6%
Irrigation system at James C. Smith Field	47.2%		22.8%		30.0%

*Note: It appears that the majority of respondents feel that public restrooms and an all weather track are important components that should be included in the referendum project. It is also interesting to note that none of these components were rated as unacceptable by a majority of the respondents. It will be necessary for the board to clearly demonstrate the case for including any items in the referendum that fall under the 75% mark as being very important/important.*

*In an interesting contradiction in the results, 77% of the respondents indicate that they feel that building improvements at the schools are very important/important, yet in Question 7, 63% of the respondents state that there aren't any other capital projects in the district that they feel would make sense to add to the field project referendum.*

**5. Which of the following sources did you utilize to gain information about the September 25, 2007 referendum?**

<b>Board of Education newsletters mailed to my home</b>	<b>66.1%</b>
From friends/family	57.5%
Presentations by Dr. Rovtar at Back to School Night	41.7%
Board of Education website	33.9%
Presentations by Dr. Rovtar (except Back to School night presentations)	29.1%
From the Butler Yahoo Internet discussion group	29.1%
From a recreation organization I or someone in my family belongs to	26.0%
From Borough officials/employees	22.8%
From a board meeting(s)	22.0%
From a board member	21.3%
From a school/district administrator	18.1%
From a civic organization I belong to	6.3%
From the district's referendum hotline	2.4%

*Note: With newsletters being the primary source of information about the referendum, we may want to consider sending more frequent newsletters (we sent 2 for the 2007 referendum). As we well know, in a small town, word of mouth is also one of the primary means for people to obtain information about the referendum. As was pointed out to us in our public feedback sessions, in order for the 2008 referendum to be successful, it will be crucial for all board members to be seem as active supporters of the referendum. Board members and administrators will need to be united in the message that is communicated to the public. The dissemination of accurate information and the dispelling of rumors will continue to be a big part of the communication efforts with regard to the 2008 referendum.*

**6. Please rank the following factors 1-8, in order of their influence on your decision to support or not support a referendum of this nature, with 1 having the most influence on your decision and 8 having the least influence:**

	% of respondents listing this item as 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , or 3 <sup>rd</sup> in importance	% of respondents listing this item as 6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> or 8 <sup>th</sup> in importance
Availability of well-kept, safe athletic facilities	51.5%	14.1%
Ability to instill a sense of pride in the town	48.8%	29.9%
Need to modernize	45.7%	25.2%
Field maintenance issues	37.7%	29.9%
Tax Impact	36.9%	45.7%
Potential to increase home values in town	34.7%	31.5%
Need to maintain Butler traditions, like field locations and settings	23.7%	56.6%
Desire for Let There Be Light Project to be fully utilized	11.0%	66.9%

*Note: While we thought that the concerns about the Let There Be Light Foundation was a significant factor in the defeat of the 2007 referendum, it does not appear that the majority of respondents are very concerned about the utilization of the lights at Hempsted Field. The tax impact is also an interesting point with 36.9% listing it at of high importance and 45.7% indicating that it was among the least influential factors.*

**7. Given the costs associated with a referendum, are there any other capital projects in the district you think would make sense for the Board to consider along with the field upgrades?**

**No** (63.0%)  
**Yes** (37.0%)

*Note: While the list of potential projects is long, the majority of respondents feel that “non-field” projects should not be included in the 2008 referendum.*

48 respondents gave additional input on this question which is summarized below. The number in parentheses following each comment indicates the number of people who expressed the same suggestion. If there is no number in parentheses, only one respondent made that comment.

Fields

- Aaron Decker needs to be resodded and a sprinkler system installed.
- All “all personnel” to use the “Taj Mahal” (field house)
- Consider a small user fee for clubs to be used as a revenue stream toward maintaining the turf fields.
- Install public tennis courts – there is nowhere to play
- Put field turf on Hempsted
- Skateboard park to be used for skateboards, BMX bikes, rollerblades.etc.

### General

A larger referendum, while more appealing to some who would see it as more balanced (not just athletics) will discourage many more voters in this town on tight incomes.

Air conditioning (4)

Better heating

Computer labs (2)

Improve arts and musical facilities in schools

Make the building more energy efficient.

Modern physical fitness gym

Money should be spent on schools before a football field that has 4 games per year.

More security – especially for the high school (2)

Provide cut through streets with speed humps to protect the kids from speeding vehicles.

Use money to set up some after school study time to help improve test scores.

### Butler High School

Annex Building needs painting

Auditorium renovation (13)

Clubs and activities (besides sports) are just as important for the educational growth of the students.

Courtyard needs upgrades

Covered walkway to the Annex building

Gymnasium improvements

Improvements to the facade

Install new electronic signboard

Landscaping (2)

Modernize classrooms in older section of the building along Bartholdi Avenue

Regionalize high school.

Remove white floors at the high school. They show dirt and mud so easily. It makes the school appear unclean.

Renovate bathrooms near the gym. (3)

Repair parking lots/driveway (3)

### Richard Butler School

Improve the walkway from Richard Court to Richard Butler School

Instructional program improvements – more computers in classrooms, more supplemental aids and manipulatives, foreign language, new rock wall.

Repair parking lot/driveway

Replace windows in back wing (those that were not included in the last referendum project). (2)

### Aaron Decker School

Enlarge the parking lot. (2)

Full day kindergarten (6)

Instrumental music program

Replace lighting in classrooms and hallways

Swimming pool

**8. Please list any additional input or comment on the referendum that you would like to share with the Board.**

Fields

All weather track should be the number one priority.

Build a skate park.

Concerns about increased injuries with turf field, concern about students with latex allergies. A well-kept grass field seems to make the most sense.

Concern that turf is not environmentally safe – grass is fine.

Field needs to be redone.

Field turf is not a green alternative to real grass. In the long run, a good grass field is also less expensive. Burning more fossil fuels to have games at night is counter productive to our society. The sun burns no fossil fuels and coincidentally, is the source of all life on earth. The night football craze started down south because it's too hot to play during the day in September. We here in New Jersey don't have that problem, at least not yet. Keep burning those fossil fuels and it won't be long before we do.

First referendum was a good package – you should just put it up for a vote again.

Football and track need to return as does a sense of school spirit among residents.

Football is a game that should be played on grass at Hempsted Field.

Fully support a turf field and a new track.

Grass fields are fine as long as you maintain them. Current field maintenance program is awful. If you spend the money, you need to maintain it, unlike Smith Field.

Having a new field would be nice, but it is not a necessity.

Hempsted Field, along with the baseball facility, have always been a secured area used by the school and town teams exclusively. Would prefer a turf field at Hempsted. You cannot turn your backs on the people who donated for the lights at Hempsted.

How does the referendum address the aspect of maintaining the investment in these new fields?

If fields are sodded, irrigation systems must be installed and fields maintained by professionals.

Look into the possibility of some fundraising for the smaller projects.

Maintenance is essential. Letting maintenance issues go too long is the cause of us having these problems.

Present fields or new fields need to be better maintained including aeration, thatching and reseeding each year. Also picking up trash and cutting weeds along fences, etc.

Some of the recent improvements have had a negative effect and are ultimately influencing the current vote.

This is long overdue and presented in that light, it might have a chance.

Track must be improved and there must be public restrooms.

Upgrades to other fields and the schools should be separate and preferably accounted for by annual capital budgeting.

We need more public athletic complexes – places where our children and go and play and exercise.

We need this new field! It could possibly bring many events to the town. These events would most likely bring funds to the school district as well as to the town.

What are you going to do to keep unauthorized people off the field? Misuse will destroy the fields.

Where would baseball be if the bleachers were on the snack stand side of the field?

Would they take care of the sod at Aaron Decker Field or would it turn into weeds like Smith Field?

Bleachers

Is a 1,000 seat bleacher capacity too big for the town's needs?

Someone should be prosecuted for giving the stands away.

What was the reason why the aluminum bleachers that were given away were reused?

General

Academics is much more important than athletics.

Action plan needed to upgrade the security at the schools – access controls, closed –circuit t.v., drug screening, etc.

Afterschool homework/tutorial program would be great.

Air conditioning is needed as well as a better heating system.

All of these improvements and more are necessary. Projects need to be prioritized.

Although the referendum lost by only 23 votes, there are many people in Butler who are opposed to ANY referendum that would raise their taxes.

Ask the large business on Route 23 to donate – acknowledge donations with a plaque on the field.

Board of Education should put the education back in Butler – support reading programs and issues dealing with children’s abilities to enter college. Although I believe in sports and activities, I believe that our tax dollars could be better utilized in our learning programs.

Building improvements – what was the 4 million for?

Butler is a good, peaceful town to live in and we should make it comfortable too.

Can any of the monies left to the high school be used for this project?

Did you ever stop to think that if the elderly were offered transportation to the voting location, it would be defeated by a greater margin than 23 votes.

Get support for the project from Butler Recreation. The Recreation Commission was never contacted for the first referendum.

Get those scores up! No excuse for mediocrity!

Get your facts straight and educate all of your board members so the same story is coming from administration and all of the board members.

Have dedicated meetings with senior citizens to explain the specifics of the proposed referendum.

I supported the last referendum and I was sure it would pass. We need to improve on the facilities not just for present students, but for future students as well.

I would not want building upgrades included in the referendum if it would have a negative effect on passing the referendum.

Keeping our schools and libraries spacious and updated is much more important than a field to play sports on. Education benefits all of our children and that’s what the Board of Education should be concerned with – not games.

More focus should be placed on the arts and maintenance of the schools. What example are we setting for the children by putting sports before school/academics and humanities?

New administrative building needed.

Perhaps if it is broken down to how much per day it would cost the taxpayers, people might be willing to give up one cup of coffee or a pack of smokes.

Publicity – not enough was given to the referendum.

Referendum does nothing to improve your primary purpose – the education of students.

Remind everyone that we are not living in “The Rubber Mill” age anymore. It’s time to move on.

Tax increases need to be managed. You are putting families in financial crisis because there is just no more money to dip in to.

The referendum needs more press coverage.

Too much of a tax impact. Find funding through donations and businesses.

Utilize the phone call notification system about the referendum to all registered voters – not just to students.

Voting for the second referendum should be more widely publicized.

We are supportive of the field referendum and will support all budget issues that have a direct and measurable increase in value to the academic and athletic performance of the Butler School System.

We need an after-school program in the elementary and middle school program for a reasonable fee.

You need to communicate with younger population – send out more mailings explaining projects.

#### Butler High School

Auditorium needs repair.

Hall monitors advisable at the high school to deter illegal activity and bullying.

#### Aaron Decker School

The school needs to be expanded to accommodate growing population.

*Note: Many of the general comments given by the respondents indicate that we need to increase our communication efforts to get accurate information out to the public to explain the various components of the referendum and why they are needed.*