

April 3, 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians, Students, Community Members and Alumni,

We hope you were all able to enjoy time with your families over the spring break. As we head back to school, we write this letter to provide updated information regarding the plans for the high school and the generous gift from Mr. Stephen A. Schwarzman. When this gift was announced over a month ago, the community was appreciative and ecstatic. To our knowledge, this is the single largest gift to a single public school in the history of our country. Mr. Schwarzman, the Board, and our Superintendent only wanted this gift to ensure that the high school would be state of the art with almost a total renovation and significant additions to accommodate increasing enrollment and upgrade an aging 1956 school building.

We recognize that we could have done a far better job of seeking public input on the name change, as well as providing ample opportunity for the community to review the agreement prior to our vote. The frustration that we heard from you was completely understandable, and, as you are now aware, the donor has agreed the name will remain as Abington Senior High School. In our excitement about the gift and what it means for our school in the years to come, we failed to provide you with the opportunity for public comment on the name change, and for that we are deeply sorry.

We thank Mr. Schwarzman, again, for his willingness to withdraw the naming proposal when it raised objections. You should all know that Mr. Schwarzman cares deeply about the community, and proudly credits much of his own success to the great start he received in Abington. While he was proud to add his name to the school it was never an effort to remove or diminish “Abington.”

As we move forward, we commit to you that communication is our priority. As such, let us lay out some important next steps.

Next Tuesday, April 10, 2018 the Board will convene to formally rescind their vote on the Pledge Agreement and open a discussion into a revised agreement that does not contain a naming component of the high school itself. The new Pledge Agreement will be available at that meeting and it will be made available to the public through posting on our website and in BoardDocs. In this fashion, the agreement will be available for all to see and will provide the details of Mr. Schwarzman’s gift well before a vote on the agreement on April 24, 2018.

The Board will then meet again on April 24, 2018 to vote on the new agreement. We welcome everyone in the community to attend these two meetings and are making arrangements to accommodate additional seating.

You will have access to the full document and all the details. Until then, we thought it might be helpful to lay out what the agreement will include at a high level:

- Naming select spaces within the building: We are recommending that the following spaces be named.
 - The newly constructed **Center for Science and Technology** will be named in recognition of Mr. Schwarzman. As we have said frequently, this project simply would not be a reality without his unprecedented \$25 million donation, and we think this is an appropriate recognition of his generosity.
 - The **Athletic Center** will be renamed in honor of Bobby Bryant, a 1965 graduate of Abington, and the **Auxiliary Gym** will be renamed in honor of Billy Wilson, another graduate. Both Bobby and Billy represented Abington proudly as star track and field

athletes, and were beloved members of the Abington school community. The **Athletic Hall of Fame** will be renamed for Coach Jack Armstrong, a beloved track coach from Abington High School, who made a substantial mark on the athletic program of Abington Senior High School.

- Schedule of Contributions: The gift of \$25 million will be paid at a preset schedule through 2022, beginning with a \$6 million payment by July 1, 2018. The document outlines the full schedule of payments.
- Building Updates: As is typical in Pledge Agreements of this scale, progress reports will be made to the donor as construction begins, including any projected cost changes to the construction budget. As required by PA state law any changes to our Awards of Contract to the prime contractors must be voted on by the Board as well.
- Curriculum Implementation: We as a Board and as an administration have for many years been laying out a vision for curriculum changes, including plans to include “coding” and “STEM” classes for the majority of students at Abington Junior and Senior High Schools. We recognize the importance of these skills for today’s workforce, and are proud that Mr. Schwarzman shares this vision. His gift frees up District resources to execute on our plans for increased technology for the students. Regular updates will be provided to him as we make progress in introducing these classes, working towards a goal of the vast majority of our students participating in these classes by 2020. These reports will be reviewed at public meetings of the Board of School Directors.

What the proposed agreement **DOES NOT** include:

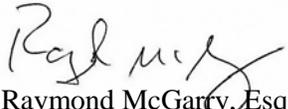
- The agreement makes no reference to changing the school name. The school will remain as Abington Senior High School.
- This agreement does not give Mr. Schwarzman any type of control over curriculum or related decisions. As mentioned, we are pleased that Mr. Schwarzman shares our vision for updating the curriculum and is helping provide the tools so that this may be implemented, but he does not control the curriculum in any way.

In closing, we would like to remind everyone of the tremendous impact that this project will have on the communities of Abington and the Borough of Rockledge for decades to come. Abington Senior High School has not been significantly renovated since it was built in 1956 and this is a chance to completely transform the school to best prepare our students for success.

We are grateful to Mr. Schwarzman for standing by Abington as we find a way to both recognize his generosity and also acknowledge the wishes of the community. We are also grateful that 100% of his gift will go towards design and construction costs, and will enable us to achieve our vision of a renovated and expanded high school. This gift is a wonderful opportunity for the students and the Abington and Rockledge communities and we are so appreciative of Mr. Schwarzman for his generosity.

We ask for your continued support of the Abington School District.

Regards,



Raymond McGarry, Esq.
President
Board of School Directors



Susan Arnhold
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Board of School Directors



Amy Sichel, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools