



Abington School District  
Abington, PA 19001  
Phone (215) 884 4700

March 30, 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians, Community Members and Alumni:

We want to provide information regarding the donation from Stephen A. Schwarzman and respond to the comments we have seen on social media. We will also attempt to respond to a few of the issues/concerns raised in some of the comments.

First, as Board members and as Superintendent, we believe we are stewards of taxpayer dollars. We are fiduciaries to our community, and we owe it to the residents, the taxpayers, and the future students of our District to do everything we can to maximize the investment we can make in their education. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Federal Government are not funding our public schools at the level to which we believe is necessary to assure that our children are prepared for the future global and technological world which awaits them. We don't see that changing in the short term. Public education is under attack and public school funding by our government will only go down in the near future, not up. As a local school Board, our options are extremely limited in terms of finding funding sources for the needs of our District's students. We are essentially left with the option of either raising property taxes or not funding the programs that we honestly believe our children are deserving of having available to them. We believe in the programs we offer our students, so the choice not to fund them is not a choice we will ever support. Alternatively, raising taxes year after year to fund the programs the school needs and deserves is also not an attractive option, and there are limits to what people can and will pay. Our district has grown by approximately 1,000 students in recent years and is projected to continue to grow. This means that the cost of educating our students in Abington and Rockledge is going to continue to rise into the future.

It is incumbent on the District to try to be creative in finding funding sources for their infrastructure needs, technology needs, or any other need that a district may identify (athletics, music and the arts, and others). We did just that for as Superintendent I reached out to a distinguished alumnus, Mr. Stephen A. Schwarzman and sought his contribution to help to fund the high school project, which will help to assure continued excellence in education for years to come. His gift will enable us to have significant resources available to not only complete the full high school addition but also renovate the 1956 school. This full project would not be a reality without the generous and thoughtful contribution of Mr. Schwarzman. Also please remember that when the Board borrowed funds it committed to make significant upgrades to our junior high building, without the need to borrow additional money. There is no question that this gift saves the taxpayers of Abington and Rockledge \$25 million.

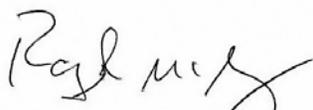
Personally we knew that if we were successful in obtaining a sizeable gift, it would likely come with some form of naming rights. It is not surprising that conversations occurred to incorporate Mr. Schwarzman's name into the school in some fashion. This is typical at colleges and universities and other large organizations. We understand it may not be typical for public schools, but neither is it typical for a public high school to receive a gift in the amount that we were lucky enough to receive.

We have seen some comments that by making this name change we are commercializing the schools. We disagree. As a District we wanted to recognize Mr. Schwarzman's generosity in a meaningful way that reflected the magnitude of the gift and the impact that it will have on the community for decades to come. When we discussed this potential opportunity, it was important to him as it was to us that the name Abington remain as the primary name of the school. We believe that the name of the new school -Abington Schwarzman High School- allows us to maintain our strong Abington identity while also recognizing Mr. Schwarzman's unparalleled gift. We would not be able to achieve our vision for building a state of the art school that our students and our community wholeheartedly deserve without Mr. Schwarzman's valuable contribution. He is an alumnus of the district, who had such a positive experience that he wanted to make a significant contribution to help assure the continued excellent educational experience for our students for years to come.

We have also seen some comments that we, as Board members, have delegated curricular decisions to Mr. Schwarzman. This is simply not true. Yes it was important to Mr. Schwarzman that our students be technologically prepared for the world when they graduate. But this also was something we as a Board, along with the Administration, had already taken steps to ensure long before Mr. Schwarzman came along. Prior to any gift from Mr. Schwarzman, we had already inserted into the curriculum "coding" and/or "STEM" classes in the junior and senior high schools. We recognize the importance of these STEM classes, and we are not changing our curriculum to meet the demands of Mr. Schwarzman or any one person. We are establishing our curriculum based on the needs of our students and the rapidly changing technological world we all live in.

We understand that even after reading this letter, some people may disagree with the decision and may not support this name change. That is absolutely your right, and we respect your opinions. As elected officials and stewards of your tax dollars, and as Superintendent, we accept your criticism but stand by the decision. We believe in weighing all of the factors, and the Board made a decision which we believe to be in the best interests of the residents, taxpayers and students of our district.

We appreciate your ongoing support of the Abington School District.



Raymond McGarry, Esquire  
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Board of School Directors



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Amy F. Sichel, Ph.D.  
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