

**Summary Sheet**

The Board of School Directors received 35 emails as of 4 p.m. on August 10, 2018, and heard comments from 6 community members at the August 7, 2018 Special Meeting, representing 97 pieces of individual input. The pieces of input were categorized according to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders from the National Policy Board for Educational Administration. The numbers in parentheses next to each standard indicate the number of pieces of verbatim input received in each category from the emails. Input entered in the "Miscellaneous" tab does not fall into one of the ten standards.

Public comments from the Special Meeting are indicated in orange

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**1. Mission, Vision & Core Values: Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student**

It is imperative that the next superintendent be an educator, first and foremost. I understand the recent trend in hiring businesspeople to head school districts, but it's counter to what our children truly need. School should be about educating our children not only with information, but with the tools to function in the world beyond high school. Running a school district like a business cannot benefit our children the way running it like a school district would.

It is important to help maintain a good and safe reputation at abington schools and work hard to keep it this way.

Ultimately, education and students need to come first. A super should be willing to be innovative and supportive - taking in input from all stakeholders.

To me, Jeff Fetcher is the obvious choice. He is a breath of fresh air. As I mentioned, I am a member of the AEF board and I have gotten to know Dr. Fetcher through that. He is funny, full of charisma, intelligent and most importantly, he knows our District. He knows how our District operates. He works with the School Board Directors, he works under Dr. Sichel and he knows the ASD staff. He had the ability to learn from Dr. Sichel. In reality, running a school district is like running a business and if we're honest, Amy Sichel is an amazing business woman. If Dr. Fetcher learned from her, excellent, we want him. He makes himself present in the District. He attends events, he communicates with parents and he listens. He should be our next Superintendent. I think his personality would do our District good and hopefully bring back the energy that it has lost.

While it will be difficult to follow in Amy's footsteps, we are confident that Jeff Fecher will be able to maintain the high standards that we benefit from as Abington residents.

I want to continue to see our district thrive, bolstering community pride and fostering a strong reputation for a top education in the state of Pennsylvania (where our graduates gain entry to prestigious universities throughout the region and US).

Dr. Sichel brought many strong and comendable qualities to the position over her years of service that I hope to see continued with our next superintendent. Her determination to make Abington the top school district given the challenges specific to our district and community is something I hope to see continued.

Abington School District has prided itself in academic excellence. In fact, academic excellence defines us. The Superintendent must continue to set very high expectations for directors, principals/administrators, teachers, and most importantly our students. Abington has been built on a tradition of adaptive leadership, and if our success is to continue the next Superintendent should have a record of leadership that is adaptive, which implies an understanding of what success looks like in a school, in a principal, in a teacher, and in their support staff. Pedro Noguera stated, "The biggest challenge we face in public education is figuring out how to replicate success. Part of the challenge comes from understanding what are the ingredients of success. Why is that classroom or school successful? The adaptive leadership challenge is figuring out what it would take to increase the scale and frequency of the successful model." Our next Superintendent should be able to meet the charge, as reflected in the words of Pedro Noguera, a nationally renowned author, professor, and researcher.

The Schwarzman gift, however, has radically altered the world of primary and secondary public education, and we will need a superintendent who not only possesses Dr. Sichel's vision for educational success, but also someone who can preserve and advocate more successfully and more strenuously for education as a public good, perhaps the most paramount public good in the Commonwealth. In short, I strongly urge you to seek a candidate who values diversity, has educational vision, public advocacy experience, and the drive to right this ship. Anything less would be a disservice to the District and the community.

I agree that it will be important for our next superintendent to have a well formed vision for our district. I believe you, Dr. Sichel and the rest of our distinguished school administrators currently have a strong vision for the district. While I'm not advocating for a radical change or departure from our current vision, this time of transition is an opportunity to refine and recommit to that vision. Our next superintendent, whether promoted from within or discovered from the outside, should be able to clearly articulate their ideas for refining our district's vision, and be someone who demonstrates the ability to think long term, identify risks, and prepare and adapt accordingly.

**2. Ethics and Professional Norms: Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

I think also having someone who is willing to listen to all sides on an issue or proposal, but is also will make tough calls when necessary. Anyone who is a conflict-avoider or who doesn't make clear, informed decisions would be a detriment to the district.

Anyone who is leading our school district should be moral in their actions. Considering all sides, benefits, and repercussions of their actions, taking into consideration all people's comments and ideas, and making a choice that is not swayed by the few loudest voices if that is a decision that is not the right one. It is important in the day of internet shaming and protesting that the superintendent be able to withstand and stand up to the few loud bullies that may be encountered and make the "RIGHT" decisions vs. making an "EASY" decision. (NOTE - sometimes we get lucky and they're one in the same)

We need our top to reflect the values of our community and be committed to preparing our children for a successful future.

Business involvement in the school should be minimal and judiciously engaged in. While many partnerships can be beneficial, they can also be inappropriate and even harmful. If a teacher is teaching the environmental concerns of fracking, having an afternoon session taught by oil and gas industry partners who might want to minimize those concerns can become problematic. We want the teachers doing the teaching. Manpower provided via required volunteer time that benefits non-profits is another concern – including work done or donations solicited on school time rather than after school. Our channel is already being gifted to various “donors” – so educational information that could help parents understand programs and processes has been kept to a minimum rather than expanded. Hard to tell the difference between that and “selling and ad”. Privacy can be given away if a “partnership” with polling agencies is made. Our children and their education should not be “sold” to outside interests. What happens in school and after school should be more effectively scrutinized.

I want to know if the next Superintendent, do we have any stand on any gun rights, or their stand on the gun rights? Because lately, as we all know in the community, that we had some people wanted to declare their rights to guns and walking with a rifle in our community. That makes me and a lot of neighbors very, very uncomfortable. I actually emailed the school, emailed Amy. Amy just copied and pasted the school policy and I did not get any responses at all. So therefore, I would like to know if the next Superintendent, is there any consideration that you will have to ask them on gun rights and their affiliation with businesses ... I do not want to see at the end of the day, you have a Superintendent who accepts large donations, maybe from gun societies, and then because the Superintendent has a lot of power over the school policies, so therefore I do not want to see at the end of the day, you know, we have schools that are leaning towards defending gun rights and therefore there are students going towards a certain violence direction under some misleading information or misread information ... I think it would be wonderful if the next Superintendent could actually lead the whole community on the stand of any gun rights. The second thing is the business affiliation. Do they actually have to declare any of their business affiliations? Because at the end of the day, I do not want to see anymore huge influences.

Also, because when we talk about the business component that fund raising connects very strongly with business connections and those have been things that have been discouraging. So, we do want to make connections in the community, we have to be careful of business connections as I mentioned before with oil companies. They may have values that are different then what we want to teach, so that's important. We do not want to be selling parts of the school.

**3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness: Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

We need every student to feel included regardless of their academic standing, personal or religious preferences or future plans. The Board must strongly consider that the students who most feel like their on the outside looking in are often times the ones who struggle academically. There must be effective programs to give every student every possible academic resource to succeed and it must be easy for parents and students to understand how and where to get them. There is a sense that those resources dissipate at the Jr. and Sr. High level and that students slip through the cracks when all they really need is the right IEP to help. The new leader must be experienced in their knowledge to provide guidance to the district to bridge that gap. The final goal should be that every student be prepared to enter the world best equipped to succeed in society and Higher Ed is not the only path.

Educational equity is and has been a measure Abington has taken great pride in addressing and accomplishing. Educational equity considers systems, individuals, and relationships and is achieved through the tenets of Opportunities to Learn (OTL). Educational equity is color brave and resource driven based on the unique needs of the child sitting in front of the teacher. The next Superintendent must continue a focus on educational equity for it is the building block of great institutions of learning. Educational equity provides structures, relationships, and resources children need to achieve their greatest potential. Educational equity promotes open and responsive communication with families and a courageous examination of school district data.

I want the Superintendent to be in it for the love of academia and the joy of all students, and the best way to show that is to acknowledge and support the demographics that make Abington up equally and with care. I would also want the Superintendent (and School Board/teachers for that matter!) to be willing to go to trainings that emphasize diversity, inclusion, and re-centering to bring back ways to ensure that all students feel fostered in academia, especially in a school district that has low income families to the richest of the rich.

Hire someone with a plan for, and experience in, addressing students with individual education plans, learning challenges, and behavioral challenges. I know of numerous families who have moved out of Abington because the district was not able to meet their families' special education needs. There are also families that have been struggling with bullying for years. Additionally, recent data published by the US Department of Education (<https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Page?t=s&eid=228750&syk=8&pid=2538>) shows that Abington Senior High School disproportionately suspends and expels students of color, even though they make up a smaller proportion of the student population. We need a leader who can address these disparities and create a more equitable and safe student environment for all students.

One of my passions is special education and the needs of kids who learn differently and recognizing that their all not going to look the same, and Abington has a reputation for being not easy to deal with, shall we say, and there is a feel that it comes from the top down. So, I just want to put that out there and encourage you to reach out to those of us in the community dealing with that who have a lot to offer and would love to help shape the collaboration that we could do between the School Board and the parents of these special needs kids.

**4. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment: Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

Informed about the scope and sequence of the current curriculum and can determine whether it is logical or arbitrary (for instance, there is no Honors placement available for Reading Across the Curriculum in grades 7th and 8th for regular education student; Committed to personalized learning that meets each student where he/she is and offers learning opportunities that are personal, meaningful, measurable and rigorous; rejects curriculum mounted on rote memorization or recitation of facts or that seeks to only address the lowest levels of learning; Committed to bringing 1:1 technology initiatives in order to prepare our children to be competitive in a global market that requires technological proficiency with real world application.

The District has an established culture built around excellence of education. We need a leader who will not only continue to build upon that culture, but also is open to the introduction of best practices from other schools that can enhance the learning experience for every student in the district. Whether students and their families choose to take advantage is up to them but the message of excellence must be prevalent through the District.

Well versed in a variety of scheduling options at the junior and high school levels, including block or modified blocks and is willing to critically analyze whether the rather antiquated schedule at the junior and high schools is appropriate, effective, and modern;

We need a vision that meets the ever changing landscape of Public Education and the rapidly changing landscape of our country. Changes in technology provide an opportunity to learn differently and just because it is new doesn't make it wrong. With Vision comes challenges as people would be happier to complain about things staying the same then embrace changes that benefit them. The new Superintendent must possess this vision and a proven track record of successfully adopting new ideas and programs.

While I recognize the vast array of input you will receive, I urge you to look at successful neighboring districts and those who have been willing to break free from the industrialized and stagnant models of education that flourished decades ago.

A fluid understanding of 21st Century skills are necessary for the next Superintendent. The 4 C's encompass what 21st Century skills are predicated on and it includes critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity . 21st Century skills have been supported and embraced by educational, business , and political leaders across the country. 21st Century skills enhance problem-solving in classrooms and incorporate innovation for student learning. 21st Century skills extends beyond traditional learning and allows for deeper learning and literacy across all fields of study.

I also hope that the candidates will have experience in gifted and APEX programs, as well as have an appreciation for the importance of music and the arts, as I believe these are areas that still need development in the district.

Abington is a well managed district that is deeply in need of academic invigoration. My last child just graduated from ASHS. I appreciated the orderly and predictable stability of the district but found it to be intellectually and creatively deadening. Although my children will not be able to benefit, as an educator myself, I feel the district sorely needs fresh perspectives and outsider eyes to bring new ideas and new excitement. I worry that an internal candidate will maintain the status quo rather than bring new and exiting academic innovation to the district.

Strong, strong emphasis on the "well –rounded & well prepared" student . All accommodations should be a priority , so the exceptional art student does not have to give up honors math or science- wherever such accommodation can be made.

**5. Community of Care and Support for Students: Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.**

I believe the person sought after should reflect a no tolerance on violence and bullying. Students should in no way fight or hit another student or else face serious consequences such as suspension first offense and expelled second.

I would like to see a superintendent who has thought about bringing diversity training and awareness to all staff and even students. The Anti-defamation League does a lot of work in schools, but teachers and staff are involved. Diversity awareness would educate staff on micro-aggressions and understanding privilege and bias. This is important racially, but also socio-economically, religiously, etc. These types of trainings lead to better school environments and feelings among and between staff and students.

I feel that it is extremely important for the candidate to respect teachers and students, thereby putting into effect an atmosphere conducive to learning. Not tolerating destructive behaviors from students, disciplining as appropriate, and fostering an atmosphere where both teachers and students feel safe.

I imagine you have heard some interesting feedback about parent priorities in the superintendent search, including ones I share, such as programs to combat bullying and the role of standardized testing in the school community. Because I suspect those other issues are already being addressed, I wanted to put a word in about transgender students and the superintendent's role in implementing trans-supportive policies.

As I'm sure you are aware, the current Presidential administration and the state legislature have been working hard to roll back Obama-era protections for transgender Americans. Communities are being given more latitude on determining students' rights such as bathroom/locker room access and the right to choose name and gender identification on class lists and school documentation, etc. I've been proud and grateful to see that Abington has continued to preserve and protect these rights even when regulations are rolled back. Of course, these are policies that are determined at the board level, and it's the responsibility of the superintendent to implement them. However, there's usually quite a bit of room for interpretation in that implementation, and some superintendents might take a more proactive approach, while others might be more conciliatory to the viewpoints of those who oppose transgender rights.

I would therefore encourage you to consider the following questions in your superintendent search:

- What is the candidate's experience with implementing policies related to transgender students? What were those policies, and does the candidate feel the implementation was successful? Why or why not?
- Has the candidate ever negotiated a dispute between families with opposing viewpoints on this issue? How was that resolved? How would they handle such a dispute if it arises here?
- Has the candidate ever encountered issues with staffers related to acceptance and support of transgender students?
- What steps would the candidate want/expect/plan to see implemented to support transgender students while s/he serves as superintendent?

Essentially, I think it's important to identify whether you are looking (as I hope you are) for someone who will vigorously defend trans rights in the ASD, or if you are comfortable with a candidate who seeks more of a middle ground. A lot can be read between the lines by a candidate if your position is not made explicit at the outset.

I would love to have a Superintendent who will continue to support rigorous care for students dealing with mental health issues. I would love for the Superintendent to look at different issues creating mental health issues in children and adolescents and proactively continue to address these issues with continued if not stronger financial aid for highly supported counseling and beyond. The counselors at Abington are stellar - I had Mr. Fred Johnson at the Junior High and Ms. Rhonda Paules as my counselor at the Senior High, and they did wonders for me. I'd love to see those services expand and evolve.

I am asking that you consider candidates that will respect public education and the diverse student population Abington Township serves. When students enter the junior and senior high schools from the various elementary schools, they will often be subjected to increased bullying and divisiveness. Although programs currently exist in schools to prevent bullying, I believe more care needs to be placed on this problem, and consideration that the emphasis on bullying prevention may actually create more problems than solutions.

The other thing that I'd like to say is that in those policies that you talk about, that whoever this person is, has strong feelings about bullying and finding solutions and bringing people together.

**6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel: Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

I also would hope that this individual will carry a strict policy for bus drivers in which transportation to and from schools should be as safe as if on school grounds and all situations should be immediately reported whether confrontational or physical.

Encourage creativity in teaching. Don't rely too heavily on data, test scores, rankings, etc.

**7. Professional Community for Teachers & Staff: Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

Her commitment to constantly growing in her professional career by staying connected to the latest research and organizations as well as continuing to teach and supervise at the college level is, again, something I hope to see in our next administrator. She appeared to know the strengths in her district staff and continued to support their growth by promoting many in-house to admin positions which I admire. As a parent of girls, Dr. Sichel is a good example of a strong woman that has worked her way up to a position in leadership that is to be admired.

Organizational clarity is an essential function of the Superintendent. According to author/educational consultant Mike Schmoker, "Clarity is the antidote to anxiety ... if you do nothing else as a leader, be clear." Organizational clarity affords school leaders to think strategically and to consider their constituents and stakeholders when making decisions in the best interest of student achievement. Organizational clarity empowers people to consider all of the possibilities for their professional staff in terms of what can be accomplished and varied ways learning can be achieved. Organizational clarity builds cohesion among staff and partnerships among those in the community. Organizational clarity extinguishes the chance for chaos.

I believe it is important to honor the work and the commitment of those within the school district who have done an exceptional job. For this I applaud you and I know it contributes to high moral among Abington employees and a high retention rate among teachers.

The Superintendent should show willingness to share the limelight – to highlight other employees so they become equally "well known" – not just in brief School Board meeting kudos, but in videos or other presentations. Previously we have had one particular person almost always front and center and "in the picture". Every picture.

<b>8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community: Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.</b>
I have on several occasions tried to contact the Superintendent only to be redirected and blocked by her secretary / administrative assistant ... Be more approachable and transparent.
Many education professionals in the Abington School District lack the ability to speak to adults. When we have questions we'd like better answers than something approximating "the teacher said so" or double talk that says nothing without a definitive statement about anything. The ability and desire to communicate effectively should be a requirement for this position.
There needs to be Cooperation between the Superintendent, The Board, The Faculty and Staff, The Students and The Community. ... We are all in this together and I believe this Community does not fit the 80 / 20 rule. The community feels a pride and vested interest in the happenings of the District but wants input into direction.
An eye towards strong community partnerships is invaluable for the Superintendent position. Strong community partnerships and business alliances bolster our students in a competitive and ever-changing global market. The byproduct for the partnerships will, ultimately, benefit our students and enhance their future readiness. Strong community partnerships promote dialogue between the schools and the leaders within the community. Strong community partnerships must and should extend beyond corporations and local businesses. A Superintendent should seek out and find individuals who are community leaders and advocates for today's youth.
I would also want the Superintendent to be a transparent figure for not just parents, but students as well. At my college, Ursinus in Collegeville, we always knew our Board of Trustees chair and our President, and had the privilege to meet and speak with both when issues concerned us. If the future Superintendent (and school board!) took the time with students and parents on a frequent basis to talk and answer questions/take suggestions, I feel like the school district would progress in a direction that many would be satisfied with.
My final comment regarding what to look for in our next superintendent is something that I'm not sure you can gather from an interview. A few weeks ago I was visiting with a beloved neighbor of mine. She's retired, but very active in certain community matters. As she was going through her mail, she handed me a letter from the district and asked me to open it and tell her what it was about. It was a personal note from Dr. Sichel following up on a recent conversation they had. I won't get into the details of the content since that is between the two of them, but I was impressed that Dr. Sichel took the time to respond, that her response was personal and demonstrated that she had truly been paying attention to their conversation, and that she had taken the time to do some of her own research in follow up to the conversation. I know it's impossible to provide that level of response to every conversation our next superintendent will have, but I want someone who will take that time when they can because it sets an example and promotes that kind of culture throughout the district and in doing so, deepens the connection between school and community and promotes healthy dialogue and trust.
Honesty and Transparency with the community are key to all actions undertaken by the new superintendent in fulfilling his/her duties . The Superintendent should embrace a policy allowing that substantive answers will always be provided whenever a parent, community, staff member, or employee poses any question. No games or wild goose chases and certainly no one is to be ignored or stonewalled. Ethics, communication & transparency should be values our new Superintendent holds in high regard. Superintendent shall never try to cut the community members off from contact with teachers or School Board members, or any interaction at all (unless, of course, such contact has become frequent, persistent, disruptive or troublesome - which should not be the call if substantive answers have not been afforded by the School, requiring them to persist in questioning). Some of us recall the attempted shut down of communications in the past, where everything had to go through the Superintendent. We hope you will make clear that no such situation should ever be considered. The Superintendent should be able to rally groups of people together for problem solving, connecting groups that work on bullying, guns in school, student safety, race issues and other topics. These groups should not be "run" by a single person – but should reconvene in different configurations so that a variety of opinions can be heard and expressed and become part of the solution.
I'm just here to express my gratitude ... for the extraordinary collaboration and cooperation that we have had as a result of the leadership in the school district over the past several decades. It's kind of extraordinary, I had the opportunity to go to the FBI National Academy and train with other law enforcement executives, and I know that we can't take this type of collaboration and a culture of public safety and a commitment to the students and working with the police department for granted. I know that my experience over the last several years when we worked with the principals and others from the school district constantly refining our active shooter training, training every two years with the staff and working with the police department. Those are the things that we appreciate as a police department. In our department, we have seen a succession plan and in that succession plan we stated in-house with the appointment of the next Chief and Deputy Chief and that was a good thing for our organization because we're proud of our culture. Other things that exist in the school district with our D.A.R.E. program, our School Resource Officers program, Youth Aid Panel, Abington Community Taskforce, and Citizens and Police Together, those things don't happen by accident, they happen because of true commitment, leadership, and establishing long-term relationships. Sometimes when we see changes in those relationships, it's difficult to re-establish those.
What we're looking for in qualities is honesty and transparency with the community and that's the first and foremost thing. We are looking for that in every area, so there's no place where there is not. At one time in the past, you know all communications were to go through the Superintendent. We don't want that kind of thing. We want that to be made clear in your negotiations, and we hope you will do that. The Superintendent should never try to cut the community out also from speaking with teachers, with Board members, with anyone else, so I hope that will be part of it. We'd like you to make sure that the person that you choose would have a policy that substantive answers would be given to any and every question that is posed. So all of you know that I recently sent you something, I got not one response, not one, a continuation of what's called stonewalling. It's not acceptable and I would like to see when a Superintendent, when you're negotiating with the Superintendent, understands that everything else they find a way to do, they can find a way to answer questions from staff, from employees, from the community, from everyone ... So bringing people together, answering questions, creating forums and groups, should be a prime quality I hope that you look for.
What went down with the naming of the school and that whole email chain and everything was not well received, which points to an issue of transparency and sort of being out front. What Amy Sichel did in terms of benefitting the schools was fantastic. I think developing donors is great, but we need to be a little bit more transparent about the way it goes, so the next Superintendent sort of needs to get that message.

Looking for somebody who could bring people together and also I hope that we will find somebody who wants to be a Superintendent, who oversees the running of the school and connects with the other educational organizations but not as a fund raiser, that's a whole separate skill set and that's a whole different dynamic and I think there was a great deal of offense over that.

**9. Operations and Management: Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

Currently, urgent decision making is at best slow and at worst damaging. It should not be difficult to make a snow closure decision when Township officials are begging for the closure. In no way am I claiming the decisions are inappropriate. However, I should not have to call out of work to watch my kids at 05:30 for a 06:00 shift in healthcare when every surrounding township has canceled the night before. Show some consideration please. Stop operating in a vacuum, work with other public officials (they report back to us when you don't).

Keeping taxes affordable so we can stay in the district and new families can join is imperative to providing education to all.

It is extremely important, for the safety of our students, to continue to operate the school district bus garage and to keep outsourcing of transportation to a minimum. The district bus garage employees are upheld to higher standards than an outsourced company. The district provides valuable benefits to its employees, which in-turn, promotes pride in employment which directly relates to the safety of the students. There has been an up-swing in the amount of school bus related crashes/incidents in which it would later reveal the driver was drunk, high, or mentally unsound. I believe that the district should have control over & set standards for their drivers, instead of leaving that in the hands of a third party that only cares about profits and not student safety. Also, there is a sense of pride when you see "Abington School District" on the side of the bus, as it takes your child to school.

A commitment to the fundamentals of school business is critical because the Superintendent must understand the purpose of school and education as well as the foundation from which a school should be built upon. Fiscal responsibility is an integral part of the process as well as being accountable to the taxpayers who assist in funding programs and resources throughout the schools. Ensuring the quality and breadth of the educational program should always be a critical driver of our District. The Superintendent must consider the business functions of the entire school district while also evaluating the "must" haves in comparison to what is "nice" to have. Several neighboring districts have slashed enrichment programs at the expense of the children with which they serve. Abington School District has always stood head and shoulders above said districts for we have not cut programs, such as art and music, rather we have found ways to remain fiscally solvent, while placing our mission to educate children first.

Please keep class sizes small, consider a smaller junior high, or even a smaller high school someday.

The Superintendent's job is to see that the educational processes as well as budgeting and planning are running smoothly, not to be a "fundraiser" which is a different skillset. Fundraising should be separate and never done by the people who have \$160 million of contractual work to dole out. Neither the School nor anything relevant to it should be "for sale" -

I'm always worried about fiscal responsibility and so I would hope that the next candidate has some capabilities in terms of understanding the budgeting process because we're running a large enterprise.

**10. School Improvement: Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.**

I'd like to see a Superintendent who is willing to examine the status quo in terms of curriculum, scheduling and personalized learning initiatives and, when appropriate, be an agent of change. There are some elements of our school district that I fear are in place simply because that's how it always been and not because it's what current research tells us is best practice.

The candidate should be open to new and innovative ideas. The world is changing and our students need to keep up with it. The Stephan Schwartzman grant was a historic transaction that will impact our student's education for years to come. The candidate should continue to be forward thinking, looking for opportunities to better the curriculum, and innovating education so Abington can continue to be a leading school in Pennsylvania.

I would hope that we find someone that's innovative. We're looking at a new wing with STEM and we're going to have to find new ways of getting that technology to our students.

**11. Miscellaneous**

Drug checks should be instituted on school grounds and lockers. Students should have random bag checks. No place is exempt from the amount of drugs students bring to schools and go unnoticed for long periods.

Please consider current superintendents who are successful in other districts. We should not hire a first time superintendent who would have to learn on the job. It may cost more to buyout a contract, but there are some excellent superintendents out there worth recruiting. It's done all of the time in the sports world, so don't be afraid of any fallout from stealing another district's superintendent.

"Book Learning" is absolutely essential while educating ourselves and training for a new role or position; however, there are many things that can never be learned as a student in the classroom or a worker "outside" of the field. For example, I would never hire a driver who has read and fully understands the manual and inner workings of a combustible engine - I would want that driver behind the wheel, in the rain, snow, and traffic jams. Only then would I trust them to transport me. The same can be said for the new superintendent. They should have served inside the classrooms and halls - for multiple years - so they understand the children, parents, staff, and faculty that the district is comprised of.

I am reaching out to share my belief that the process should be opened to all potential candidates from the beginning - external and internal. I believe we have some outstanding internal candidates who deserve strong consideration - but I do not believe we should limit the search from the beginning to just those candidates. Instead, we should open the search to all qualified applicants and start the screening and interview process from there, so we have the full scope of talent available and interested in this critical role. I would also like to volunteer to participate in the selection committee. I believe it is critical to involve parents of current students as well as other community stakeholders in the search process, and I would welcome the opportunity to engage in this important task. I have an extensive career in public education and the best interests of our children and our township at heart. I am actively participating in the Superintendent's committee for the transition to the new middle school and wish to serve our school district in any way possible. My rising first and fourth graders are having a wonderful experience in Abington and I will do anything I can to contribute positively to your work.

As an Abington School District employee, I have had several occasions to work directly with Dr. Jeffrey Fecher. In my humble opinion, I believe that he has what it takes to lead Abington School District.

I am sure that the board has at least one internal candidate in mind for the superintendent position. I would like to see as many external candidates interviewed as internal candidates. An outside perspective and different experiences may provide information and viewpoints that would not be gained by a candidate who has spent much of their career within the district.

The candidate should be a resident of Abington, whom currently or has had some connection with the school district (ie – either attended, worked or have/had children attend). I feel it is extremely important for there to be a strong connection to the school and community. Dr. Sichel helped to grow the district, its reputation, and help build up the community to where it is today.

With all the positive aspects of Dr. Sichel's years of service, there are also changes and growth that I hope to see with the next superintendent. Dr. Sichel came from a counseling and psychology background. I would like to see our next superintendent come from a teaching background. Someone that has given at least 10 years of service teaching in an elementary or high school level classroom. This background will allow for a direct connection with the staff on the front lines and understanding of the students' needs. Dr. Sichel had a special education background through counseling and psychology. However, having a daughter that receives special education services, I first hand saw the cracks in Abington's special education system that were district wide, not due to school staff issues. My hope is that our next superintendent will have special education teaching experience so that he or she can listen to the staff and make the necessary changes. I understand wanting the district to look good on paper is important, however low LRE percentages aren't more important than meeting the students' needs. And this is just one issue of many in special education that I've encountered.

I understand that our first job in the district is to educate our students but, I look at this process from a business perspective. When you are the CEO of an organization, you align leaders below you that can and will someday take over your organization. Following that mindset, Dr Fecher is the ideal candidate to replace Dr Sichel. I think that Dr Fecher is an excellent candidate. He is more than qualified to take on the role and he also brings a new perspective to the position. Dr Fecher has spent time learning both the academic needs of our district and the business side of running our district over the last few years. Dr Fecher has been a great presence in the district and always makes himself available to attend events, speak to students, parents and community members. He is also well respected among our staff and Superintendents in the region.

My concern with an outside search would be what our neighboring districts have faced. We don't want a revolving door of superintendents - someone that only comes to Abington for a few years and then leaves. This could be extremely detrimental to the district. It is expensive to conduct a search and then having to repeat it in two years would be expensive to the community, not to mention the ramp up time for a new Superintendent. My other concern is that if we do not promote Dr Fecher, we will lose him. He is asset to the district and we should not be willing to overlook that. The other risk here is that we would have all new administrators running our district. To ensure success, we need some continuity.

Throughout my life I have seen first-hand the dedication it takes to be an effective educator and how dynamic successful administrators need to be. That being said, I would highly suggest that you give Chuck Lentz consideration as the next Superintendent.

Mr. Lentz grew up in Abington Schools, spent his entire career here and has held successful leadership positions in every level of education. Many of you may already be aware of his resume and his current responsibilities as Assistant Director of Curriculum. However, from my personal perspective, I have never had a teacher who has had more of an impact on my life than Mr. Lentz. Mr. Lentz was my 6th grade teacher at Highland. From the first day we recognized how effective he was at getting across the subject matter and we could all tell that he genuinely had fun in the classroom. I remember that he put a large emphasis on writing, a skill that served me well as a humanities major in college in throughout my professional career. He challenged each one of us and adapted his style according to the individual needs of his students. Mr. Lentz was the first teacher I had who made me see my potential as a student. He would pull me aside, ask about my goals and come up with a plan of action. In my particular case, a few friends and I would stay in many days during recess and after school where he would give us higher level math problems than what he was teaching during regular class time. He also did this for students who needed extra attention to understand the subject matter. When I went to middle school he would allow me to come back and tutor me after school in algebra. Having lived and worked with teachers, I have come to believe that the most effective teachers are naturally born with the gift. Mr. Lentz has that gift.

Mr. Lentz and I had stayed in contact on and off through the years and in our conversations I came to know more about his philosophy on education. Not only was he driven to be the best teacher he could be, but he is truly dedicated to shifting the paradigm on a macro level for the benefit of the greatest number of students. This is indicative of the countless boards, committees and leadership positions he has taken outside of his day to day professional responsibilities. Furthermore, he too is a lifelong student and constantly works to make himself a more rounded individual and professional.

I credit a large part of my success in life to the confidence that he instilled in me. In addition, he was a significant inspiration for me to seek a career in academic institutions. In my opinion, there is no one more qualified, more knowledgeable of the school district, more dedicated and more inherently gifted to be the next Superintendent than Mr. Lentz. I hope you give him your serious consideration.

I felt that Dr. Sichel has done a great job in the district. Our taxes have been manageable, and Abington does not have the same problems as other districts ... That is why I think it is important that the next superintendent has had a good chance to learn under Dr. Sichel. I have been pleased with Abington's leadership to date and think promoting someone who knows Abington well is of the best interest to taxpayers. If an educator was good enough to be hired by the district and has continued to prove that they are capable of doing their job well, then we should give them the opportunity to advance to superintendent. I think hiring someone from the outside could be a risk because you do not always know what you are getting. Stability is important in leadership roles and I would hate to see Abington become like other districts where they have a new superintendent every two years. It's best to hire someone who has already dedicated themselves to helping the children of Abington and has done so because they want to work here, not because they got a shot at the top job.

The next Superintendent of Abington School District should be an educational leader, strategic thinker and a visionary.

Don't select the best candidate, select the right candidate.

I sincerely hope that the board is strongly considering promoting within the existing ranks and putting our current assistant superintendent of the last five years at the top of the list. I served under Dr. Jeffrey Fetcher as PTO president and witnessed firsthand his leadership skills and his sense of responsibility. He has exhibited devotion to the all members of Abington School District whether they be students, faculty, or members of the greater community. These qualities are essential to continue the excellence that is Abington School District. Someone with Dr. Fetcher's knowledge of how the Abington School District runs would only enhance the job he would do as superintendent. I also feel his experience would facilitate a smooth transition into a new administration.

If I could request anything out of a Superintendent, it would be that they either have been a graduate of Abington or have a deep appreciation and knowledge of the area and demographics. I would love to see someone who knows the halls, knows the classrooms, and knows how to make them progressively better in a way that is best for Abington residents.

I have made many community connections and I can tell you there is an overwhelmingly high sentiment toward Dr. Fecher. In fact, there is palpable excitement about his becoming our next superintendent. I have always found Dr. Fecher welcoming, accessible, fair, and thoughtful about matters put before him. I am frankly surprised that we are going through this public process as never before for any position in the school district. This process was not implemented when James McCaffery followed Dr. Hebert nor when Dr. Sichel followed James McCaffery. Please do not make a decision that would cause you to give Dr. Fecher to another school district. He is a breath of fresh air in Abington!

Consider hiring Dr Charles Lentz as the New superintendent

I am writing to express concern about the search for the next superintendent being an internal one. If Abington is to be a district of the 21st century, responding not just the local situations of our children, but also to the national and global issues students confront everyday, and will most certainly confront as graduates of Abington Senior High School, I believe it is imperative that the search for the next superintendent is one that looks beyond the district. It may end up that the best candidate is found within the walls of the district, that would be wonderful! However, to make sure a determination from the onset of a search is very limiting. As a parent, this makes me question how much Abington is really preparing my children for the complex, global and interconnected world we live in now, and what they will certainly encounter in the next 10-16 years until my last child has graduated from HS. From my more than 15 years of experience serving on countless search committees, the practice of having an effective search begins with crafting a thoughtful job description and casting a wide net to ensure an array of applicants, with a variety of skills and experiences can be considered. As a newer parent I have been hoping to become more involved at the district level. If I can assist at all with this search, or serve as a member of this search committee I would love to be of assistance in any way possible.

I'm sad to hear she's retiring, she's been so dedicated and done such a good job! I don't know how you feel about recommendations, but I think Dr. Lentz would be just as dedicated and that he'd do incredible things for the district.

While I appreciate that Dr. Sichel has a succession plan in place, I would strongly urge the Board to look beyond internal candidates.

<p>Please consider searching beyond Abington for potential candidates. Abington has a tradition of hiring from within for both administrative and teaching positions, and while continuity can be useful, it can also lead to stagnation. Dr. Sichel served the district for many years, and it would be useful to consider individuals who have experience working in and with other communities in order to breathe new life into Abington schools. Recruit women and people of color to apply for the Superintendent position and seriously consider their candidacies. The leadership of our schools and school board is not reflective of the community at large. Children in our community need to see people of color in leadership positions, and I am sure there are many individuals with extensive experience and expertise who could offer a broader perspective in Abington.</p>
<p>This has been a rather tumultuous year, and while Dr. Sichel certainly leaves big shoes to fill, it also seems an opportune time to reset some switches. As a taxpayer, I would ask you to establish a salary and benefits package that is in line with comparable local school districts. As a parent, and as a community member who was displeased with the plan to rename Abington High School, I would ask you to take this opportunity to set in stone the district's policies toward charitable donations. Dr. Sichel's successor may very well be asked to make a similar decision, and it would serve the board and the community well to know how he or she would handle such situations ... This past year highlighted the big issues, but please remember that there are 8,000 small stories being written every single day.</p>
<p>I strongly urge you to consider making the selection after the upcoming election cycle. I fully support Dr. Fletcher as interim Superintendent and he would be my choice for the position. After the actions displayed by board members during the attempted renaming of our school and the lack of transparency extended, my hope is that you will be respectful in holding any selection process until residents have input in who will be our voice in such an important selection.</p>
<p>I hope, and I'm sure, the School Board of Directors are looking long term as well. The decision for who is chosen to be Assistant Superintendent is just as important. That person will be next in line however many years down the road to run Abington School District. I'm not sure if you want feedback on that choice, but my biased opinion is Dr. Charles Lentz. I got to know him when he was Principal of McKinley and I was PTO President. He is another ASD employee that is personable, intelligent, serious but funny and truly does care about the best interests of our children. I don't know if he has the experience to be an Assistant Superintendent, as I am certainly not an expert on this, but I do feel he would be an excellent candidate.</p>
<p>I would strongly encourage the Board to solicit input from the community as a major stakeholder in this decision. I would also encourage the Board to appoint members of the community to serve on the search committee.</p>
<p>What is most important to me in the search for a new superintendent, is that transparency of the process is made a top priority. I urge you to post the comments that have come in and post the "top 5" traits that you will be focusing on in your search. The full job description should be posted publicly. The process/schedule with which you will conduct your search should be posted publicly. The progress you make (excluding specific names for privacy reasons) should be posted publicly. A public session to interview the final candidate might also be a good idea; a chance to send questions via email for a Facebook live Q&amp;A would also be a great option. If the school board and school district seek to include major gift fundraising in its list of future priorities, I urge you to require experience in raising major gifts, stewarding donors, and community engagement for the successful candidate.</p>
<p>I believe I failed to appropriately articulate my concerns with the most recent superintendent's contract. I largely approve of the overall package, particularly given Dr. Sichel's level of experience and impressive track record. The role of superintendent is one that is largely thankless, never ending, and incredibly stressful. While no one is perfect, from what I've seen Dr. Sichel has performed an amazing job for our district and is well deserving of her compensation. My critiques lie mainly in two areas. The first is regarding the structure of the superintendent's bonus, more precisely, what is required to receive the bonus. As I recall, the parameters the board uses in determining the bonus are largely symbolic and consist of the superintendent's most basic job duties. In short, as long as the superintendent doesn't get fired, the bonus is basically guaranteed. That rubs me the wrong way. I would have preferred that either the bonus be simply been done away with and the salary increased instead of going through the pretense of tying the bonus to the superintendent's job performance, or that the bonus be tied to progress toward longer term objectives related to executing the district's vision. To that end, I would encourage you to approach the bonus differently in negotiating with our next superintendent, preferably tying it to longer term objectives as a way of encouraging and rewarding retention, commitment and long term thinking. My second suggestion is with regard to how the board communicates the superintendent's contract and compensation package. While I respect the sensitivity of having someone's detailed contract and compensation package laid bare for public scrutiny, such is the nature of this high profile public position. When the board voted on the most recent superintendent's contract, specifics were not readily available to the public during the meeting and had to be requested after the fact. I was one of the people who requested to see the contract because I was curious about the seemingly mysterious details. After doing my own research, I concluded that Dr. Sichel's overall compensation package was well aligned to that of a CEO of an educational non-profit with a \$150 million budget. I may have some quibbles with a few details, but within the context of the broader market and given Dr. Sichel's experience, performance and accomplishments, it is nothing outrageous. I would encourage you therefore, to be very open with the next superintendent's contract details and frame the package within the broader context of the market and the candidate's experience. I know not everyone will agree with the contract, but I believe that will allow you to better control the narrative and guide the discussion, and would certainly support your efforts toward increased transparency.</p>

Health Care Plans –shouldn't our leaders and administrative personnel have the same health care policy that they think is good enough for the rest of the employees? If they want additional features their substantial salaries allow for them to purchase what they think is appropriate.

Other benefits – do all employees get the same or similar professional development allowances? Flexible Premium Life Insurance payments? Term Life Insurance Premiums? Tax deferments? Phones ? Car Expenses ? Reimbursement for sick or vacation or holiday days unused ? Any such negotiations that are not applied evenly across the employee base are simply the equivalent of negotiating a higher salary – often one that taxpayers can't add up to decipher what exactly, in the end, is being paid. It skews transparency. If you are offering more, simply make the salary larger.

Outside Endeavors - at Penn they limit them, I think to 2 . Transparency in the amount of time / hours spent is far better than an attitude that suggests no such accountability is required .

Real Bonuses - Bonuses that are determined at the outset of the year and that rely heavily on the recipient's own opinion of whether they are earned, are not really bonuses – but "salary" . Any bonuses offered should be small ( in comparison with the current \$26,000 + ) and be just a token to reward a good direct outcome . How can this be revamped? It should be considered a sign that you have done well at your job by the fact that you are retained for additional years and are well paid. More than a small token bonus of a few thousand dollars is little more than an attempt to hide the real salary figure.

School and Township Community input : For any bonus: polling the school and township community for concerns, and polling again for satisfaction after addressing those concerns should play into the awarding of any bonus. Other things that should....?

Cost to Taxpayers : (Policy needed – clause in the contract that the full cost to taxpayers of any contract negotiated, with all of the details intelligibly delineated, shall be published openly for the benefit of the taxpayers. A section on the website will be kept where this and other salary info can be easily found.

A starting salary for negotiation? If Dr. Fecher or other internal persons are considered, what is their current salary and what is a reasonable increase for this increase in responsibility? I am taking it for GRANTED that no one should be at or near what Dr. Sichel had negotiated. The outrage in the community had no place to go. It was a done deal. But this is the right time to address it and put the genie back in the box. The outrageous contract previously negotiated will continue for years and years as an unreasonably inflated retirement package.

The second question I had was as far as the Superintendent, it talks about how in the Board procedures they'll be Executive Sessions for interviews having to do with contracts. Will that apply to the Superintendent's contract also? I would like to see that a little bit more public, and in that same vein is there a framework established right now, just a broad framework for when you're advertising this position for what the Superintendent's contract will be. I would hope that you would not start anywhere near that price point, which enraged the community who didn't know what to do with that.

And also in the search for the next Superintendent, is there any way that we can have parents actually be involved in the search? In the way that I think if we can come down to a very ideal case, let's say you have three candidates, and then we can have actually the whole parental community, not anyone but parents of students, do a general vote or something, when you list all the three candidates, their credentials and their backgrounds and then we can vote on that, and that way the community gets one they agree on, one Superintendent. So therefore in the future any decision made by the Superintendent would not be creating or enraging the community or creating such huge conflicts. At the end of the day, none of us want that.

Leadership style with a high emotional quotient so that they're in tune with the community and everybody, and finally some experience in governance because that's what leadership is, in this case, about. And obviously, an open process.

A Superintendent who believes that her health care plan should be the same as the health care plan of all the people that she works with every day and not something way superior and other benefits too on that line. And outside endeavors, we have an issue with way too many outside endeavors. I hope you'll find a Superintendent that you will either limit the qualities in the contract, the endeavors that they can undertake, in the contract. Some places limit them to either one or two outside activities or you will have somebody who believes that their full focus is here.