



January 18, 2021

Capital Projects Advisory Review Board  
ATTN: Project Review Committee  
[PRC@des.wa.gov](mailto:PRC@des.wa.gov) c/o Talia Baker, Administrative Support

RE: Tacoma Public Schools Application for Certification of Public Body

Dear Members of the PRC:

Absher Construction Company supports Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) request for Certification as a Public Body for Design-Build. In our experience working with TPS on the current Hunt Middle School project, we have found TPS to be well managed with staff that is well versed in design-build; clear communicators for their goals and expectations; and a highly engaged member of the overall project team.

Throughout the Hunt project, we can cite a number of ways the District has provided better results for its students and the citizens of Tacoma through use of design-build delivery. Most notably, TPS was able to contract for both phases of this project through two different bond measures and is still on track to deliver the project on the original Phase I timeline. Due to the advance planning for Phase II that TPS was able to do with our design-build team, all necessary work to expand the school was designed during Phase I design. Upon the District passing its next bond, TPS was able to add Phase II work to the on-going project without change to the critical completion date to open the school.

TPS has also leveraged design-build to upgrades to their facilities. TPS gave Absher's design-build team a clear list of priorities and preferences that they would consider enhancements to the project. As we have realized budget savings and returned portions of unused contingency, we have been able to incorporate several upgrades to materials and amenities that give the school better functionality, durability and maintainability. Having an open dialogue with designers and contractors, and not encumbered by the traditional change-order process, design-build has given the District the flexibility to maximize their value.

Finally, TPS has been a leader in expanding opportunities for local, women- and minority-owned and small businesses on their projects, and utilizing design build has been a key factor in achieving more diverse project participants. Because design-build does not solely rely on a low-bid process, we have successfully collaborated with TPS to contract MWBE and local firms who can successfully perform within the allotted budget and whom reflect the diverse makeup of the greater Tacoma community.

Tacoma Public Schools' demonstrated ability to manage construction through design-build delivery has proven to be an asset to not only the District itself, but it also provides designers and contractors with a more collaborative and productive design and construction process. Their use of design-build has created cohesive projects for all project participants.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Curt Gimmestad".

Curt Gimmestad  
Vice President, Absher Construction Company

CC: Morris Aldridge, Tacoma Public Schools