



David Douglas School District
Learn · Grow · Thrive

Don Grotting, *Superintendent* | 11300 NE Halsey Street, Portland, Oregon 97220 | Phone 503-252-2900 | Fax 503-256-5218

November 12, 2015

To Whom it may concern:

The David Douglas School District has had the great pleasure to work closely with Cornerstone Management Group since 2012, shortly after our citizens overwhelmingly passed a \$49.5 million construction bond measure.

Over the past three years, the tremendous success we have had in unrolling and completing multiple projects at all of our facilities is directly tied to the skilled management of Cornerstone MGI and its staff.

The construction of new facilities and remodel of 17 existing buildings – the majority of which requiring completion during the short, 10-week summers – is a monumental juggling act. We could not have done it with the success we have without the expertise and leadership of Rick Rainone and his team at Cornerstone.

All projects have been completed on or ahead of schedule, which means the education of our students was never disrupted. Cornerstone worked hand-in-hand with contracted construction and architectural firms to ensure the timely completion of projects. A significant reason for the timely completion of our projects was Cornerstone's masterful navigation of the City of Portland's permitting and zoning regulations and departments. Almost all of our permit and zoning requests sailed through the city's bureaucracy, largely because of Cornerstone's expertise, communication skills and, for lack of a better word, diplomacy. Permitting is a frequent cause of project delays, but was not in our case.

Cornerstone's expertise in the bidding process also resulted in most of our projects coming in under budget. They helped us to secure the right contractors for the right jobs at the right price. Cornerstone was also instrumental in assisting David Douglas in leveraging additional funds from the state of Oregon's facility grant program and energy incentives. Their assistance and leadership allowed our District to complete every project we promised to our citizens and in many cases more.

Early on, we discovered that our initial plan to refurbish our swimming pool facility was unrealistic due to its deteriorated condition. The pool was unsalvageable. Cornerstone helped us to navigate both the political process and financial implications of shifting gears toward the construction of a brand new aquatics center. Their leadership in financial management of our bond provided us with the additional resources required to make such a dramatic change in plans, all within the limitations of our approved bond measure. As a result, we now have what I believe to be one of Oregon's finest K-12 aquatic centers.

Visit our website: www.ddouglas.k12.or.us

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Perhaps the crown jewel of our bond projects is our new Richard C. Alexander Early Learning Wing built at Earl Boyles Elementary to provide Pre-K education to our families. Incorporating an early learning wing and accompanying neighborhood center into a K-12 school is a highly unusual project in Oregon. Few exist. It was complicated further by a funding effort that combined \$3.5 million in bond dollars with a \$3.5 million private/public fundraising effort. Working seamlessly with architects, construction companies, fundraisers, private funders, public partners and myriad other community partners, Cornerstone helped David Douglas create what is now a nationally recognized model for early education and family involvement.

In addition to the highly skilled management of our projects, Rick and his team helped us to create a citizens' Bond Oversight Committee, which has provided tremendous credibility with our voters. Rick or a member of his team has attended every monthly meeting of this committee since it formed in 2012. Moreover, Rick or a member of his team has attended every David Douglas School Board meeting for the past three years, joining with the chair of the Bond Oversight Committee in reporting to the Board on monthly progress. Attending these regular night meetings, as well as attending weekly construction meetings with our administrative leadership, clearly demonstrates Cornerstone's absolute commitment to the success of our bond program.

Our major projects are now complete. Over the next one to two years, we will finish up remaining projects that could not be done during the initial remodels, as well as implement our plan to add electronic door security to every facility in our District. This is a complex project, but we know that Cornerstone will be with us throughout, and because of that we are very confident that it will be completed successfully.

Some day hopefully soon, David Douglas will pass another bond measure. When that happens, we will immediately and eagerly encourage Cornerstone to bid for our project management services. And I highly recommend Cornerstone Management Group to anyone looking for such services.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for additional information. I am happy to answer any questions you may have regarding Cornerstone's work for us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don Grotting".

Don Grotting
Superintendent