

November 6, 2025

Rob Jackson, Ed.D., Superintendent
Buncombe County Schools
175 Bingham Road
Ashville, NC 28806

Re: Martin L. Nesbitt Discovery Academy Roof Rehabilitation Project – Areas B, B-1, D-1, D-3, and H, RFP # 15-25

Dear Dr. Jackson,

On behalf of the International Institute of Building Enclosure Consultants (IIBEC), I am writing to share our observations and concerns regarding the procurement process for the Martin L. Nesbitt Discovery Academy Roof Rehabilitation Project – Areas B, B-1, D-1, D-3, and H (RFP #15-25).

IIBEC is an international association representing 3,900 professionals who specialize in roofing, waterproofing, exterior wall design, and building enclosure commissioning. Our members advocate for building owners to ensure projects comply with codes, standards, warranties, and performance requirements.

After reviewing the referenced solicitation, it appears that the project proceeded without the involvement of an independent, licensed design professional and may have relied on a single-source or proprietary product specification process. Such an approach can inadvertently conflict with both state and federal procurement standards, bypass established safeguards and increase project costs.

To ensure transparency and accountability, IIBEC recommends that future project documents clearly demonstrate open competition and independence in design. We noted that the solicitation included materials referencing a specific manufacturer. This detail raises the possibility that the manufacturer was directly involved in developing the specifications, a practice inconsistent with NCGS 133-1 and 133-2, which prohibit specifiers from preparing project documents for products or entities in which they have a financial interest.

Publicly funded construction projects should always be structured to promote open competition and eliminate potential conflicts of interest. When specifications restrict bidding to a single product or supplier, it limits market participation, discourages innovation, and often leads to higher costs. Independent, credentialed professionals, such as those certified through IIBEC, are best positioned to help public agencies maintain fair, competitive processes that protect both quality and taxpayer investment. For more information or to locate credentialed building enclosure professionals, please visit <https://consultant.iibec.org/>.

To further reduce potential conflicts, IIBEC encourages public owners to:

1. Require all consultants to attest that they receive no financial benefit, directly or indirectly, from manufacturers or suppliers associated with their projects.
2. Require consultants to confirm that they do not sell, distribute, or install materials, and do not bid on construction services related to the project.

The RFP, as published included a “Roof Cleaning Services Proposal” with an allocated cost of \$26,507.15 to a vendor not included in the public bidding process. Expenditures of this nature should also be subject to competitive review and transparent procurement procedures.

For your reference, I am enclosing a memorandum from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction regarding drawings and specifications for roofing projects, which further clarifies the legal requirements surrounding public design and procurement.

Open competition and independent design oversight are the foundation of sound public procurement. Specifications should focus on performance-based criteria and life-cycle value rather than proprietary brand names or single-source systems. This approach not only ensures fairness but also promotes innovation and delivers the most cost-effective outcomes for public entities.

IIBEC’s Policy [Safeguarding Taxpayer Funds During Procurement of Design and Construction Services](#) emphasize the importance of separating design from product manufacture and installation to remove bias and promote best practices. Using multiple material sources and performance- or life-cycle-based specifications supports both competition and cost-effective outcomes.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss these recommendations or if IIBEC can provide additional assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brian Pallasch, CAE
Executive Vice President & CEO