

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1860 (McKinnor) – As Amended April 13, 2026

Policy Committee: Education

Vote: 9 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill authorizes a county office of education (COE) to use the design-build and alternative design-build method for facilities projects in excess of \$1 million and \$5 million, respectively, subject to approval of the county superintendent of schools, and provides the county superintendent of schools with exclusive authority to award design-build contracts.

FISCAL EFFECT:

No new state costs.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

AB 1860 would authorize design-build and progressive design-build for COE, align COE authority with K–12 districts and community colleges, and improve project coordination, reduce delays, and increase efficiency.

2) **Background.** Current law authorizes school districts to use either the more traditional “design-bid-build” construction delivery method or the more recently authorized “design-build” and “alternative design-build” construction delivery methods when pursuing public works projects.

In simple terms, with design-bid-build, an entity, such as a school district, first engages an architect or engineer to design a project. Thereafter, the school district contracts with a general contractor, who often subcontracts with third parties who build the project. With design-build, the school district first engages a general contractor, and the general contractor engages an architect or engineer to design the project and then subcontracts with a third party who builds the project. According to the Legislative Analyst’s Office, each method has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, design-bid-build may result in a more objective contract award than design-build. On the other hand, design-build leads to greater price certainty than design-bid-build and is oftentimes an overall quicker process.

Existing law defines the similar “alternative design-build” method as a project delivery process in which both the design and construction of a project are procured from a single design-build entity based on its proposed design cost, general conditions, overhead, and

project as a component of the project price, and “best value” as a value determined by evaluation of objective criteria that may include, but are not limited to, price, features, functions, life-cycle costs, experience, and past performance. This bill would extend authorization for both the design-build and alternative design-build methods to a COE, subject to approval by the county superintendent of schools.

- 3) **Prior Legislation.** AB 956 (Cortese), Chapter 177, Statutes of 2024, permanently authorized a school district to use the design-build method for projects in excess of \$1 million.

AB 185 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 57, Statutes of 2022, authorized a school district, until January 1, 2029, to use the alternative design-build method for projects in excess of \$5 million.

Analysis Prepared by: Aaron Heredia / APPR. / (916) 319-2081