



Category: 6 – Best Building Project – Specialty Contractor (\$6M to \$10M)

Specialty Contractor: Weifield Group Contracting

Project Name: Laramie High School Project | Cheyenne, Wyoming

The brand-new Laramie High School opened on August 25th, 2016, in Laramie, Albany County, Wyoming. It is the largest high school in Wyoming to come out of the ground as one complete building—spanning over 295,000 sq. ft. This high school as compared to traditional high school projects had double the amount of special systems, additional square footage, increased power demands and custom areas and classrooms to support college-type program offerings. Construction began in the summer of 2014.

“This is the most complicated project I’ve ever done, but we worked together to accomplish our goals,” said James Sammon, Weifield Field Supervisor.

“The responsiveness of Weifield’s team and the pride they had was what really caught my attention. Working with Weifield was a very positive experience,” said Jared Strube, Project and Engineer for Dowl, the Albany School District Owner’s Representative. “Everybody at Weifield was interested in making sure this project was the best it could be.”

Solutions of Special Projects: Constructing for the Unknown

The State of Wyoming awarded the project in two phases; in August, 2014, Weifield was contracted to do the first phase involving underground work as represented in the initial drawings we received. Only after we were a third of the way through the underground and structural block phase did we find out we were awarded the second phase of the project, in December—and then obtained the rest of the drawings for the building. This made it challenging, because we were essentially “flying



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blind,” building the underground for the entire building before knowing what the rough-in for the building’s systems would require.

“That was a task—circling back and starting the whole job process again,” said Russell Tafoya, Weifield Project Manager. “We were contracted to install the bare minimum scope shown as underground in the first phase, but we had to put a lot more in the underground than what was in our contract in preparation for unknown special systems needs and items not yet in scope. We did some guesswork on conduit locations and stub-ups in the electrical rooms and other areas; that was a big risk because if we weren’t chosen for the second phase, we would have had to absorb those costs.”

“It wasn’t just underground we were doing in the first phase, but load-bearing walls and other things,” said Sammon. “We had to make some educated guesses in the areas not awarded yet.”

Another challenge involved the fire alarm systems. The fire alarm plans contained only performance-based requirements, and didn’t show the specific systems needed to meet fire code compliance. Weifield’s crew roughed in the fire alarm into the foundational concrete walls based on where we estimated the systems’ notification devices would need to be, but once in, the plans would literally be set in stone.

The architect listed broad requirements for other systems on the drawings, instead of exact specifications—which added to the guesswork.

“There were many RFIs around location, box sizes, and other items,” said Sammon. “This affected us and other subs on the project.”



“We had some issues with drawings; the mechanical drawings didn’t have the electrical connections and other things in them,” said Strube. “This presented more challenges than there should have been.”

Over 300 RFIs were written over the course of the project and over 50 were written before the second phase was awarded in December.

“We communicated well and pointed out missing items in the documents to all of our partners, but had to proactively plug some holes because of holes in the design,” said Tafoya.

Excellence in Project Execution: Keeping Pace with Requirements and Change

Another challenge on this project was the budget; it was 73% state-funded and 27% local government-funded, so we went through four stages of value engineering to build the optimal project for the budget.

We were able to rein in the things outside of our control through persistent management and communication. James Sammon ensured success by developing working relationships across the entire Haselden subcontractor team. Weifield held a daily morning huddle with GC participation to outline each day’s requirements, and we also attended weekly GC meetings. We also coordinated the work of several smaller subs with the rest of the team’s schedule.

One area that Weifield took particular pride in was our work within the auditorium. We utilized our prefabrication department for all large feeder bends, cord drops, homeruns and stub-ups.

Weifield and the project owners also did substantial review of the main telecom room; Weifield and the Owner’s Rep addressed a design miss for this room which included the omission of all critical power requirements. Together they established what the owner’s needs were and took a design build approach to furnishing power for this area, quickly, and at the most affordable price.



“The owners were very happy with that,” said Tafoya.

After soliciting input from the Laramie community on the school’s design, the team had to go back and make some of the rooms bigger, such as the wood and metal shops. Weifield closely coordinated across the team to ensure the repositioning was correct and the rework would be completed on-schedule.

“We really appreciated that Weifield was professionally invested in the project. We had some other subs that didn’t take that same level of pride – it’s nice to see the ‘old school’ desire to do the best at everything you can do,” said Strube.

Innovative Construction through Accurate Layout and Virtual Design

Laramie High School is a two-story building with three major areas—Areas A, B, and C. The majority of the classrooms are in Areas A & B; Area C houses the theater/media center/auditorium as well as the gyms and pools. For Areas A & B, we utilized our in-house BIM team again to plan the rough-in before the mechanical began, which expedited this phase. The supports and hangars were also installed early with the help of BIM.

Many of the subsystems –approximately eight to ten—needed to fit into the ceiling area, including the duct work/hydraulic lines and a massive mechanical system. Weifield worked closely with our in-house BIM team on the virtual modeling to ensure proper routing of locations and that all of the subsystems would fit. Additionally, early on, the school district made the school’s main computer room the district aggregation point—which would include a large amount of amperage/electrical and systems. The installations for this room needed to happen accurately and sequentially.

“Weifield really had to push and was excellent at working with the other trades to get everything in there at the right time,” said Tony Czech, Director of Technology and Communications at Albany County School District One.



Zero Incidents through Strict Attention to Safety

Weifield followed Haselden’s safety guidelines for the project and adhered to our general Project Safety Plan (PSP) program which outlines our goal of achieving zero incidents in construction. We performed 69,000 total man hours on the project –approximately 10% of that total was dedicated to safety. We experienced no incidents/accidents on the project.

Weifield held a daily morning safety huddle to review general and site-specific safety topics and enforced strict Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) compliance, on-site. We executed a recycling program early to ensure minimal waste.

A Lasting Legacy for the Laramie Community

The State of Wyoming’s funding contributed roughly \$80.3 million to the construction, while a local bond measure brought in \$25 million from the Laramie community—an effort that Wyoming Senate President Phil Nicholas says sets the new building apart from others in the state. The project completed on August 4th, 2016, and Haselden was very pleased with results. State leaders including Governor Matt Mead were present at the high school’s open house, held August 11th.

Weifield was honored to contribute our skills to a project that will offer so much to the students and community in Laramie.

“It has been an absolute pleasure to work with Weifield on this incredibly successful project,” said Tyler Depew, Project Architect at Lantz-Boggio Architects. “Weifield’s attention to detail and professionalism are rarely seen in today’s construction industry. From day one, they approached every obstacle we encountered with nothing but a positive can-do and will-do attitude. Weifield has performed very well on this project due to their complete command of their trade.”

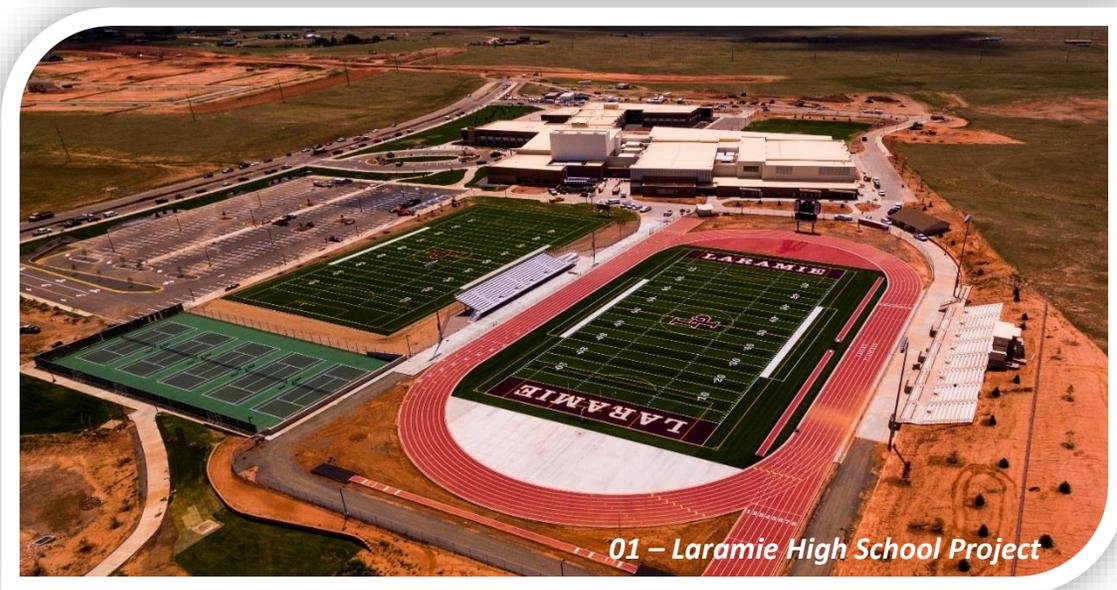
Christine Williams, Senior Electrical Designer at MKK Engineers, said: “Weifield is a great team player. I look forward to the times that Weifield is on a project, because it always seems to go a lot smoother.”





“This was a six-year process to make this project happen,” said Czech. “Weifield was a joy to work with—it was pretty amazing how they pulled together to get it all done.”

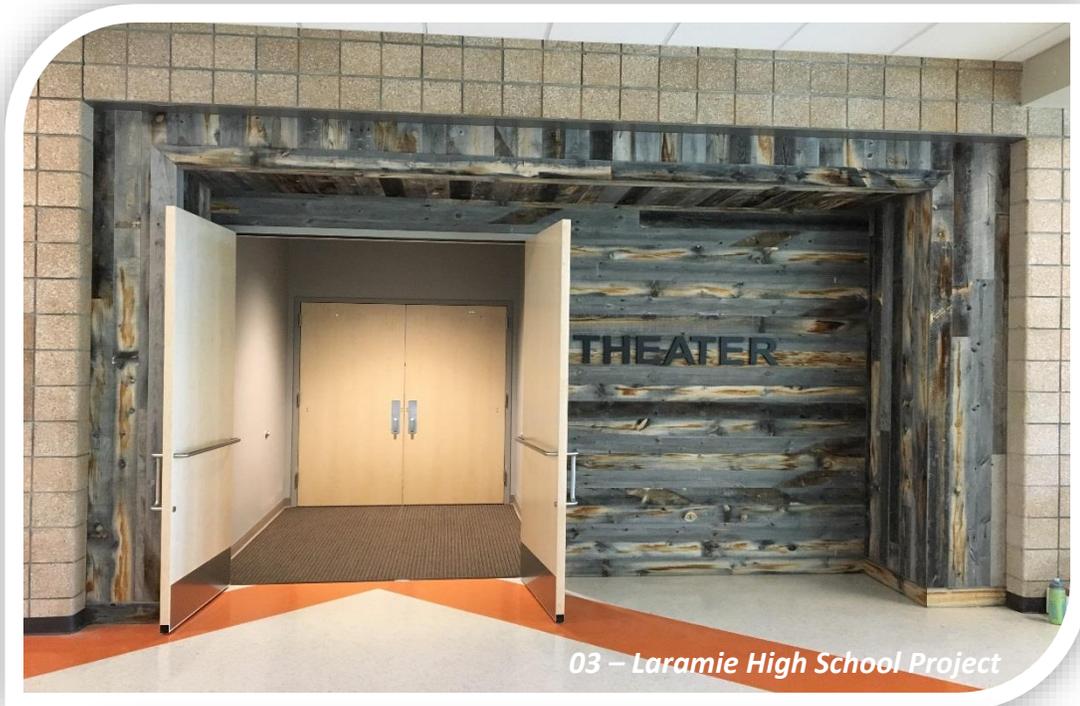
He added, “On any project, you can get everything done but getting everything done isn’t the whole picture—the rest is ensuring it works for 50 or 100 years. I know that the things that James and his team built will last well beyond the life of the building.”



01 – Laramie High School Project



02 – Laramie High School Project



03 – Laramie High School Project



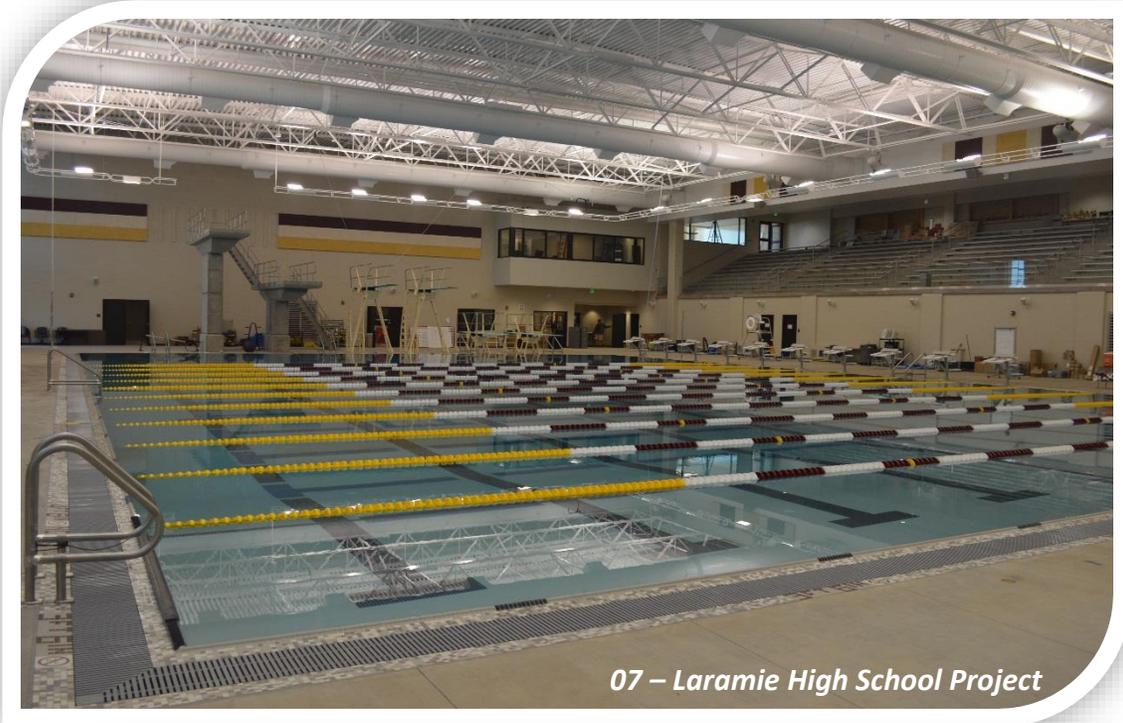
04 – Laramie High School Project



05 – Laramie High School Project



06 – Laramie High School Project



07 – Laramie High School Project



08 – Laramie High School Project



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