Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I write today on behalf of the Preuss School, a charter middle and high school on the UC San Diego campus recognized by Newsweek as the top transformative high school in the nation, three years in a row. Our school sits just 1,200 feet from the proposed Voigt Electric Mobility Hub and we are major stakeholders in the project’s success and our needs and close collaboration with UC San Diego’s Department of Transportation have helped shape the project proposed to USDOT for RAISE funding.

The Preuss School serves a population that is 97% non-white. Our 850 students come from low-income families and they will be the first in their family to earn a college degree. We call them 1st Gen Scholars. In the parlance of USDOT, we serve scholars who reside in underserved, overburdened, and historically underrepresented communities. We provide extraordinary opportunities and support, and the results speak for themselves; our graduates are consistently accepted to four-year colleges and universities at a rate of more than 90% and nearly 100% of our graduates go on to some form of higher education.

Our students and their families suffer disproportionate impacts from the current transportation system, whether noise, particulate emissions, or toxic-laden runoff. Currently, more than 26 gas-fueled buses travel through their communities twice per day to transport our scholars to The Preuss School. As such, we are deeply invested in the electrification of transportation and diversion of trips from single occupancy vehicles to active transportation, shared rides and transit. We are working to convert our own transportation operation to electric school buses and are excited about the shared 450kW charger that would be available to our bussing contractor should the Voigt Electric Mobility Hub be approved. Similarly, we have engaged UC San Diego about the prospect of our contractor co-locating with UC San Diego Transportation at the Voigt Electric Mobility Hub, an overture that has been warmly received.

Our scholars are engaged with the UC San Diego campus in myriad ways, from incorporating campus academic and cultural resources, utilizing university facilities that we could not hope to replicate in our small footprint, or participating in internships that extend students learning opportunities, broadening their horizons, and preparing them for the rigors of pursuing a four-year degree at a top tier university. Triton Transit picks up at our front door and provides Preuss School scholars fare-free transportation to the wealth of UC San Diego opportunities. USDOTs support of the Voigt Electric Mobility Hub will help offset Triton Transit’s cost of electrification and make it possible for them to continue their close partnership with the Preuss School.
UC San Diego’s RAISE proposal also includes investments in active transportation that will directly benefit our students and countless UC San Diego undergraduates who serve as daily tutors at The Preuss School. The proposal seeks to provide safer walking connections to and from the UC San Diego campus for Preuss and undergrad tutors, shared bikes and scooters that can help Preuss scholars access internships and college courses, campus-adjacent labs and businesses, and secure bicycle storage that will make it possible for students to access resources throughout the Golden Triangle with the independence afforded by bicycles. Finally, the protected bikeway that the project will install between the Preuss School and the heart of the UC San Diego campus is a crucial investment in student safety that makes cycling the safe and wise choice.

In addition to the bussing operation that supports our students and the growing share of students arriving at school by light rail, our highly engaged parents and caregivers frequently pick up and drop off their students. The Voigt Electric Mobility Hub’s investment in charging capacity where our families are already traveling, paired with California electric vehicle incentives that are means-tested to promote equitable access, mean that our historically underserved families will have unprecedented access to clean transportation without the cost burden of home charging or navigating the lack of charging opportunity in multifamily housing.

The Voigt Electric Mobility Hub is good for The Preuss School. It is good for our scholars, their families, and the urban communities from which they hail. It is good for our precious planet. I hope that for all these reasons you will support the Voigt Electric Mobility Hub with funding through the RAISE program.

Sincerely,

Helen V. Griffith, Ed.D.
Executive Director
The Preuss School UC San Diego