

PURCHASING

NOTE: The policy is updated to reflect Chapter 494 of the Laws 2009 which changed the threshold for requiring competitive bidding on public works contracts, increasing it from \$20,000 to \$35,000. Please note that this threshold will revert back to \$20,000 on June 1, 2013 unless the Legislature reauthorizes it. In addition, NYSSBA has added language to address purchases made through the federal E-Rate program, based on auditor recommendation. The regulation has been updated as well. We have eliminated redundant language in the regulation and cross-referenced Policy 6741, Contracting for Professional Services, to improve the clarity of the regulation.

The Board of Education views purchasing as serving the educational program by providing necessary supplies, equipment and related services. Purchasing will be centralized in the business office under the general supervision of the Purchasing Agent designated by the Board.

It is the goal of the Board to purchase competitively, without prejudice or favoritism, and to seek the maximum educational value for every dollar expended. Competitive bids or quotations shall be solicited in connection with purchases pursuant to law. The General Municipal Law requires that purchase contracts for materials, equipment and supplies involving an estimated annual expenditure exceeding \$10,000 and public work contracts involving an expenditure of more than \$35,000 will be awarded only after responsible bids have been received in response to a public advertisement soliciting formal bids. Similar procurements to be made in a fiscal year will be grouped together for the purpose of determining whether a particular item must be bid.

In accordance with law, the district shall give a preference in the purchase of instructional materials to vendors who agree to provide materials in alternative formats. The term "alternative format" shall mean any medium or format for the presentation of instructional materials, other than a traditional print textbook, that is needed as an accommodation for a disabled student enrolled in the district (or program of a BOCES), including but not limited to Braille, large print, open and closed captioned, audio, or an electronic file in a format compatible with alternative format conversion software that is appropriate to meet the needs of the individual student.

The Board is also aware of the need to reduce exposure of students and staff to potentially harmful chemicals and substances used in cleaning and maintenance. In accordance with law, regulation and guidelines set forth by the Office of General Services (OGS), the district will purchase and utilize environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products in its facilities whenever feasible. Cleansers purchased must, first and foremost, be effective so that the district may continue to purchase non-green products as necessary. Environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products will be procured in accordance with standard purchasing procedures as outlined in this policy and regulation.

In order to ensure that the district avails itself of advantageous purchasing opportunities, the Board authorizes the Purchasing Agent to represent the district in applying for federal programs designed to discount prices for goods and services. Specifically, the Purchasing Agent will abide by the rules and regulations associated with applying for telecommunications service discounts through the Universal Service Fund (E-Rate), in addition to complying with the local purchasing policies set forth by the Board. As with all purchasing activity, appropriate documentation of the application and purchase through any federal program will be maintained by the business office.

Goods and services which are not required by law to be procured by the district through competitive bidding will be procured in a manner so as to ensure the prudent and economical use of public monies, in the best interests of the taxpayers, to facilitate the acquisition of goods and services of maximum quality at the lowest possible cost under the circumstances, and to guard against favoritism, improvidence, extravagance, fraud and corruption.

Alternative proposals or quotations will be secured by requests for proposals, written or verbal quotations or any other appropriate method of procurement, except for procurements:

1. under a county contract;
2. under a state contract;
3. of articles manufactured in state correctional institutions; or
4. from agencies for the blind and severely disabled.

The district's purchasing activity will strive to meet the following objectives:

1. to effectively supply all administrative units in the school system with needed materials, supplies, and contracted services;
2. to obtain materials, supplies and contracted services at the lowest prices possible consistent with the quality and standards needed as determined by the Purchasing Agent in conformance with state law and regulation and in cooperation with the requisitioning authority. The educational and physical welfare of the students is the foremost consideration in making any purchase;
3. to ensure that all purchases fall within the framework of budgetary limitations and that they are consistent with the educational goals and programs of the district;
4. to maintain an appropriate and comprehensive accounting and reporting system to record and document all purchasing transactions; and
5. to ensure, through the use of proper internal controls, that loss and/or diversion of district property is prevented.

Opportunities shall be provided to all responsible suppliers to do business with the school district. Suppliers whose place of business is situated within the district may be given preferential consideration only when bids or quotations on an item or service are identical as to price, quality and other factors. Purchases will be made through available cooperative BOCES bids, state contracts of the Office of General Services or county contracts whenever such purchases are in the best interests of the district. In addition, the district will make purchases from correctional institutions and severely disabled persons through charitable or nonprofit-making agencies, as provided by law.

The district will provide justification and documentation of any contract awarded to an offeror other than the lowest responsible dollar offeror, setting forth the reasons why such award is in the best interests of the district and otherwise furthers the purposes of section 104-b of the General Municipal Law.

The Purchasing Agent will not be required to secure alternative proposals or quotations for:

1. emergencies where time is a crucial factor;
2. procurements for which there is no possibility of competition (sole source items); or
3. very small procurements when solicitations of competition would not be cost-effective.

The Superintendent of Schools, with the assistance of the Purchasing Agent, shall be responsible for the establishment and implementation of the procedures and standard forms for use in all purchasing and related activities in the district. Such procedures shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations of the state and the Commissioner of Education.

No Board member, officer or employee of the school district shall have an interest in any contract entered into by the Board or the district, as provided in Article 18 of the General Municipal Law.

Comments will be solicited from those administrators involved in the procurement process before enactment of the district's policies regarding purchasing and from time to time thereafter. The policies must then be adopted by Board resolution. All district policies regarding the procurement processes will be reviewed by the Board at least annually.

The unintentional failure to fully comply with the provisions of section 104-b of the General Municipal Law or the district's policies regarding procurement will not be grounds to void action taken nor give rise to a cause of action against the district or any officer or employee of the district.

Cross-ref: 6710, Purchasing Authority; 6741, Contracting for Professional Services

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