

PURCHASING

The Board of Education of the Rensselaer City School District 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. The Purchasing Agent shall be responsible for the developing and administering the purchasing program for the district.

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 will 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 \$20,000, shall be awarded only after responsible bids have been received in response to a public advertisement soliciting formal bids. The Business Executive or other designated person shall have the authority to open bids and record them pursuant to law. 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.

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 funds, 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 so as to guard against favoritism, improvidence, extravagance, fraud and corruption.

Alternative quotations or proposals 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
5. other cooperative purchasing agreements such as BOCES contracts

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

1. to effectively supply all administrative units in the district effectively 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 cooperation with the requisitioning authority.

The Educational welfare of the students shall be 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 the loss and/or diversion of district property is prevented and that items commonly used in the various schools or units thereof shall be standardized whenever consistent with educational goals and in the interest of the district.

Opportunities shall be provided to all responsible suppliers to do business with the school district. Suppliers whose place of business is located 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 relevant factors. To this end the Purchasing Agent shall develop and maintain lists of potential bidders for various types of materials, equipment and supplies. Such bidders' list shall be used in the development of mailing lists for distribution of specifications and invitations to bid.

Purchases shall 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 interest of the district. In addition, the district shall make purchases from correctional institutions and severely disabled persons through charitable or non-profit-making agencies, as provided by law. Prudent procurement through other vendors where the price is lower for items of a similar nature or where the value is greater than the state or county contracts may be made so as to maximize the use of the district funds.

The district will provide justification and documentation of any contract awarded to a bidder other than the lowest responsible dollar bidder, 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 Purchase 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, such as textbooks);
3. procurements of professional services, which, because of the confidential nature of the services, do not lend themselves to procurement through solicitation; or
4. 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 law as and regulations of the state and the Commissioner of Education.

The Purchasing Agent shall have the authority to issue purchase orders without prior approval from the Board, in accordance with the guidelines established elsewhere in the policy, so long as (a) formal bidding procedures are not required by law and (b) budget appropriations are adequate to cover such obligations.

Blanket Purchase Orders: The Purchasing Agent or Substitute Purchasing Agent may in their best judgment issue a limited number of blanket purchase orders to vendors from who the school district will be obtaining the same or similar goods and services on a recurring basis throughout the fiscal year. The amount encumbered will fairly represent the expected purchases from that vendor for the fiscal year, but will not exceed the total budget appropriation for the budget accounts being charged. Blanket purchase orders could typically be issued for cafeteria vendors, maintenance vendors or other vendors with which the District makes regular and predictable purchases.

Contracted Services: All contracts approved by the Board of Education for the fiscal year shall be supported by a purchase order in an amount representative of the total contract and shall be charged to the appropriate budget account for the service being provided. Some examples of contracted services to be encumbered by purchase orders are: audit services, special education placements, utilities, physician services, etc.

BOCES Services: After the annual final service request is approved, a purchase order in the full amount of the FSR will be issued to BOCES with allocations made to the correct appropriation accounts.

The use of credit cards for purchases with authorization given by the Purchasing Agent is permitted for use in purchasing (e.g. Home Depot, Wal-Marts, fuel, etc.). Access to the credit cards will be controlled by the Business Office. The Purchasing Agent may establish a credit card control procedure with the Transportation Supervisor in order to facilitate the regular purchase of fuel for District School Buses. Individual staff members will not keep District credit cards in their possession for general purpose use. All credit card purchases must be supported by an approved Purchase Order, Conference Request or Board Resolution prior to its use.

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 shall be reviewed at least annually by the Board.

All procurement contracts that require competitive bidding shall be forwarded to the Board of Education with a recommendation for approval by resolution. Recommendation for the award of all such contracts shall be submitted to the Board by the Superintendent, whose recommendation shall in turn be based on the recommendation of the Purchasing Agent.

Designation as “Equipment” value levels which coincide with that defined in the federal and state grant process. As of February 1, 1996 this value is \$1,000.

The *unintentional* failure by an agent of the Board and the District to fully comply with the provisions of section 104-b of the General Municipal Law or the district’s policies regarding procurement shall not be grounds for voiding action taken, or give rise to a cause of action against the district or any officer or employee of the district.

Ref: Education Law §§305(14); 1604(29-a); 1709(4-a)(9)(14)(22); 2503(7-a);
2254(7-a)
General Municipal Law §§102: 103: 104-b; 109-a; 800 et seq.

Adopted by the Board of Education: February 24, 2004

Revised: January 10, 2006

Revised: March 14, 2012