

**Purchase of Supplies and Equipment****Intent of Policy**

The intent of this policy is to ensure that supplies and equipment are purchased in a fair and efficient manner, and to minimize operating costs and maximize the financial and business resources of the District.

**Board Authorization for Expenditure of Funds**

All payment orders drawn on the District's funds shall be authorized by either:

1. A majority of the members of the Board; or
2. By an officer or employee of the District specifically authorized by the Board pursuant to this policy ("Purchasing Agent").

(Ed. Code § 42623.)

**Authorized Purchasing Agents**

The Board hereby authorizes the following officers and employees ("Purchasing Agents") to purchase supplies, materials, apparatus, and equipment in accordance with the requirements of this policy and applicable law:

1. Meridian Elementary School District Superintendent

(Ed. Code 42632)

**Prohibited Activities of Employees Who are Not purchasing Agents**

Only the Board authorized Purchasing Agents have the authority to purchase supplies and equipment for the District. Employees who are not Purchasing Agents shall not engage in any of the following on behalf of the District:

1. Contact or communicate verbally or in writing with vendors or suppliers except to obtaining technical specifications or other information needed to request a purchase order;
2. Contact or communicate with vendors in a manner that might reasonably be interpreted as creating a contract or purchase agreement;
3. Make direct purchases of supplies or equipment;
4. Contract for any supplies or equipment; or

5. Request the District purchase supplies or equipment in a manner that would create a conflict of interest or would otherwise violate state law, or this policy.

### **Unauthorized Purchases**

District funds shall not be used to purchase supplies and equipment unless done through a Purchasing Agent pursuant to state law and this policy.

If a District officer, employee, or another individual makes an unauthorized purchase on behalf of the District, the purchase shall be considered the personal obligation of that individual.

Any delivery of equipment or supplies to the District without a valid Purchase Order is done at the risk of the vendor delivering the items.

### **Board Has Sole Authority to Enter Contracts**

Pursuant to state law and this policy, the Board has the sole authority to enter contracts on behalf of the District. This authority may not be delegated to any individual including the Purchasing Agents listed in this policy.

### **Manner of payment of school district funds; provision of forms**

All payments from the funds of a school district shall be made by written order of the governing board of the district. Orders shall be on forms prescribed by the county superintendent of schools unless the warrants are processed by an on-line data processing system. Forms may be printed and furnished by the board of supervisors or the county superintendent of schools.

Ed. Code 42631

### **Purchasing Orders**

All payments from the District's funds shall be made by a written purchase order. The District will utilize a standardized Purchase Order either;

1. Prescribed by the County Superintendent of Schools pursuant to Education Code; or
2. Pursuant to the District's online data processing system

Ed. Code 42631

### **Process for Submitting Purchase Requests**

All requests for the purchase of supplies and equipment for the District shall be in accordance with the following procedures:

**Requesting Purchases or Bids**

All requests for the purchase of supplies and equipment shall be made by the school site. Individual employees must make their requests through the school office or department.

When requesting the purchase of supplies or equipment, the District school site is responsible for:

1. Determining whether the District has sufficient available funds to pay for the requested items;
2. Contacting the business office early in the purchase process in order to consult with a Purchasing Agent(s) regarding specifications, sources of supplies, price advantages, and substitutions, and other information related to the specific reasons for the purchase request;
3. Ensuring that the requested supplies and equipment are necessary to the District's operations and will be used for the proposed purpose;
4. Advanced planning of purchasing needs for the upcoming school year and taking proactive steps to consolidate similar items into a single purchase request; and
5. Ensuring that the business office is timely informed of purchasing needs for the upcoming school year in the form and manner required by the business office.

**Requirements for Purchases of More than \$109,300**

In accordance with state law and this policy, the Board shall let any contracts involving an expenditure of more than \$50,000, adjusted for inflation (the "bid threshold," \$109,300 for school year 2023), for any of the following:

1. The purchase of equipment, materials, or supplies to be furnished, sold, or leased to the District;
2. Services, except construction services;
3. Repairs, including maintenance as defined in Public Contract Code § 20115, that are not a public project as defined in Public Contract Code § 22002(c).

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to annually adjust the \$50,000 amount specified in Public Contract Code § 20111(a) to reflect the percentage change in the annual average value of the Implicit Price Deflator for State and Local Government Purchases of Goods

and Services for the United States. The District's bid threshold shall be automatically adjusted whenever the State Superintendent's annual adjustment becomes effective, typically January 1 of each year.

### **Bidding Procedures**

All contracts for supplies and equipment in excess of the District's bid threshold shall utilize the District's Formal Bidding Procedures set forth in this policy.

(Pub. Contract Code, § 20111.)

### **Identical Bids**

In the event that the Board receives identical bids, the Board shall determine by lot which bid shall be accepted.

### **Requirements for Purchases of \$109,300 or Less**

The following requirements shall apply to the purchasing of materials, supplies, and equipment as determined by the purchasing amounts:

#### **1. For Purchases up to \$5,000**

The Purchasing Agents have the authority to make purchases of supplies, goods and materials up to \$5,000 as follows:

- a. Must receive proposal from at least one (1) vendor but may request additional proposals;
- b. Purchase Requests shall include:
  - i. The name and description of the item being requested;
  - ii. A description of the item the company;
  - iii. Name of the seller and/or company; and
  - iv. Specific amount being requested.
- c. Requests shall be vetted by Purchasing Agent to ensure that they are fair and reasonable; and
- d. Preference may be given to a vendor with an established, positive business history with the District.

**2. For Purchases of \$5,001 to \$14,999**

The Purchasing Agents have the authority to make purchases of supplies, goods, and materials between \$5,001 and \$14,999 as follows:

- a. Must receive proposals from at least 2 vendors;
- b. Purchase Requests shall include:
  - i. The name and description of the item being requested;
  - ii. A description of the item the company;
  - iii. Name of the seller and/or company; and
  - iv. Specific amount being requested.
- c. Purchasing Agent shall follow the Districts Informal Bidding Process as defined by this policy.

**3. For Purchases of 15,000 to \$109,300**

The Purchasing Agents have the authority to make purchases of supplies, goods, and materials between \$15,000 and \$109,300 as follows:

- a. Must receive proposals from at least 3 vendors;
- b. Purchase Requests shall include:
  - i. The name and description of the item being requested;
  - ii. A description of the item the company;
  - iii. Name of the seller and/or company; and
  - iv. Specific amount being requested.
- c. The Purchasing Agent shall follow the Districts [Informal/Formal Bidding Process] as defined by this policy.

**Splitting of Purchase Orders is Prohibited**

It is unlawful for the Board, a Purchasing Agent, or any District employee to split or separate a Purchase Request or Purchase Order into smaller amounts to avoid the competitive bidding requirements of state law or this policy.

**Informal Bidding Process**

The “Informal Bid Process” requires the Purchasing Agent to obtain proposals from 2 or more vendors. The informal bidding process is as follows:

1. Request for Proposals

The Purchasing Agent shall request written proposals for the item. The request must state the specifications for the requested item(s), and the vendors’ deadline for submitting a written proposal. The District may solicit proposals from local vendors as practicable.

2. Evaluating Proposals

The Purchasing Agent reviews all timely proposals and determines which vendor has made the lowest responsible bid. When making this determination, the Purchasing Agent shall consider the relative quality of the vendor’s items, shipping costs, or any other concerns relevant to the District’s intended use of the item(s).

3. Selection of Vendor

After evaluating each of the proposals the Purchasing Agent may take any of the following actions:

- a. Award the proposal to the lowest responsible bidder;
- b. Waive any minor irregularities or errors in a proposal and accept the proposal;
- c. Reject any proposal due to non-waivable omissions, irregularities, or errors;
- d. Reject any proposal the Purchasing Agent determines to be not responsible; and/or
- e. Reject all proposals and determine whether to repeat the process until a lowest responsible bidder can be determined.

4. Executing Purchase Order

If a bid is awarded to a vendor, the Purchasing Agent shall execute a Purchase Order with the Vendor.

### **Formal Bidding Process**

The “Formal Bid Process” is a competitive bidding process requiring the Purchasing Agent to circulate a bid request to all applicable vendors on the District’s vendor list, to publicly post the bid request, and accept sealed bids.

#### 1. Request for Bids

The Purchasing Agent shall solicit sealed bids from vendors on the District’s list of vendors, and through public posting of the bid request. All interested vendors may submit sealed bids. The request must state the specifications for the requested item, the deadline for submitting the sealed written bid, and the time and location in which the sealed bids will be opened.

#### 2. Opening Bids

The Purchasing Agent shall open all timely bids in a public meeting at the time and location stated in the bid request. Bids received after the deadline shall be marked “Not Received By Deadline”, and returned to the vendor unopened.

#### 3. Evaluating Bids

The Purchasing Agent reviews all timely bids and determines which vendor has made the lowest responsible bid. When making this determination, the Purchasing Agent shall consider the relative quality of the vendor’s items, shipping costs, or other concerns relevant to the District’s intended use of the item.

#### 4. Selection of Vendor

After evaluating each of the proposals the Purchasing Agent shall take any of the following actions:

- a. Award the bid to the lowest responsible bidder;
- b. Waive any minor irregularities or errors in a bid and accept the bid;
- c. Reject any bid due to non-waivable omissions, irregularities, or errors;
- d. Reject any bid where the Purchasing Agent determines the vendor is not responsible; and/or
- e. Reject all bids and determine whether to repeat the process until a lowest responsible bidder can be determined.

#### 5. Notification of Bid Results

The Purchasing Agent shall notify the bidders of the bid results and post the bid results for public viewing. The notice shall include the apparent lowest qualified bidder, a description of the item(s) to be provided, and any other relevant bid information.

#### 6. Protest Procedure

Under the Formal Bidding Procedures, a vendor who was not the lowest responsible bidder has the opportunity to protest the results of the bidding process and/or the manner in which it was conducted. Protest procedures should only be used after informal methods have failed to resolve the dispute. Bidders must exhaust the District's administrative remedies before filing a civil action.

Bidders seeking to protest the bid award shall utilize the following District procedures:

- a. Within ten (10) business days from the date of public posting of the bid results, the protesting bidder shall submit a letter of protest to the Purchasing Agent, signed by an authorized representative of the bidder. The protest letter must include the specific reasons for the protest, any facts supporting the protest, and any law, regulation, or policy, that bidder claims was violated during the bidding process;
- b. If the Purchasing Agent finds the protest has merit, the Purchasing Agent may modify the bid award and then issue a notification to all bidders of the change in the District's decision;
- c. Where a protest has been resolved or withdrawn the bid may be awarded in accordance with the Purchasing Agent's original recommendation;
- d. In the event the protest remains unresolved, the protest shall be submitted to the Board for consideration as a regular agenda item. All bidders shall be notified of the date on which the matter will be heard by the Board and may attend and address the Board at that meeting. The Board has the discretion to:
  - a. Accept or reject any or all bids;
  - b. Waive any informality, error, or irregularities in a bid; or
  - c. Make a bid award.

The decision of the Board shall be the final decision of the District.

#### 7. Executing Purchase Order

If a bid is awarded to a vendor either before or after a protest, the Purchasing Agent shall execute a Purchase Order or contract with the Vendor. A copy shall be kept maintained in the District's Business Office.



#### 8. Additional Purchases From Winning Vendor

When a bid award is made through the Formal Bidding Process, a Purchasing Agent may dispense with separate bidding under the following conditions:

- a. The purchase is for the same items(s);
- b. The purchase is from the same vendor;
- c. The purchase is made within 12 months from the date the District made its initial purchase under the contract or Purchase Order; and
- d. The vendor agrees to the same purchase price as stated in their bid.

Exception: If the cumulative total of the initial bid and the additional purchases exceeds \$500, the Purchasing Agent shall obtain the approval of the Board.

#### Cumulative Purchases

When the cumulative purchases of a particular commodity, or group of like commodities that is not exempt from competitive processes, reach \$25,000 the Purchasing Agent shall have one hundred twenty (120) days in which to solicit formal bids for additional purchases anticipated in the remainder of the fiscal year. In the interim 120 day period, the Purchasing Agent may use the informal bid process to make additional purchases that are urgent and necessary for the efficient operation of a department or department(s).

#### Exemption From Competitive Bidding

Competitive bidding shall be used to purchase supplies and equipment for the District unless the item or the purchase is exempted from competitive bidding by this policy and/or state law. Exemptions from competitive bidding include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The purchase amount is less than the cost thresholds for competitive bidding established by law and this policy;
2. Telecommunications purchases (Pub Cont, Code, § 20118.2);
3. Perishable Food (Ed. Code § 38083; Pub. Cont. Code § 20660);
4. Educational Materials (Pub. Cont. Code § 20118.3; Ed. Code § 81651);
5. Surplus federal property (Ed. Code §§ 17602, 81653);

6. “Piggybacking” on another public agency contract pursuant to applicable laws (Ed. Code § 17595; Pub. Cont. Code §§ 20118, 20652, 20653; Govt. Code § 14931.)

### **Surplus Federal Property- No Competitive Bidding**

The Board or Purchasing Agent may purchase surplus property from the federal government or any agency thereof in any amount needed for the operation of the schools of the District without competitive bidding.

(Ed. Code § 17602.)

### **Purchase of Educational Material**

The Board or Purchasing Agent may purchase supplementary textbooks, library books, educational films, audiovisual materials, test materials, workbooks, instructional computer software packages, or periodicals in any amount needed for the operation of its schools without taking estimates or advertising for bids.

(Pub. Cont. Code § 20118.3.)

### **Computers, Software, Telecommunications Equipment, Microwave Equipment and Related Electronic Equipment and Apparatus**

The Board or Purchasing Agent(s) may purchase computers, software, telecommunications equipment, microwave equipment, and other related electronic equipment through detailed request and competitive negotiation pursuant to Public Contracting Code § 20118.2.

Adopted: May 11, 2023