

## **Business and Non-Instructional Operations**

### **Purchasing Policy**

#### **Purpose**

The Westport Board of Education recognizes the importance of maximizing the use of district resources, the need for sound business practices in spending public money, the requirement of complying with state laws governing purchasing, the importance of standardized purchasing regulations, and the need for clear documentation in meeting State of Connecticut and Federal Auditing requirements

Within the framework of applicable laws and regulations, purchases and use of material and other resources shall be accomplished in accordance with good business practices with the primary purpose of serving the program of instruction.

#### **Authority**

The duties of purchasing shall be centralized under the Director of School Business Operations who shall be responsible for all purchase transactions for the district. In accordance with the Westport Town Charter, the Director of School Business Operations is the designated representative of the Board of Education to act with the Finance Director of the Town to maximize economies of purchasing through sharing of purchases in all areas practicable. If questions arise, the scope of this provision shall be determined by the Board of Education.

The Superintendent or designee shall sign purchase orders and other purchase obligations. For the purpose of this policy, only the Director of School Business Operations shall be deemed the designee of the Superintendent for the signing of purchase orders and other purchase obligations.

#### **Purchasing Guides**

Purchasing services will include personnel and equipment necessary to process promptly all approved requisitions, to deliver goods and services promptly. Purchasing services will have as their criteria for all items and services:

1. Best possible quality;
2. Lowest possible cost; specifications of the user;
3. Availability when needed;
4. Efficient use of time of staff;
5. Compliance of suppliers and staff with equal employment opportunity and other Board policies;
6. Preference to Westport vendors where possible, providing price, quality and availability are equal to or better, than non-Westport vendors.

All purchases of goods and services with district funds must be made on a properly executed district purchase order or contract issued by the Director of School Business Operations.

## **Business and Non-Instructional Operations**

### **Purchasing Policy (continued)**

#### **Quantity Purchasing**

To help achieve both quality control and the price advantages of quantity purchasing, the administration is encouraged to:

1. Set specifications for goods and services as needed. Cite several existing, commercially available “standard brands” that meet those qualifications acceptable as examples.
2. Invite and/or advertise for vendors to bid on those examples, or comparable ones which the vendors believe to be acceptable according to the specifications.

#### **Bidding**

Competitive bidding is required as detailed below. Preference is to be given to local suppliers and vendors when quality and price are equal.

1. For purchases totaling between \$3,000 and \$5,000, at least three (3) verbal price quotations must be sought and recorded.
2. For purchases totaling between \$5,000 and \$25,000, formal written quotations from at least three (3) separate vendors shall be provided, if available.
3. For purchases above \$25,000, formal bid(s) must be sought.
4. The following purchases are not subject to competitive bidding except as stated in paragraph 7 below:
  - a. Purchases under \$3,000;
  - b. Emergency purchases;
  - c. Goods purchased from state agencies, such as furniture produced by the State Department of Corrections;
  - d. Goods purchased under state contracts;
  - e. Purchasing collaboratives involving federal, state, local governments and regional entities;
  - f. Surplus and secondhand purchases from another governmental entity;
  - g. Sole source goods or services;
  - h. Purchases to maintain equipment consistency;
  - i. Textbooks and other programmed instructional materials as only one source generally exists.
5. Price quotes/bids are not required when items are available from one vendor only (e.g., most educational media, software and services).

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#### **Bidding** (continued)

6. When purchasing from approved vendors using school district, state or purchasing consortium contracts, if multiple price quotes or bids are not obtained from separate vendors, a written explanation and/or documentation must be provided to demonstrate why the purchase from the chosen vendor(s) provides the greatest value and benefit. Value and benefit are not to be measured solely by price level.
7. Except as stated in paragraphs 4(b), 4(g), and 5 above, and regardless of any previously listed exceptions, for single item purchases over \$50,000 the formal bid process must be followed.
8. There shall be an annual report of collective purchases made from single vendors to ensure that the verbal bid quotation process is consistent with the purchasing policy.

#### **Financing**

The Board of Education, wherever possible, will seek the advice of the Board of Finance and the Education and Finance committees of the RTM as to manner of financing when considering purchase or lease agreements that obligate the Board of Education to finance the acquisition of goods by multi year periodic payments. A final decision will be made by the Board of Education.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-220 Duties of boards of education

10-222 Appropriations amid budget

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Policy adopted:	March 15, 2004, November 10, 2014
Policy modified:	June 7, 2004
Policy amended:	October 20, 2014

WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Westport, Connecticut

## **Business and Non-Instructional Operations**

### **Purchasing Procedures**

#### **Purpose**

To ensure that goods and services are acquired at the lowest possible cost without sacrificing quality or educational purpose; are within dollar amounts and purpose as approved in the budget; comply with federal, state, town, and Westport Public Schools requirements, as well as generally accepted business practices.

To insure oversight and accountability, purchasing is a two step process. Account managers may initiate purchase requisitions but only the business office may create and send purchase orders. (A computerized accounting software system converts approved purchase requisitions into purchase orders.)

#### **Purchasing Authority**

Only designated cost center managers, i.e., administrators and non-certified managers, may initiate a purchase requisitions. Managers may designate other staff to prepare the requisition. However, managers must always sign the purchase requisition.

#### **Processing Procedure**

Purchases may be made only by purchase order approved by the Director of School Business Operations. Any individual who orders goods and services without a purchase order approved by the Business Office is considered to be making a personal purchase. The Westport Public School District is not responsible for paying these types of bills.

All prospective purchases must be submitted as requisitions through the accounting software and also by hard copy prior to the event, purchase or planned reimbursement. The system automatically tests for fund availability. If there are insufficient funds in the account to be charged, the manager must complete a Transfer of Funds Request Form, attach that form to the purchase requisition and forward to the Business Office.

#### **Types of Purchase Requisitions**

1. **Descriptive** - This requisition should contain all the information needed to fill the order: quantity, full product description (including model number, size, color, etc.), individual unit pricing, extension of total cost, freight where applicable, vendor discount if available, and complete account coding. An attachment in lieu of order description may be used only in extreme circumstances.

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R 3320(b)

### Purchasing Procedures (continued)

#### 2. Standing (Encumbrance Only)

This type of requisition should contain a brief description of the item(s) that will be ordered and the individual(s) authorized to place item orders. These are generally used for repairs or recurring weekly purchases of supplies.

#### 3. Emergency Purchases- When uncontrollable circumstances require immediate acquisition of goods or services the following procedure is to be used:

- Requisition approved by account manager must be faxed to Business Office (341-1008) with cover note requesting emergency approval.
- Accounts Payable must be alerted by phone (Ext.1005) to expect the emergency fax.
- Once the emergency purchase is approved by the assistant superintendent for business, the order may be faxed or called to the vendor, using the purchase order number.

### Payment Process

The Business Office must have evidence that materials or services have been received in order to pay invoices:

1. The individual who receives an order must confirm receipt on-line.
2. All packing slips must be forwarded to the Business Office with the purchase order number written on them.
3. If partial order has been received the cost center should send the packing slip and a copy of the pink section of the purchase order to accounts payable. This will allow the Business Office to pay for the goods received, but keep the purchase order open waiting for the back ordered items to be delivered.

### Bidding Guidelines

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|----|--------------------------|---|
| 1. |                          | <b>Under \$3,000</b> Pricing may be developed by comparing costs in current catalogs and should be confirmed with vendor.   |
| 2. | <b>\$3,000 - \$4,999</b> | Three (3) verbal quotes are required.   |
| 3. |                          | <b>\$5,000 - \$25,000</b> Three (3) written quotes must be obtained and attached to the requisition. Purchases should be made using the low quote. Any exceptions to low quote must be carefully explained. |
| 4. | <b>Over \$25,000</b>     | Formal bid(s) required.   |

Orders for like items or services that would ordinarily be purchased on one (1) purchase requisition cannot be separated into multiple purchases to keep the total below the bidding guidelines of \$3,000 for verbal quotes, \$5,000 for written quotes, and \$25,000 for formal bid.

Whenever appropriate, the use of state or other purchasing collaborative bids is encouraged (you may refer to: <http://www.das.state.ct.us>). If you are using a state or other collaborative bid, you must reference

the bid number on the purchase order.

**R 3320(c)**

## **Business and Non-Instructional Operations**

### **Purchasing Procedures (continued)**

#### **Petty Cash**

Petty cash accounts are used to facilitate purchases under \$25.00 for which a purchase order cannot be issued because of the need for immediate cash, e.g., overnight mail. There may be instances where the sum used from the petty cash is a higher amount. The administrator would make sure that all proper documentation and a description of the use of the funds is clearly noted and authorized by him/her. Reimbursement for petty cash by any school or office must be submitted with a purchase requisition with proper account codes and all original receipts. Sales tax will not normally be reimbursed.

#### **Reimbursement For Professional Development**

An approved travel authorization and Aesop job number must be attached to the purchase requisition.

The Westport Public School District is tax exempt according to state statute; therefore sales tax is not normally paid or reimbursed.

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Regulation approved: March 15, 2004, November 10, 2014  
Regulation amended: October 20, 2014