

PURCHASING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the procedure for obtaining a purchase order?

- End user must enter a requisition in PeopleSoft for the purchase of goods or services.
- Purchasing processes the requisition utilizing the proper procurement method as per NJ procurement statute.
- The Purchase Order is mailed, emailed or electronically transmitted to the vendor.

2. What is PeopleSoft?

- PeopleSoft is the NPS electronic requisitioning /ordering/payment system.
- All schools/central locations are required to use the electronic system for orders requests for goods and services (exceptions are field trips and staff travel).
- There are large selections of items that are priced and easily secured through the PeopleSoft catalog i.e., paper, printer cartridges, athletics supplies, technology, etc.
- PeopleSoft Punch vendors: School Specialty, WB Mason, Staples, Lakeshore Learning, Frey Science, Pearson Education, Grainger, Office Depot. Updates of vendors occur periodically.

3. What is the approval process for ordering goods/services?

- Enter a requisition in the PeopleSoft Financial eProcurement system.
- Orders under \$20,000 require approval of the principal or department head.
- Orders over \$20,000 – \$36,000 require the approval of Regional Superintendent/Executive Director/ Controller.
- Orders over \$36,000 require the approval of the Superintendent or designee.
- All purchase orders must be approved by the School Business Administrator.

Additional Approvals are required for:

- Technology orders must be approved by Paul Mailloux, Chief Information Officer.
- Health supplies must be approved by Dr. Marguerite Leuze, Director of Health Services.
- Air-conditioners must be approved by Frank Masella, Director of Facilities Support.

4. What is the threshold?

Verbal Quotes

Purchases that are \$1.00 - \$5,400 require one verbal quote (Attach a copy of quote/names and contact number of individual providing quote in the comments section of the requisition if available).

Written Quotes

Purchases that are \$5,401 - \$36,000 require two written quotes (at least one (1) quote must be submitted). Quotes must include the vendor's proposal/scope of services. Vendors paid over \$5,401 require a NJ Business Registration Certificate (BRC). The Purchasing department will verify BRC number prior to payment.

Bid Requirement

Orders \$36,000 or more require formal bidding and Board approval (Attach a copy of the scope of services and specifications for services requested).

Note

- The New Jersey Public School Contracts law requires that any specific item, class of items, and/or services of a similar nature purchased by a school district totaling more than \$36,000, in aggregate, for the entire year must be competitively bid.

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- Purchases over \$36,000 require bidding and/or School Board resolution/action before services can begin. This process can take from anywhere from 30 to 90 days.

5. What is a formal Bid?

- Formal bids are solicitations for good and/or service that must be advertised, received in a sealed bid, and opened and publicly read.
- Bids include the Newark Public Schools specifications for good and/or services.
- The bid document lists the items to be purchase.
- The minimum amount of time allowed for bids are ten days.
- The bid includes the Newark Public Schools standard terms and conditions.
- Vendors are required to include: NJ Business Registration Certificate, Political Disclosure Statement, Affirmative Action information certification, etc. is required upon award of contract
- Awarding of contracts through the bidding process must be Advisory Board/NPS approved

6. What is a Request for Proposal?

- A Request for Proposal is a method of securing proposals for services that are primarily professional in nature, and for services that requires tailored specification.
- Advertisement is not always required.
- Proposals include the Newark Public Schools specifications, and standard terms and conditions
- The minimum amount of time allowed for solicitation can be 10 days, but most often requires 20 days.
- Vendors are required to include: NJ Business Registration Certificate, Political Disclosure Statement, Affirmative Action information certification, etc. upon award of a contract.
- Awarding of contracts through the bidding process must be Advisory Board/NPS approved.

7. What is a professional service?

- Professional Services means services rendered or performed by a person authorized by law to practice a recognized profession and whose practice is regulated by law.
 - Examples are: Doctors, Attorneys, Architects, CPA
- Professional services may also mean goods and services that are original and creative in character in a recognized field of artistic endeavor.
 - Examples: Painter, Dancer, Actor, Musician

8. What is the process for hiring a firm to provide professional development for instructional and administrative staff that exceeds the \$36,000?

- The district must solicit proposals through the competitive contracting process.
- The process requires an RFP; end user should provide a scope of service and vendor requirements and/or qualifications. The RFP is created in collaboration with the Purchasing Department.
- The solicitation must be advertised in the newspaper for 20 days.
- The proposals must be reviewed by an evaluation committee.

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- This process can take from 60-90 days.
- Awarding of contracts must be approved by the School Board and Superintendent.
- All awards granted under this process must be publicly advertised.

9. What is the process for hiring a consultant?

- Enter a requisition in the PeopleSoft Financial eProcurement system.
- Use the consultant form.
- Provide a clear and concise scope of service.
- Two written quotes are required for services totaling more than \$5,400. At least one (1) quote must be submitted with request. You are encouraged to submit more than one; however, Purchasing will secure any documentation required by statute.
- The maximum dollar amount for individual consultant is \$350.00 per day; any amount higher must be approved by the Chief of Staff or School Business Administrator.
- If the cost of service is more than \$5,400, the vendor must have a NJ Business Certification Certificate.
- If the cost is more than \$17,500, the vendor must have a NJ Business Registration Certificate and complete a Political Disclosure form.
- If the service is above the threshold, the same requirements as RFP/Bids apply.

10. What is the process for hiring an education consultant?

- Education consultant must provide copies of license.
- End user must submit a requisition with the scope of services and written proposal attached.
- If the service is above the threshold, the same requirements as RFP/Bids apply.
- Acquire two written quotes for services that are more than \$5,400.
- If the cost of service is more than \$5,400, the vendor must have a NJ Business Certification Certificate.
- If the cost is more than \$17,500, the vendor must have a NJ Business Registration Certificate and complete a Political Disclosure form.

11. What is the process for using NJ State contracts?

- The Newark Public Schools, without bidding, have the benefit of purchasing goods or services entered into on behalf of the State of New Jersey Division of Purchase and Property.
- The state's website: <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/purchase/>.

12. Is the bidding processed required, when the vendor is another local or state agency?

- The Newark Public Schools can enter into contracts with other public agencies without public advertising.
 - Example: Essex County Educational Services Commission, Rutgers University, University of Medicine & Dentistry, Huntington County Educational Services Commission
- A board resolution is required when the amount exceeds \$36,000.00.

13. Are there any vendors that are exempt from having a NJ Business Registration Certificate?

- State, Federal or local government agencies are exempt

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- Non-profit organizations although required to register for tax purposes are not subject to the proof of registration requirement when contracting with public agencies in this state.

14. What is the policy for vendors contributing to Board Members campaigns?

- All vendors that are issued a purchase order that is in excess of \$17,500 must complete a Political Disclosure Form.
- Vendors that contribute more than \$300.00 to an Advisory Board members campaign cannot do business with the Newark Public Schools.

15. What accounts do I use to purchase textbooks, general supplies, transportations, admissions, postage?

The object code determines the account used; the account code string is as begins as follows:

Fund-Fund-Program-Function –Object

- Use account object code 300/320/390
 - Professional Services/Consultant Services
 - Technical Support Services
- Use account object code 420
 - Repairs
- Use account object code 440
 - Rental of facilities/Leases
- Use account object code 500/530
 - Telephone Service
- Use account object code 512/516
 - Buses/Student Transportation
- Use account object code 600/610
 - General supplies including consumable books
- Use account object code of 640
 - Textbooks
- Use account object code 730/731
 - To purchase fixed assets (Purchases where the unit price is \$2,000 or more)
- Use account object code 800/890
 - Admissions; Registrations; Memberships; Petty Cash;
 - Postage; Magazine Subscription Service; Catering

16. What is the allotment for petty cash?

- Elementary schools are allotted \$700.
- High schools are allotted \$1,200.

17. How do I enter a requisition for petty cash and how do I obtain the check?

- Enter a requisition in the PeopleSoft Financial eProcurement system.
- List the school as the vendor.

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- Enter the amount.
- Purchasing Department will process the purchase order.
- The P.O. and Voucher Bill will be forwarded to the Office of Accounts Payable.
- The school must enter a receipt for the full amount in PeopleSoft Financial system.
- The school must contact Accounts Payable to sign the voucher-bill and arrange to pick-up the check.

18. Why my requisition did not pass budget?

- Make sure that you entered the correct account number.
- Make sure that you have adequate funds for your purchase.
- Make sure that the account does not have a hard-stop hold.

19. What is a hard-stop?

- A hard-stop is a hold on the account.
- This occurs when the accounts have been frozen or restricted due to budgetary constraints.
- To check for hard-stops, you must navigate in PeopleSoft to Commitment Control:
 - Click on Budget Details.
 - Enter the account number.
 - View the upper left corner of the account for the word “hard-stop”.
 - If the account is fully open, you will see 100 under hard-stop.
 - If the account has a hold, the number will be less than 100.

(The number dictates the percentage in which the account is open and what funds are available for expenditures)

20. What is the process for field trips?

- All field trips are processed through the School Business Administrators’ office. You should contact Ms. Marixsa Castillo for assistance.

21. What is the process for travel and attending workshops?

- All travel and workshops are processed through the School Business Administrators’ office. You should contact Ms. Marixsa Castillo for assistance.

22. What is a PQS Solicitation?

- The PreQualification Solicitation process allows the district to examine and select an approved group of vendors to provide services throughout the district.

23. Why should a vendor respond to this solicitation?

- This pool of vendors have are issued contracts for a stated dollar value. They have already completed the solicitation process and district has met NJ Public Contract Law requirements. Vendors can provide immediate services upon the issuance of a purchase order.

24. How long will it take to find out if my organization was an approved vendor?

- All proposals must be awarded within 30-90 days after the closing date. Final approval is made by School Board resolution and Superintendent approval. Notification periods

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may vary. Vendors are notified by email. A preliminary contract is sent with a request for additional documents.

25. What are the terms of the contract for approved vendors?

- The terms and conditions of all contracts are included in the boiler plate language of the solicitation. Any adjustment/amendments will be negotiated through the legal counsel of NPS and the vendor's representative.
- Most contracts are renewable annually or every two (2) years for up to five (5) years. This doesn't guarantee that any awarded vendor will be offered a renewal. Conversely, not all vendors opt for renewal with the district.

26. What is the maximum award amount for PQS solicitations?

- The maximum award varies. It is determined by the district needs and funding availability.

27. What is the advantage of repeating the PQS process every six months?

- PQS are advertised periodically to ensure an active updated pool of vendors, allow new vendors to apply and allow current vendors to propose additional services.

28. The PQS is lengthy. Can vendor have access to solicitation components or rubrics prior to solicitation?

- Public Contracts Law mandates that all solicitations are fair and open. All information on the solicitation is released to all vendors at the same time.
- Evaluation criteria are listed in each solicitation. Best practices encourage the non-disclosure of related weighting. Vendors are encouraged to market their services and products aggressively within the proposal.
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29. If I am currently an approved vendor, do I need to submit a proposal for another PQS?

- You only need to submit a proposal if you have additional services that you would like considered for approval. If approved a new contract will be awarded for that particular service(s).

30. How are schools notified of approved vendors?

- Once the vendors have been approved and the related contracts are fully executed, the principals are sent an index style catalog summarizing the approved vendors and related services.

31. How should vendors market their services within the district?

- Vendors should contact the school administrator via their customary methods of marketing. The district does not currently conduct vendors fair.
- Administrator allocate funding for various services in accordance to district and school initiatives. Funding capabilities vary.

The procurement process contains many nuances that may affect your particular purchase. The Purchasing Department has an informed staff with the knowledge to provide professional assistance. This FAQ was prepared to outline the requirements for the most common circumstances. Please call the Purchasing Department (973-733-6549) for additional information as needed.