Vancouver Island West School District 84
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

AP 505

Adopted: 2022-11-18
Amended: 2023-06-12
Amended: 2024-11-06
Amended: 2026-08-24

PURCHASING AND TENDERING

The School District shall purchase the most appropriate services, products, commodities, and equipment for the purposes envisaged, based on the quality and cost of the particular product. The School District believes in purchasing competitively and seeking maximum educational value for every dollar expended, consistent with good purchasing practices.

1. **Procedures and Guidelines**

   a. All services, supplies, commodities, or equipment required for the ongoing operations of the School District are acquired on the open market with probity and in accordance with competitive public sector purchasing practices.

   b. Whenever possible, the tender that provides the best economic value is to be accepted consistent with equal quality and the ability of the bidder to supply the requirements in a reasonable period of time. In exceptional circumstances, the Secretary-Treasurer may authorize acquisition from a sole source. These exceptional circumstances would involve an urgent requirement to:

      - protect and ensure the safety of students and staff;
      - protect School District assets;
      - prevent a serious financial loss to the School District.

   c. In determining the best economic value, the following factors will be considered:

      - price;
      - quality;
      - ability to meet product specifications;
      - ability to provide service and warranty support (including past performance);
      - availability of replacement parts.

   d. In all purchasing transactions, authorized employees of the School District will:

      - consider the interest of the school system and the improvement of its educational program;
      - consider all responsible bidders equally when determining whether their product meets specifications and the educational needs of the school system;
      - decline gifts that might in any way influence the purchase of school supplies and equipment;
      - refrain from soliciting funds or material from vendors, however worthy the purpose;
      - refrain from asking for special discounts or prices on items purchased from School District suppliers for personal use.

   e. The Secretary-Treasurer may develop specific educational partnerships that result in the provision of unique products or services to support educational programs, at a reduced cost to the School District.

f. The Secretary-Treasurer may pursue improved efficiencies and economies through cooperative ventures with other public sector agencies. The success of these joint initiatives will depend, in part, on achieving a level of standardization in supplies and services.

g. Any single transaction expenditures exceeding $75,000 for goods and services or $200,000 for construction will be referred to the Board for approval.

(Note: These single transaction limits do not include utilities expenditures; e.g. telephone, natural gas, and hydro. These single transaction limits are pre-tax amounts.)

2. The Secretary-Treasurer may delegate to the appropriate personnel the authority to purchase goods and services. The operating units are encouraged wherever possible to cooperatively purchase; that is, to take advantage of quantity discounts.

3. **General Guidelines:**

a. All items purchased, or donated, in the name of a school or the School District will become the property of the Board.

b. Where practicable, the Secretary-Treasurer will coordinate “bulk purchases” for various commodities.

c. Use of the School District’s purchasing procedures to acquire goods and services for personal use will not be permitted except where specifically allowed by the Secretary-Treasurer.

d. Whenever practicable, equipment and supplies will be standardized to achieve maximum purchasing economy and quality goods. Consideration will be given to future maintenance of equipment and availability of parts and services.

e. The purchase of any item or product from any person employed by the School District will not be in effect until the purchase has been approved by the Secretary-Treasurer.

f. All contracts must be signed by the Secretary-Treasurer.

4. **Purchasing Methods**

The School District utilizes various purchasing tools for the acquisition of goods and services as follows:

a. *Petty Cash* – used at the user level to expedite the acquisition of low value goods not to exceed $100.00 (excluding taxes) per single transaction, unless explicitly approved by the Secretary-Treasurer. A petty cash fund can be established by contacting the Secretary-Treasurer.

Receipts must be attached to a petty cash voucher by the custodian in charge of the petty cash. The petty cash voucher must be signed by the custodian of the petty cash, and signed by the custodian’s immediate supervisor. The petty cash voucher shall be submitted to the Finance Department to be approved by the Secretary-Treasurer or designate prior to reimbursement by Accounts Payables.

b. *School Trust/Bank Account (School Generated Funds)* - used at the school level to expedite the acquisition of goods and services. The School Trust/Bank Account is the responsibility of the School Principal. The School Principal may delegate the duties of financial record keeping, receipting and disbursing fund to an individual of their choice.

Disbursement of funds to purchase goods and services shall be made with cheques. The cheque must be signed by two (2) authorized signatures.

In some instances, funds disbursed from the School Trust/Bank Account may be reimbursed by the School District. The custodian in charge of the School Trust/Bank Accounts must submit an invoice to the Finance Department with all receipts or relevant documentation attached. The invoice shall be approved by the Secretary-Treasurer or designate prior to reimbursement by Accounts Payable.

c. *Purchasing Cards (Procurement Cards)* – used for the procurement and payment of goods and services within established purchasing authorization limits, where it is efficient, economical and operationally feasible to do so. With the written approval from an employee's School Principal, or Supervisor, an employee may make application to the Secretary-Treasurer or the Purchase Card Administrator for a Purchasing Card. All Purchase Card users are required to sign an Individual User Agreement outlining the terms of use each school year.

   The Purchasing Card may only be used by the person named on the front of the card. Monthly limits on each Purchasing Card will not exceed $10,000 without the express consent of the Secretary-Treasurer.

   On a monthly basis, the Finance Department forwards a Monthly Purchasing Card Statement to each cardholder. The cardholder must attach the receipts to the Monthly Purchasing Card Statement and ensure the GST amount and General Ledger Account attached to the transaction is correct. The Monthly Purchasing Card Statement must be signed by the cardholder's immediate supervisor. The Monthly Purchasing Card Statement must be returned to the Finance Department five business days after the statements are issued. Each month the Finance Department processes payment to the Financial Institute and the Secretary-Treasurer performs a review of all Purchasing Card transactions.

d. *Invoice Entry* – used to request payment for goods and/or service.

   Vendor, Dollar Amount, GST, General Ledger Account, and FIA details must be entered into the accounting system. Each entry must have supporting documentation attached, such as a vendor invoice. Where a vendor invoice is not available or applicable, official School District forms found on the School District website must be attached instead. Entries must be routed to the appropriate supervisor and/or the individual employee responsible for the applicable General Ledger Account Budget for approval prior to payment by Accounts Payable. The Secretary-Treasurer reviews all payments.

   Any invoice with a single transaction greater than $75,000 for goods and services or $200,000 for construction must also be approved by the Board, prior to reimbursement by Accounts Payable.

e. *Systems Contract* – for goods or services to be supplied over a period of time at a fixed or negotiated price (i.e. equipment leases, garbage disposal, etc.). An encumbered amount with start and end dates will be established for the System Contract. All system contracts must be negotiated by the Secretary-Treasurer. Any system contracts greater than $75,000 must also be approved by the Board, prior to the system contract.

   The approved systems contract will be sent to the vendor for the vendor to enact on the requirements stated in the systems contract. Based on the terms of the system contract, the vendor shall forward an invoice to the Finance Department for payment.

   If there is no deviation between the invoice and the system contract, payment to the vendor will be processed without additional approval. If there is a deviation between the invoice and the system contract, additional approval from the Secretary-Treasurer must be received prior to the processing of payment.

5. **Purchasing Procedures**

a. The Secretary-Treasurer shall assign to individual employees the authority to initiate expenditures from accounts specifically assigned to them. When the total purchase cost of a single unit or group of units, or a service, is estimated to be:

i. For purchases of goods and services up to $25,000 or for construction purchases up to $100,000, the purchase shall be made by comparative selections unless made from a previous supplier. Purchases are to be completed by the end user by one of the following methods: “Purchasing Cards” or “Invoice Entry”. Where convenient “Petty Cash” can be used to complete purchases of items up to $100. Purchases will be authorized by the Secretary-Treasurer.

ii. For purchases of goods and services from $25,000 to $75,000 or for construction purchases from $100,000 to $200,000 (pre tax amount), written quotations will be requested from known reputable suppliers of a particular goods and/or services. These purchases must be approved by the Secretary Treasurer in writing prior to initiating the order with the vendor.

iii. (Note: Processing of utility invoices does not require prior approval from the Board for processing of payment to the supplier. These would include telephone, hydro and natural gas.)

iv. For purchases of goods and services greater than $75,000 or for construction purchases greater than $200,000 (pre tax amount), a “Tender” or “Request For Proposal” will be written by the Secretary-Treasurer..

6. **Tendering or Request For Proposals**

a. All orders in excess of $75,000 for goods and services or $200,000 for construction (pre tax amount) shall be tendered.

b. All responsible bidders will be given equal consideration and assurance of unbiased judgments in determining whether their product or service meets specifications and the needs of the School District.

c. Invitations to tender shall be advertised through an electronic notice board, such as the provincial government’s BC Bid website or other.

d. The Secretary-Treasurer will ensure that competition is maximized and that local vendors are given every reasonable opportunity to bid on School District contracts.

e. All tenders or sealed bids will be opened in public in the presence of and signed by two staff members, one of whom must be the Secretary-Treasurer, recording the time and date opened.

f. On occasion, only one bid may be submitted by tender closing time. The bid will not be opened unless the bidder agrees, in writing, that they accept their bid may be rejected and that the tender may be re-tendered without any changes in the tender documents.

g. Information pertaining to the proposals will not be released until after the review process has been completed and the successful vendor has been identified.

h. Tenders will be awarded to the lowest bid or quoted price, consistent with the required quality, service and safety standards. The School District reserves the right to accept or reject the whole or part of any tenders. The “Tender” must be approved by the Secretary-Treasurer and the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Board prior to initiating the order with the successful vendor. The Secretary-Treasurer will notify the Board as to the results of the “Tender”.

The Secretary-Treasurer will inform the successful vendor to the awarding of the tender. After the successful vendor has accepted the tender, then the unsuccessful vendors will be informed of the awarding of the tender to a competitive vendor.

i. The Secretary-Treasurer will be consulted prior to awarding a tender to other than the low bidder.

7. **Suppliers and Vendors**

In considering qualifications and performance of suppliers and vendors, considerations will be given to:

- current Business licences and Canada Custom & Revenue Agency business number;
- minimum of $1,000,000 (one million dollar) liability insurance;
- WSBC coverage (where applicable);
- reputation and experience;
- ability to deliver or perform within the time specified;
- ability to provide after sales' maintenance and service;
- past experience on previous orders.