

II. Administration

C. Procurement

1. Purchasing

- A. All records of the Purchasing Office shall be open to public scrutiny.
- B. Purposes and Guidelines for Purchasing Policy:
 - 1. Educational welfare of student should be foremost consideration when making any purchases.
 - 2. Public should expect and get greatest possible return for every dollar spent.
 - 3. Those who use material should have a decision in selection of materials.
 - 4. Essential information should be included in bid forms, quotations forms, and purchase orders.
 - 5. No contract will be awarded contrary to the public interest.
 - 6. Advertisements for bids shall be made in sufficient time to permit full and free competition.
 - 7. It is desired that flexibility and professional judgment will be possible.
 - 8. School Committee having secured bids, shall not be obliged to accept the lowest bid, if in its opinion, it would not be in the best interest of the school system.
 - 9. All contract or obligations entered into by the Narragansett School System prior to the effective date of this policy shall continue in full force and effect.
- C. In order to encourage maximum response, bid specifications, whenever possible, should be generic in nature and broad in scope. Specifications will never be narrowly constructed for the purpose of targeting, pre-selecting, or excluding a specific brand, dealer, or manufacturer. If it is deemed necessary that a brand or brand-like specification be stipulated in the bid offering, then a minimum of three such brand names as well as the generic product or description will be indicated. The “or equal” clause will be prominent in all offerings.
- D. The School Committee, via the Director of Finance and Administration, shall authorize all purchases within the approved budget or approved by transfer for the use of the schools.
- E. All purchases will be competitively shopped to insure the vendor selected is the best value for the school system and shall be made on the approved district purchase order form, authorized by the administrator making the request, signed by the Director of Finance and Administration and transmitted to the vendor via a written purchase order form or by electronic means

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- F. Purchases may be made through the RI Division of Purchases Master Price Agreement or other state, regional, or national cooperative purchasing agreements. Purchases may also be made in cooperation with other districts or educational agencies where the exact item has been bid. In these cases, competitive quoting and competitive bidding shall not be required.
- G. The Director of Finance and Administration shall be empowered to authorize purchases not to exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000), or not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for construction purchases, in accordance with RIGL 45-55-9, provided money for same is in the approved budget or approved by transfer.
- H. Competitive Quote Process: The School Committee requires competitive quotes for procuring supplies and services for any single item purchase or any multiple item purchase available from a single vendor of between \$3,500 and \$5,000, or in the case of construction between \$3,500 and \$10,000. These purchases shall be made only after the solicitation of three quotations, in accordance with RIGL 45-55-9, that further requires that no purchasing transaction that is essentially a single unit may be subdivided to circumvent the requirement for competitive quoting. Competitive quotes are not required when purchases are made in accord with F above.

Whenever this process is used, the results shall be documented, with documentation retained in accordance with the Records Retention Policy. The purchase will be made after review by the Director of Finance and Administration.

- I. Competitive Bidding Process: In accordance with RIGL 45-55-5 (with reference to 45-55-9), sealed bids shall be solicited for any purchase of supplies, materials, equipment or services performed that will exceed \$5,000, or in the case of construction as defined in state law, in excess of \$10,000. The School Committee may increase or decrease these amounts in accordance with RIGL 45-55-5 through 45-55-9.

The process for soliciting sealed bids shall be as follows:

- a. Public notice shall be posted on the District website and placed in a newspaper of local and/or statewide circulation, in accordance with RIGL 45-55-5.
- b. The bid notice shall state the latest date that bids will be accepted and where bid packages, if any, may be picked up; and notify bidders that there shall be a public opening of bids on a specific date.

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- c. The School Committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formalities in a bid, to make awards to more than one bidder, or to accept the bid or bids which in the judgment of the School Committee is in the best interest of the Narragansett School System to do so. The School Committee shall not be obligated to accept the lowest bid, if in its opinion, it would not be in the best interest of the school system.
 - d. All bidders who have submitted a bid shall be notified of the time and place of bid opening, which shall be held in public, in accordance with RIGL 45-55-5. The Director of Finance and Administration shall recommend to the Superintendent an award or that none of the bids are acceptable. The School Committee may approve or reject this recommendation. If an award is approved, the successful bidder shall be notified in writing.
- J. Competitive Negotiations: If the competitive bid process fails to yield a contract acceptable to the School Committee, an award may be negotiated in accordance with RIGL 45-55-6 and the process below:
1. Contracts may be competitively negotiated when the School Committee, with a recommendation from the Superintendent, determines that the bid prices received are:
 - i. Unreasonable as to all or part of the requirements,
 - ii. Not independently reached in open competition, or
 - iii. In excess of funds available to make the award to the lowest responsive bidder.
 2. In the case of (i) or (ii), all bidders shall be afforded the opportunity to negotiate a contract. In the case of (iii), the lowest three bidders shall be afforded an opportunity. The negotiated price must be lower than the lowest rejected bid price from the competitive bid process of I above, and must be the lowest negotiated price. Any discussions regarding revisions to specifications must be held with all bidders eligible to negotiate.
 3. All bidders shall be notified of the negotiations in writing and all other applicable provisions of RIGL 45-55-6 shall apply.

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K. Sole Source Procurement

1. The School Committee may authorize a sole source procurement of supplies, services, or the award of a contract, when it is determined that the item is only available from a single vendor, in accordance with RIGL 45-55-8 (a).
2. Sole source procurement may be authorized following an internal formalized search by a representative committee, for items including but not limited to textbooks, software, and computer hardware. The results of the search shall be provided to the School Committee.

L. Before bids are issued and purchases are made, existing warranties and guarantees should be reviewed and acted upon, if necessary.

M. Bid Bond/Deposits

When the Director of Business Operations deems it necessary, bid bond deposits shall be prescribed in the public notices inviting bids. Unsuccessful bidders shall be entitled to return surety where the Director has required such. A successful bidder shall forfeit any surety required by the Director upon failure on his part to enter a contract within the time specified after the awards.

N. Petty Cash Purchases shall not be encouraged in the purchasing program. Petty cash shall be expended only when absolutely necessary for the day-to-day operation of the school system offices.

O. Emergency Purchases shall not be encouraged. Emergency purchase should reflect a true emergency situation and not the result of poor planning.

All purchases of an emergency nature will be in accordance with RIGL 45-55-8. A purchase order will be generated as soon as possible following the emergency. Emergency purchases may be made when there exists a threat to public health, welfare, or safety. Emergency situations include but are not limited to:

- i. Failure of a school building facility or system such as the heating system, water supply, or technology support system,
- ii. Loss of building integrity due to weather, fire damage or vermin infestation,
- iii. Direction provided by an authority, i.e., fire marshal, building inspector, with an urgent timeline,
- iv. Shortage of programmed instructional materials, textbooks, equipment or personnel.

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P. Provisions not included in the policy shall be governed by Title 37 and Chapter 45-55 of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island.

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Narragansett School System

Narragansett, Rhode Island