



FEDERAL GRANTS: PROCUREMENT MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

This manual sets forth the procurement policies and procedures used by Edgewood ISD (EISD) (the “LEA”) to administer federal funds. The manual contains the internal controls and grant management standards used by the EISD to ensure that all federal funds are lawfully expended. According to 2 CFR §200.317, non-federal entities (LEAs) will follow §§200.318 General Procurement Standards through 200.327 Contract Provisions when procuring property and services under a federal award.

Statutes containing requirements for competitive purchasing/contracting processes for LEAs are found in the Texas Education Code, Local Government Code, Government Code, Texas Revised Civil Statutes, Texas Attorney General Opinions, federal regulations and other sources.

This procurement manual was adapted from guidance and excerpts from the Texas Education Agency’s “Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG), Module 5 Purchasing Guide 2019”, and the “Handbook on Purchasing for Texas Public Schools, Junior Colleges and Community Colleges” incorporated into the FASRG’s Purchasing Module as Appendix 1.

Although this manual is not all-inclusive and cannot address all situations, it does provide general information to assist with standard procurement operations consistent with federal and state law. Employees of EISD involved with procurement, new employees as well as incumbent employees, are expected to review this manual to gain familiarity and understanding of EISD’s rules and practices.

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, every local educational agency (LEA), large and small, should have a written manual describing its purchasing policies and procedures. Rules and guidelines for those purchases consistent with relevant statutes, regulations, and board policies are a vital part of the manual.

Overall, a good purchasing manual establishes rules for making purchases. It provides guidance to employees at the campus and departmental levels in requisitioning purchases and often is used to acquaint vendors and suppliers with the EISD’s policies and procedures. Internally, the manual helps in training personnel in purchasing policy and procedures. Finally, it promotes consistency in purchasing applications throughout EISD.

For additional guidance on procurement, refer to the Questions and Answers section found in the FASRG’s Purchasing Module, Appendix 1 – Handbook on Purchasing for Texas Public Schools, Junior Colleges and Community Colleges, as well as TEA’s “New EDGAR Regulations Frequently Asked Questions” document.

PURCHASING OVERVIEW

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, a major management process supporting financial accountability in Texas public schools is the purchasing function. Purchasing has several links to overall accountability initiatives which include the:

- **Strategic Link.** The overall mission of purchasing is to use available fiscal resources to obtain the maximum product or service for the resources expended.
- **Operational Link.** Purchasing supports instructional delivery, administration, and other services. Performance and goal achievement throughout the school district depend on its effectiveness.
- **Tactical Link.** The purchasing process influences day-to-day financial functions including budget management, accounting, and accurate financial reporting.

Purchasing in the *public sector environment* presents numerous challenges including:

- The requirement to comply with numerous statutes, policies, legal interpretations, and procedures. The complexity of these requirements demands not only knowledge of purchasing laws and standards but compliance in implementing a purchasing system that also meets user needs.
- The dynamic and diverse nature of the public education organizational environment. School districts are complex organizations with diverse functions. Although instruction is the heart of the organization, numerous other services – ranging from custodial services to food service to tax collection – support the overall educational mission. These distinct organizational units need a procurement process that is responsive to their needs.
- The competition among vendors for school district business. The strong competition among vendors for school district business may create pressure on school district personnel for product selection, bid or proposal awards, and dispute resolution. Most school districts seek to foster both good vendor relations and strong competition but balance them with objective purchasing decisions.
- The consistent oversight by interest groups. School district purchasing is scrutinized by diverse groups including those from the public, the media, state and federal agencies, and auditors. Strict adherence to established guidelines and consistency in record keeping, documentation, and execution of procedures assists the school district in withstanding this scrutiny.

Purchasing Policy

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, the objective of the purchasing policy is to purchase the best products, materials, and services at the lowest practical prices within relevant statutes and policies. Procurement policies must, of course, accommodate the LEA's unique operating environment and needs. While EISD administrators are not authorized to override federal or state law or board policy, they can customize the purchasing function to provide for regulatory compliance while minimizing procedures and related costs.

The purchasing function is the result of conscious process design and is reviewed and challenged periodically. The elements are systematic, comprehensive, and creative. The structure itself, therefore, is not based on historical methods and "the way it's always been done." Instead, it begins with a strategic focus and ends by linking operations, strategy, technology, and human resources district-wide. Development of this structure is an interactive process which is cross-functional in providing a sense of ownership for user/designers.

A good design identifies the best purchasing methods and subsequently employs them throughout EISD. It correlates the diversity of district operations and the important nature of the services with the timing of service delivery. As an example, planning for and subsequent procurement of instructional materials for both students and teachers is coordinated at the district and campus levels to meet both the school calendar and class schedules.

Accurate record-keeping and documentation is a fundamental element of the procurement process. Precise and systematic record-keeping and records management withstands the constant scrutiny of various interest groups including vendors, the general public, and outside agencies as well as internal groups which are the users or customers of the purchasing system. This records management function supports EISD's overall information management plan consistent with the Data Collection and Reporting module of TEA's FASRG. The records management system generally provides for:

- Both the flow and retention of forms including requisitions and purchase orders.
- Full documentation of all competitive procurements with comprehensive competitive procurement files containing specifications, competitive procurement advertisement, pre-competitive procurement conference minutes (as appropriate), competitive procurements submitted, competitive procurement tabulation, board minutes indicating competitive procurement awards (or a similar award notice) and related records.
- Full documentation of procurement procedures utilized to obtain goods and services through competitive sealed proposals, design/build contracts, and other procurement options.
- Documentation of price quotations if there are quotations obtained by EISD staff for local policy compliance.

EISD Purchasing Department uses Frontline as its record management system for purchasing documents. Documentation related to purchasing is scanned into Frontline with the exception of bids and proposals. Hard copies of bids and proposals are maintained in a hard copy and electronic format.

Quality assurance and quality control are reflected in all administrative procedures and extend to areas such as analysis of products provided, review of services and review of vendor performance. Specific areas of quality control may be grouped as:

- Administrative Control activities may include:
 - Independent review of account coding
 - Confirmation of availability of funds
 - Confirmation of utilization of approved vendors
 - Confirmation of legal compliance with bid, proposal and quotation requirements
 - Review of pricing and price extensions
- Product and Services Control activities may include:
 - Product samples
 - Ongoing analysis of product quality and quality of service delivery
 - Product reliability analysis
- Vendor Performance Control activities may include:
 - Review of compliance with contractual terms for prices
 - Analysis of timeliness and accuracy of product delivery
 - Responsiveness to problems

A consistent program for purchasing staff development and training is important to effective purchasing activity. The complexity of the purchasing environment demands that staff members responsible for purchasing goods and services periodically receive training in policy and procedures. Purchasing training includes all levels of employees providing information about the EISD's purchasing function.

Training is on-going to accommodate:

- Employee advancement and staff turnover that create training needs for employees
- Procedures, processes, functions and support mechanisms that are modified or enhanced
- Purchasing changes that may be mandated by legislative, executive or judicial action

Purchasing Design

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, design and implementation of certain purchasing processes results in more successful LEA operations. Although not all inclusive, these processes include:

- **Planning and Coordination.** EISD develops a comprehensive plan to determine how various purchasing methods will be implemented and the timing of key activities such as annual bid or proposal requirements. Responsibility for coordination of purchasing activities are assigned to a responsible administrator to ensure that needs are met.
- **Purchasing Infrastructure Development.** Comprehensive policies and procedures, implementation of processes to support these procedures, on-going training of users, and monitoring of the overall purchasing function to ensure sound operations requires careful development.
- **User Responsiveness.** To operate successfully, the purchasing function must be responsive. This includes ensuring that communication lines are open and that a user perspective is incorporated into all processes.
- **Consistent Compliance with Requirements.** EISD ensures that enforcement mechanisms for laws, regulations, policies and ethical standards are in place and monitored.

PURCHASING ETHICS

Purchasing Ethics

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, the competitive nature of the public purchasing arena and the expenditure of significant amounts of public funds require that ethical standards be incorporated into the foundation of all purchasing functions. EISD Purchasing personnel and other staff face the difficult task of developing good vendor relations and encouraging vendor competition while avoiding even the appearance of favoritism or other ethical misconduct.

Numerous problems may be encountered, including:

- Employees will not circumvent policies, procedures, and laws, or to make their own liberal “legal” interpretations of existing policies. Such activity, although well intentioned, can cause ethical problems.
- Employees will not purchase the same items or type of items over the course of twelve months may exceed the federal, state, and/or local competitive quotation and procurement requirements. Although some sequential purchasing is intentional, it usually results from needs that could not be anticipated. It may also result from lack of centralization and/or centralized control of the purchasing function.
- Employees will not purchase an item (usually equipment) in component parts. Component purchasing usually is an attempt to circumvent bid or proposal laws or other requirements by buying an item through the issuance of multiple purchase orders for the component parts of the item versus a single purchase order for the entire item. Repeated purchases of

additional optional equipment or parts after an initial purchase may create the perception of component purchasing.

Ethics relating to conflicts of interest, financial interest in firms conducting business with EISD, kickbacks and gratuities, and improper use of a position or confidential information are clearly communicated throughout the district. Additionally, EISD personnel are made aware of the penalties for violations of purchasing laws and ethics which may include criminal prosecution and loss of employment opportunities.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA), *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide – General Ethical Standards and other documents*, prescribes common standards of ethics governing the conduct of employees involved in the purchasing function, which are incorporated in the procedures prescribed below. *Texas Education Code, §44.032*.

State law and applicable Board policy prohibits the following types of purchases:

- **“Component Purchases”** means purchases of the component parts of an item that in normal purchasing practices would be purchased in one purchase.
- **“Separate Purchases”** means purchases, made separately, of items that in normal purchasing practices would be purchased in one purchase.
- **“Sequential Purchases”** means purchases, made over a period, of items that in normal purchasing practices would be purchased in one purchase.
- **Component, Separate, and Sequential purchases and confirmation orders** are illegal and can subject a district official to possible criminal prosecution as a Class B misdemeanor, an offense involving moral turpitude.

Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

To ensure the public receives the most value, EISD strives to ensure its administrative management of public funds is as effective and efficient as possible, with a high standard of accountability to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse.

All trustees, employees, vendors, contractors, consultants, volunteers, and any other parties who are involved in EISD’s financial transactions shall act with integrity and diligence in duties involving EISD’s financial resources.

Fraud and Financial Impropriety

EISD prohibits fraud and financial impropriety, as defined below, in the actions of its trustees, employees, vendors, contractors, consultants, volunteers and others seeking or maintain a business relationship with EISD. These persons shall not seek a financial or other advantage, either

personally or for EISD, through bribery, fraud, kickbacks, misapplication of funds, malfeasance, gross mismanagement, or other criminal activities. These persons shall not offer, promise, give, request, agree to receive or accept a bribe for any purpose. Excessive or lavish gifts or hospitality in relation to business transactions or arrangements with granting agencies, contractors, vendors or other parties to contracts might constitute bribery.

Please see page 13 for a definition of nominal vs excessive gifts.

Fraud and financial impropriety includes, but is not limited to:

- ☐ Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document or account belonging to the EISD;
- ☐ Forgery or unauthorized alteration of a check, bank draft, or any other financial document;
- ☐ Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies, or other EISD assets, including employee time;
- ☐ Impropriety in the handling of money or reporting of EISD financial transactions;
- ☐ Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of EISD information or activities;
- ☐ Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or proprietary information to outside parties;
- ☐ Unauthorized disclosure of investment activities engaged in or contemplated by the EISD;
- ☐ Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors, or other persons providing services or materials to the EISD;
- ☐ Destroying, removing, or inappropriately using records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment;
- ☐ Failure to provide financial records required by state and local entities;
- ☐ Failure to disclose conflicts of interest as required by policy; and
- ☐ Any other dishonest act regarding the finances of the EISD.

EISD will take appropriate action to prevent incidents of fraud, malfeasance, misapplication of funds, gross mismanagement, or other criminal activities in all forms, which may be prosecutable. EISD will disclose in writing to the awarding agency any violation of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award.

Please see page 19 for Mandatory Disclosure procedures.

Reporting Fraud or Financial Impropriety

Any person who suspects fraud or financial impropriety, or suspects that an illegal or unethical act has occurred, shall report the suspicions immediately to any supervisor, the Superintendent or designee, the Board President, or local law enforcement. EISD will not retaliate against any person who, in good faith, has reported what they believe to be illegal acts by EISD employees, officers, or agents, or of other individuals or entities with whom EISD has a business relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of law or clear mandate of public policy.

An Incident Report should be completed by the Complainant and should include the following information, if applicable or known: (1) Date of Report; (2) Type of funds, such as federal, state, local; (3) Grant Number; (4) Location of incident; (5) Date and time of incident; (6) Source of complaint (employee, vendor, etc.); (7) Description in detail of infraction.

Investigating Reports of Fraud or Financial Impropriety

The Executive Business Officer will appropriately investigate, record, and report all suspected instances of fraud or financial impropriety to the Superintendent or designee, including the initial Incident Report, as well as a report indicating actions taken. If necessary, the appropriate investigative agency or law enforcement will be notified. Depending on the results of the investigation, EISD will take appropriate action, including disciplinary actions for violations of EISD's Code of Conduct. Appeals related to the conclusion of an investigation or disciplinary action resulting from an investigation should be made in writing to the Superintendent or designee.

Purchasing Code of Ethics

EISD adopts, with adaptations, the following Purchasing Code of Ethics outlined by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts' Model Purchasing Manual for Texas Cities and Counties (November 2010), accessed at http://www.texasahead.org/lga/finances/purchasing/96-449_Model_Purchasing_Manual_11_10.pdf. (The purchasing manual describes general purchasing principles applicable to counties, cities, independent school districts, and other governmental entities.)

Statement of Purchasing Policy

Public employment is a public trust. It is the policy of EISD to promote and balance the objective of protecting government integrity and the objective of facilitating the recruitment and retention of personnel needed by EISD.

Such policy is implemented by prescribing essential standards of ethical conduct without creating unnecessary obstacles to entering public service.

EISD employees must discharge their duties impartially so as to assure fair competitive access to governmental procurement by responsible contractors. Moreover, they should conduct themselves in such a manner as to foster public confidence in the integrity of this EISD's procurement organization.

To achieve the purpose of this policy, it is essential that those doing business with this EISD also observe the ethical standards prescribed in this manual.

General Ethical Standards

- **Personal Gain.** It shall be a breach of ethics to attempt to realize personal gain through public employment with the EISD by any conduct inconsistent with the proper discharge of the employee's duties.
- **Influence.** It shall be a breach of ethics to attempt to influence any public employee of the EISD to breach the standards of ethical conduct set forth in this code.
- **Conflicts of Interest.** It shall be a breach of ethics for any employee of EISD to participate directly or indirectly in procurement when the employee knows that:
 - The employee or any member of the employee's immediate family has a financial interest pertaining to the procurement;
 - A business or organization in which the employee, or any member of the employee's immediate family, has a financial interest pertaining to the procurement; and
 - Any other person, business or organization with which the employee or any member of the employee's immediate family is negotiating or has an arrangement concerning prospective employment involved in the procurement.
- **Gratuities.** It shall be a breach of ethics to offer, give or agree to give any employee or former employee of EISD, or for any employee or former employee of EISD to solicit, demand, accept or agree to accept from another person, a gratuity or an offer of employment in connection with any decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, preparation of any part of a program requirement or purchase request, influencing the content of any specification or procurement standard, rendering of advice, investigation, auditing or in any other advisory capacity in any proceeding or application, request for ruling, determination, claim or controversy, or other particular matter pertaining to any program requirement or a contract or subcontract or to any solicitation or proposal therefore pending before this local government.
- **Kickbacks.** It shall be a breach of ethics for any payment, gratuity or offer of employment to be made by or on behalf of a subcontractor under a contract to the prime contractor or higher tier subcontractor for any contract for EISD, or any person associated therewith, as an inducement for the award of a subcontract or order.
- **Contract Clause.** The prohibition against gratuities and kickbacks prescribed above shall be conspicuously set forth in every contract and solicitation therefore.
- **Confidential Information.** It shall be a breach of ethics for any employee or former employee of EISD knowingly to use confidential information for actual or anticipated personal gain, or for the actual or anticipated gain of any person.

Texas Education Code §44.032 Enforcement of Purchase Procedures

(b) An officer, employee, or agent of a school district commits an offense if the person with criminal negligence makes or authorizes separate, sequential, or component purchases to

avoid the requirements of Section 44.031(a) or (b). An offense under this subsection is a Class B misdemeanor and is an offense involving moral turpitude.

(c) An officer, employee, or agent of a school district commits an offense if the person with criminal negligence violates Section 44.031(a) or (b) other than by conduct described by Subsection (b). An offense under this subsection is a Class B misdemeanor and is an offense involving moral turpitude.

(d) An officer or employee of a school district commits an offense if the officer or employee knowingly violates Section 44.031, other than by conduct described by Subsection (b) or (c). An offense under this subsection is a Class C misdemeanor.

(e) The final conviction of a person other than a trustee of a school district for an offense under Subsection (b) or (c) results in the immediate removal from office or employment of that person. A trustee who is convicted of an offense under this section is considered to have committed official misconduct for purposes of Chapter 87, Local Government Code, and is subject to removal as provided by that chapter and Section 24, Article V, Texas Constitution. For four years after the date of the final conviction, the removed person is ineligible to be a candidate for or to be appointed or elected to a public office in this state, is ineligible to be employed by or act as an agent for the state or a political subdivision of the state, and is ineligible to receive any compensation through a contract with the state or a political subdivision of the state. This subsection does not prohibit the payment of retirement benefits to the removed person or the payment of workers' compensation benefits to the removed person for an injury that occurred before the commission of the offense for which the person was removed. This subsection does not make a person ineligible for an office for which the federal or state constitution prescribes exclusive eligibility requirements.

(f) A court may enjoin performance of a contract made in violation of this subchapter. A county attorney, a district attorney, a criminal district attorney, a citizen of the county in which the school district is located, or any interested party may bring an action for an injunction. A party who prevails in an action brought under this subsection is entitled to reasonable attorney's fees as approved by the court.

Employees involved in the purchasing process are exposed to more than ordinary temptations because they are involved with the expenditure of large amounts of public money. Strict adherence to the above standards are critical to the protection of the employee's and the District's reputation.

Conflict of Interest Requirements

Definitions

Agent. “Agent” means a third party who undertakes to transact some business or manage some affair for another person by the authority or on account of the other person. The term includes an employee. Local Government Code, §176.001(1), amended by the 84th Legislature.

Business Entity. “Business entity” means a sole proprietorship, partnership, firm, corporation, holding company, joint-stock company, receivership, trust, or any other entity recognized by law. Local Government Code, §171.001(2).

Business Relationship. “Business relationship” means a connection between two or more parties based on commercial activity of one of the parties. The term does not include a connection based on: (A) a transaction that is subject to rate or fee regulation by a federal, state, or local governmental entity (includes EISD) or an agency of a federal, state, or local governmental entity (includes EISD); (B) a transaction conducted at a price and subject to terms available to the public; or (C) a purchase or lease of goods or services from a person that is chartered by a state or federal agency and that is subject to regular examination by, and reporting to, that agency. Local Government Code, §176.001(1-a).

Conflict of Interest. A “conflict of interest” is a situation where the personal interests of a contractor, public official or classified employee are, or appear to be, at odds with the best interests of the jurisdiction. TEA’s Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) Module 5 Purchasing.

In accordance with EISD Board Policy DBD(LEGAL), an employee who exercises discretion in connection with contracts, purchases, payments, claims, or other pecuniary transactions shall not solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit from a person the employee knows is interested in or likely to become interested in any such transactions of the District.

Penal Code 36.08(d).

Contract. “Contract” means a written agreement for the sale or purchase of real property, goods, or services. Local Government Code, §176.001(1-d).

Family Member. “Family member” means a person related to another person within the first degree by consanguinity or affinity, as described by Subchapter B, Chapter 573, Government Code. Local Government Code, §176.001(2), amended by the 84th Legislature.

Family Relationship. “Family relationship” means a relationship between a person and another person within the third degree by consanguinity or the second degree by affinity, as those terms are defined by Subchapter B, Chapter 573, Government Code. Local Government Code, §176.001(2-a), amended by the 84th Legislature.

Gift. “Gift” means a benefit offered by a person, including food, lodging, transportation, and entertainment accepted as a guest. The term does not include a benefit offered on account of kinship or a personal, professional, or business relationship independent of the official status of the recipient. Local Government Code, §176.001(2-b), amended by the 84th Legislature.

Goods. “Goods” means personal property. Local Government Code, §176.001(2-c), amended by the 84th Legislature.

Local Government Officer. “Local government officer” means (A) a member of the governing body of a local governmental entity (includes LEA); (B) a director, superintendent, administrator, president, or other person designated as the executive officer of a local governmental entity (includes LEA); or (C) an agent of a local governmental entity (includes LEA) who exercises discretion in the planning, recommending, selecting, or contracting of a vendor. Local Government Code, §176.001(4), amended by the 84th Legislature.

Local Public Official. “Local public official” means a member of the governing body or another officer, whether elected, appointed, paid, or unpaid, of any district (including a school district), etc. who exercises responsibilities beyond those that are advisory in nature. Local Government Code, §171.001(1). For charter schools, according to TEC §12.1054, a member of a governing body of a charter holder, a member of the governing body of an open-enrollment charter school, or an officer of an open-enrollment charter school is considered to be a local public official for purposes of Local Government Code §171.

Nominal Value.

The following list can be used as guidance regarding nominal vs. excessive:

- Promotional items that apply to any supply order;
- Promotional items and door prizes that anyone would receive at a conference or event (not singled out for this particular EISD or person);
- Meals when meeting to discuss EISD business, not to exceed \$50.00 per unit not to exceed \$250.00 per fiscal year (July 1 through June 30);
- Gifts not to exceed \$50.00 per unit not to exceed \$250.00 per fiscal year (July 1 through June 30)

Records Administrator. “Records Administrator” means the director, county clerk, municipal secretary, superintendent, or other person responsible for maintaining the records of the local governmental entity (includes EISD) or another person designated by the local governmental entity (includes EISD) to maintain statements and questionnaires under Local Government Code §176, and perform related functions. Local Government Code §176.001(5). EISD has designated the Superintendent as the records administrator for Conflict of Interest Disclosure statements. When the conflict disclosure statement is made by the Superintendent the Board President will serve as the records administrator.

Substantial Financial Interest in a Business Entity. According to Local Government Code §171.002, (a) A person has a substantial interest in a business entity if: (1) the person owns 10 percent or more of the voting stock or shares of the business entity or owns either 10 percent or more or \$15,000 or more of the fair market value of the business entity; or (2) funds received by the person from the business entity exceed 10 percent of the person’s gross income for the previous year. (b) A person has a substantial interest in real property if the interest is an equitable or legal ownership with a fair market value of \$2,500 or more. (c) A local public official is considered to have a substantial interest if a person related to the official in the first degree by consanguinity (blood) or affinity (marriage) has a substantial interest.

Vendor. “Vendor” means a person who enters or seeks to enter into a contract with EISD. The term includes an agent of a vendor. The term also includes an officer or employee of a state agency when that individual is acting in a private capacity to enter into a contract. The term does not include a state agency except for Texas Correctional Industries. Local Government Code, §176.001(7), amended by the 84th Legislature.

Standards of Conduct (Conflicts of Interest)

In accordance with 2 CFR §200.318(c), the EISD maintains standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts associated with federally funded transactions.

No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract.

The officers, employees, and agents of the EISD may neither solicit nor accept gifts, gratuities, favors, services, benefits, or anything of monetary value from contractors or parties to subcontracts that could reasonably be construed to influence the person’s discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities, unless the financial interest is not substantial or the gift is an unsolicited item of

nominal value given, for example, for the purpose of advertising, ceremonial occasions or official events.

In addition to the standards of conduct listed above for federal awards, standards of conduct are applicable for all funds in accordance with TEA's Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) Module 5 Purchasing: EISD officials and employees cannot accept anything of value from a vendor, such as personal gifts or gratuities, which may be construed to have been given to influence the purchasing process. Although such practices may be legitimate and generally accepted in the private sector, giving and receiving gifts in the public sector may constitute a violation of law.

No EISD employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal, state, or other award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. If required by the terms and agreements of a Grant Award Notice and/or the awarding agency, the EISD will disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to the awarding agency in accordance with the awarding agency's policies. Furthermore, applicable EISD officials and employees will abide by the EISD's Purchasing Code of Ethics.

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

The EISD will follow the requirements of Local Government Code Chapter 176 and Local Government Code Chapter 171 regarding conflict of interest statements and reporting. The EISD will also refer to the Texas Ethics Commission website for additional information and sample forms.

Board Member:

According to TEA's Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) Module 5 Purchasing, if a board member or member of their immediate family has a financial interest in a business entity(s), they are required to disclose this relationship through the execution of an affidavit, submitted to the Superintendent. Local Government Codes §171 and §176 provide information regarding disclosure requirements.

Local Government Officer:

A local government officer of an LEA, according to Local Government Code Chapter 176.003, amended by the 84th Legislature, shall file a conflicts disclosure statement with respect to a vendor if: (1) the vendor enters into a contract with the LEA or the LEA is considering entering into a contract with the vendor; and (2) the vendor (A) has an employment or other business relationship with the local government officer or a family member of the officer that results in the officer or family member receiving taxable income, other than investment income, that exceeds \$2,500 during the 12-month period preceding the date that the officer becomes aware that: (i) a contract between the LEA and vendor has been executed; or (ii) the LEA is considering

entering into a contract with the vendor; (B) has given to the local government officer of family member of the office one or more gifts that have an aggregate value of more than \$100 in the 12-month period preceding the date the officer becomes aware that: (i) a contract between the LEA and vendor has been executed; or (ii) the LEA is considering entering into a contract with the vendor; or (C) has a family relationship with the local government officer. A local government officer is not required to file a conflicts disclosure statement in relation to a gift accepted by the officer or a family member of the officer if the gift is a political contribution as defined by Title 15, Election Code; or food accepted as a guest; or the LEA or vendor is an administrative agency created under Section 791.013, Government Code.

When applicable to file the conflicts disclosure statement, the local government officer will submit the conflicts disclosure statement to EISD's designated records administrator no later than 5 pm on the seventh business day after the date on which the officer becomes aware of the facts that require the filing of the statement. EISD refers to Local Government Code §176.003(e), as amended by the 84th Legislature, for requirements of the contents of the conflicts disclosure statement.

Vendor:

A vendor, according to Local Government Code §176.006, as amended by the 84th Legislature, shall file a completed conflict of interest questionnaire if the vendor has a business relationship with an LEA and: (1) has an employment or other business relationship with a local government officer of that LEA, or a family member of the officer, described in Local Government Code §176.003(a)(2)(A), as amended by the 84th Legislature; (2) has given a local government officer of that LEA, or a family member of the officer, one or more gifts with the aggregate value specified by Local Government Code §176.003(a)(2)(B), as amended by the 84th Legislature, excluding any gift described by Local Government Code §176.003(a-1), as amended by the 84th Legislature; or (3) has a family relationship with a local government officer of that LEA.

The vendor's completed conflict of interest questionnaire must be filed with EISD designated records administrator (Executive Business Officer) not later than the seventh business day after the later of: (1) the date that the vendor: (A) begins discussions or negotiations to enter into a contract with EISD; or (B) submits to EISD an application, response to a request for proposals or bids, correspondence, or another writing related to a potential contract with EISD; or (2) the date the vendor becomes aware: (A) of an employment or other business relationship with a local government officer, or a family member of the officer, described in Local Government Code §176.003(a)(2)(A), as amended by the 84th Legislature; or (B) that the vendor has given one or more gifts described by Local Government Code §176.003(a)(2)(B), as amended by the 84th Legislature; or (C) of a family relationship with a local government officer. EISD refers to Local Government Code §176.006(c), as amended by the 84th Legislature, for requirements of the contents of the conflicts disclosure statement.

Additionally, according to Local Government Code §176.006(d), as amended by the 84th Legislature, the vendor shall file an updated completed questionnaire with EISD's designated records administrator not later than the seventh business day after the date on which the vendor becomes aware of an event that would make a statement in the questionnaire incomplete or inaccurate.

EISD requires all vendors to complete a conflict of interest questionnaire to determine if there is a potential conflict of interest

Employee:

The employee shall disclose in writing to the Superintendent or Designee a personal financial interest, a business interest, or any other obligation or relationship that in any way creates a real or potential conflict of interest with the proper discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities or that creates a potential conflict of interest with the best interest of the EISD. In the case that the individual receiving the report is also involved in the potential conflict, the disclosure should be submitted to the Board President.

The disclosure is then forwarded to the EISD's designated records administrator.

Conflict of Interest Reported to USDE and/or TEA

According to 2 CFR §200.112, the LEA must disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity (TEA) in accordance with applicable federal awarding agency policy.

The EISD will use the Conflict of Interest Disclosure form obtained from the TEA website at <http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=25769821440>, to disclose any potential conflict of interest concerning the expenditure of *federal or state grant funds*. The Executive Business Officer is responsible for submitting the Conflict of Interest Disclosure form.

Removal from the Procurement Transaction and/or Abstinence from Voting

According to TEA's Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG), Module 5 Purchasing, Board members should abstain from voting on award of contracts to businesses in which they or their immediate family members have a financial interest. This is documented through Board Minutes.

EISD employees, officers, and agents should recuse themselves from the procurement transaction if there is a real or potential conflict of interest.

An email will be sent notifying the employee that they are to remove themselves from the procurement transaction. Documentation will not include approval by the employee in order to

show they were not involved in the transactions and have properly recused him or herself from the procurement transactions.

Training and Acknowledgment of Code of Ethics

EISD employees, officers, and agents are made aware of the provisions of the Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policy and procedures.

Organizational Conflicts 2 CFR §200.318(c)(2)

This is not applicable to EISD.

Disciplinary Actions

Penalties, sanctions, or other disciplinary actions for violations of standards of conduct will be in accordance and to the extent permitted under state and local law. Penalties for violations of purchasing laws and ethics may include criminal prosecution and loss of employment opportunities.

EISD will follow the enforcement requirements of Local Government Code Chapter 176, as amended by the 84th Legislature, for local government officers and vendors who violate the standards of conduct and conflict of interest requirements.

Enforcement of Purchase Procedures According to Texas Education Code 44.032

According to TEC 44.032, an officer, employee, or agent of an LEA commits an offense if the person, with criminal negligence, makes or authorizes separate, sequential, or component purchases to avoid the requirements of TEC 44.031(a) or (b). An offense under TEC 44.032(b) is a Class B misdemeanor and is an offense involving moral turpitude.

An officer, employee, or agent of an LEA commits an offense if the person, with criminal negligence, violates TEC 44.031(a) or (b) other than by conduct described in TEC 44.032(b). An offense under TEC 44.032(c) is a Class B misdemeanor and is an offense involving moral turpitude.

An officer or employee of an LEA commits an offense if the officer or employee knowingly violates TEC 44.031, other than by conduct described in TEC 44.032(b) and (c). An offense under TEC 44.032(d) is a Class C misdemeanor.

The final conviction of a person other than a trustee of an LEA for an offense under TEC 44.032(b) or (c) results in the immediate removal from office or employment of that person. Additional information concerning a trustee who is convicted of an offense under TEC 44.032(b) or (c) may be found at TEC 44.032(e).

Mandatory Disclosure of Violations of Federal Criminal Law

According to 2 CFR §200.113, the EISD must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the federal awarding agency or pass-through entity (TEA), all violations of federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the federal award.

EISD will use the Mandatory Disclosure form obtained from the TEA website at <http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=25769821440>, to disclose any violation of federal criminal law, including fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting a *federal or state award*. The Executive Business Officer is responsible for submitting the Mandatory Disclosure form. The disclosure will occur within 7 days after the records administrator is notified of the violation.

EISD will follow any forthcoming USDE or TEA guidance concerning the mandatory disclosure.

PROCUREMENT

General Procurement Standards 2 CFR §200.318

EISD must use its own documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified in 2 CFR § 200.317 through 200.327.

- The LEA must maintain oversight to ensure that contractors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts or purchase orders. Refer to page 58 for the procedures.
- The LEA maintains written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and standards of conduct. Refer to pages 51 regarding purchasing ethics and conflict of interest.
- If the LEA has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a state or local government, the EISD must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. Refer to page 51 regarding organizational conflict of interest.
- The LEA's procedures must avoid acquisition of unnecessary or duplicative items. Consideration should be given to consolidating or breaking out procurements to obtain a more economical purchase. Where appropriate, an analysis will be made of lease versus purchase alternatives, and any other appropriate analysis to determine the most economical approach. The Purchasing Department is responsible for conducting this analysis.
- To foster greater economy and efficiency, and in accordance with efforts to promote cost-effective use of shared services across the federal government, the LEA is encouraged to enter into state and local intergovernmental agreements or inter-entity agreements where

appropriate for procurement or use of common or shared goods and services. Refer to pages 25 & 41 regarding interlocal contracts.

- The LEA is encouraged to use federal excess and surplus property in lieu of purchasing new equipment and property whenever such use is feasible and reduces project costs. The Purchasing Department is responsible for determining the feasibility of such.
- The LEA must award contracts only to responsible contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement. Consideration will be given to such matters as contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources. Refer to page 44 regarding award determinations.
- The LEA must maintain records sufficient to detail the history of procurement. These records will include, but are not necessarily limited to the following: rationale for the method of procurement, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the contract price. Refer to page 73 regarding records retention.
- The LEA may use a time and materials type contract only after a determination that no other contract is suitable and if the contract includes a ceiling price that the contractor exceeds at its own risk. Time and materials type contract means a contract whose cost to the LEA is the sum of the actual cost of materials and direct labor hours charged at fixed hourly rates that reflect wages, general and administrative expenses, and profit. Since this formula generates an open-ended contract price, a time-and-materials contract provides no positive profit incentive to the contractor for cost control or labor efficiency. Therefore, each contract must set a ceiling price that the contractor exceeds at its own risk. Further, the LEA awarding such a contract must assert a high degree of oversight in order to obtain reasonable assurance that the contractor is using efficient methods and effective cost controls. The Purchasing Department is responsible for this determination and oversight.
- The LEA alone must be responsible, in accordance with good administrative practice and sound business judgment, for the settlement of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurements. These issues include, but are not limited to, source evaluation, protests, disputes, and claims. These standards do not relieve the LEA of any contractual responsibilities under its contracts.

Competition 2 CFR §200.319

All federally funded procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition, consistent with the standards of 2 CFR §200.319 Competition and 2 CFR §200.320 Procurement Methods. Noncompetitive procurements can only be awarded in accordance with 2 CFR §200.320(c). In order to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, or invitations for bids or requests for proposals must be excluded from competing for such procurements.

Some of the situations considered to be restrictive of competition include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Placing unreasonable requirements on firms in order for them to qualify to do business;
- 2) Requiring unnecessary experience and excessive bonding;
- 3) Noncompetitive pricing practices between firms or between affiliated companies;
- 4) Noncompetitive contracts to consultants that are on retainer contracts;
- 5) Organizational conflicts of interest;
- 6) Specifying only a “brand name” product instead of allowing “an equal” product to be offered and describing the performance or other relevant requirements of the procurement; and
- 7) Any arbitrary action in the procurement process.

The LEA must conduct procurements in a manner that prohibits the use of statutorily or administratively imposed state, local, or tribal geographical preferences in the evaluation of bids or proposals, except in those cases where applicable federal statutes expressly mandate or encourage geographic preference.

Nothing in 2 CFR §200.319(c) preempts state licensing laws.

When contracting for architectural and engineering (A/E) services, geographic location may be a selection criterion provided its application leaves an appropriate number of qualified firms, given the nature and size of the project, to compete for the contract.

Competitive Solicitation Requirements 2 CFR §200.319(d)

The LEA written procedures for procurement transactions ensure that all solicitations:

Incorporate a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product or service to be procured. Such description must not, in competitive procurements, contain features which unduly restrict competition. The description may include a statement of the qualitative nature of the material, product or service to be procured and, when necessary, must set forth those minimum essential characteristics and standards to which it must conform if it is to satisfy its intended use. Detailed product specifications should be avoided if at all possible. When it is impractical or uneconomical to make a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements, a “brand name or equivalent” description may be used as a means to define the performance or other salient requirements of procurement. The specific features of the named brand which must be met by offers must be clearly stated; and

Identify all requirements which the offerors must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.

The LEA ensures that all prequalified lists of persons, firms, or products which are used in acquiring goods and services are current and include enough qualified sources to ensure maximum open and free competition. Also, the EISD does not preclude potential bidders from qualifying during the solicitation period. 2 CFR §200.319(e)

PROCUREMENT METHODS 2 CFR §200.320

1. Micro-Purchases	2. Small Purchases	3. Sealed Bids	4. Competitive Proposals	5. Noncompetitive
Up to \$10,000 aggregate for "like-type" items	Not to exceed \$250,000, except where Texas is more restrictive	>\$250,000, except where Texas is more restrictive	>\$250,000, except where Texas is more restrictive	Micro-purchases
Increase up to \$49,999, subject to self-certification and notification to TEA	Not to exceed \$49,999 for Texas LEAs subject to TEC §44.031(a)	Contracts valued at \$50,000 or more for Texas LEAs subject to TEC §44.031(a)	Contracts valued at \$50,000 or more for Texas LEAs subject to TEC §44.031(a)	Item available only from a single source
No quotations; Determine reasonable price	Quotations required	Review types of competitive procurement under TEC §44	Requires written method for conducting technical evaluations of proposals received and selections made	Public exigency or emergency will not permit a delay resulting from publicizing a competitive solicitation
Distribute equitably among qualified suppliers	No cost or price analysis required	Cost or price analysis required for all procurements >\$250,000	Review types of competitive proposals under TEC §44	Approval obtained from TEA in accordance to request submitted by LEA
			Cost or price analysis required for all procurements >\$250,000	After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate

The LEA must have and use documented procurement procedures, consistent with the standards of 2 CFR §§[200.317](#) (last sentence), [200.318](#), [200.319](#), and [200.320](#) for any of the following methods of procurement used for the acquisition of property or services required under a Federal award or sub-award.

The methods of procurement fall under three major categories: Informal Procurement, Formal Procurement, and Noncompetitive Procurement, each with distinctive requirements.

An LEA may design purchasing structures with requirements that are more restrictive than those mandated by the Federal government or the State. However, locally-defined purchasing structures must not be less restrictive.

In Texas, the [FASRG \(Financial Accountability System Resource Guide\)](#), Purchasing Module describes **state** purchasing rules that must be followed, in accordance with the [Texas Education Code \(TEC\) Chapter 44 School District Fiscal Management](#) and other applicable state rules. Refer specifically to TEC §§44.031-44.901 for **state laws on purchasing**.

[TEA's [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) explain that the FASRG procurement requirements are not applicable to charter schools unless the commissioner approved otherwise in the individual contract for the charter. Generally, [TEC §12.1053](#) provisions do not significantly limit the contracting and purchasing activities of open-enrollment charter schools. Open-enrollment charter schools should consult with their legal team to determine if certain state purchasing rules differ for their charter school, based on their charter. The FASRG Special Supplement for Charter Schools also provides

information on purchasing, applicable to charter schools.]

Informal Procurement Methods (Micro-purchases and Small Purchases) 2 CFR §200.320(a)

When the value of the procurement for property or services under a Federal award **does not exceed** the *simplified acquisition threshold (SAT)*, as defined in [2 CFR §200.1](#), **or a lower threshold established by a non-Federal entity**, *formal* procurement methods are not required.

The LEA may use *informal* procurement methods (i.e., micro-purchases and small purchases) to expedite the completion of its transactions and minimize the associated administrative burden and cost.

Simplified acquisition threshold means the dollar amount below which a non-Federal entity may purchase property or services using small purchase methods [informal procurement methods]. Non-Federal entities adopt small purchase procedures in order to expedite the purchase of items at or below the simplified acquisition threshold. The simplified acquisition threshold for procurement activities administered under Federal awards is set by the FAR (Federal Acquisitions Regulations) at [48 CFR Part 2, subpart 2.1](#). The non-Federal entity is responsible for determining an appropriate simplified acquisition threshold based on internal controls, an evaluation of risk, and its documented procurement procedures. However, in no circumstances can this threshold exceed the dollar value established in the FAR ([48 CFR part 2, subpart 2.1](#)) for the simplified acquisition threshold. Currently, the simplified acquisition threshold established by the FAR is \$250,000. **Recipients should determine if local government laws on purchasing apply. [2 CFR §200.1](#)**

Texas state law is more restrictive than Federal regulations concerning the threshold for informal purchase methods versus formal, competitive procurement for ISDs and **certain** open-enrollment charter schools.

Implementation:

In accordance with [TEC §44.031 Purchasing Contracts](#), all school district contracts for the purchase of goods and services, except contracts for the purchase of produce or vehicle fuel, valued at \$50,000 or more in the aggregate for each 12-month period shall be made by the **competitive** method, of methods listed in the citation, that provides the best value for the district.

Therefore, the Federal simplified acquisition threshold of \$250,000 is not applicable to Texas ISDs and **certain** charter schools when determining the threshold for informal, small purchase procedures.

This LEA limits informal procurements to procurements under \$50,000.

Micro-purchases [2 CFR §200.320\(a\)\(1\)](#):

Requirement:

Micro-purchase means a purchase of supplies or services, the aggregate amount of which does not exceed the micro-purchase threshold. The *micro-purchase threshold* means the dollar amount at or below which a non-Federal entity may purchase property or services using micro-purchase

procedures. Generally, the micro-purchase threshold for procurement activities administered under Federal awards is not to exceed the amount set by the FAR (Federal Acquisitions Regulations) at [48 CFR Part 2, subpart 2.1](#), unless a higher threshold is requested by the LEA and approved by TEA. [2 CFR §200.1](#)

Currently, the micro-purchase threshold established by the FAR is \$10,000.

The LEA is responsible for determining and documenting an appropriate micro-purchase threshold based on internal controls, an evaluation of risk, and its documented procurement procedures. The micro-purchase threshold used by the LEA must be authorized or not prohibited under State and local laws or regulations. [2 CFR §200.320\(a\)\(1\)\(iii\)](#)

Requirements Applicable to Micro-purchases:

Regardless of the threshold chosen for the micro-purchase method, the following applies to micro-purchases, as outlined in [2 CFR §200.320\(a\)\(1\)\(i-ii\)](#):

- Micro-purchases may be awarded without soliciting competitive price or rate quotations if the LEA considers the price to be reasonable based on research, experience, purchase history or other information, and documents its files accordingly.
- Purchase cards can be used for micro-purchases if procedures are documented and approved by the LEA.
- To the maximum extent practicable, the LEA should distribute micro-purchases equitably among qualified suppliers.

TEA Requirements for the Micro-Purchase Aggregate Spending:

Regardless of the threshold chosen for the micro-purchase method, the LEA must define “like-type” items for which the aggregate spending applies.

TEA’s [November 29, 2018 To the Administrator Addressed letter](#) outlines the TEA guidance regarding this requirement. The LEA may not define “like-types” as a single purchase order or a single vendor. The cost of items applicable to each “like-types” category is cumulative across the year for all federal awards and cannot exceed the established micro-purchase threshold.

Small Purchases [2 CFR §200.320\(a\)\(2\)](#):

Requirement:

Small purchase procedures pertain to the acquisition of property or services, the aggregate dollar amount of which is higher than the micro-purchase threshold, but does not exceed the simplified acquisition threshold, or the threshold established by state rules or local policy, whichever is lesser.

The LEA is responsible for determining an appropriate simplified acquisition threshold based on internal controls, an evaluation of risk and its documented procedures which must not exceed the simplified acquisition threshold established in the FAR (Federal Acquisitions Regulations) at [48 CFR](#)

Part 2, subpart 2.1. The current simplified acquisition threshold is \$250,000. When applicable, a lower simplified acquisition threshold used by the LEA must be authorized or not prohibited under State or local laws or regulations.

Texas state law is more restrictive than Federal regulations concerning the threshold for informal purchase methods versus formal, competitive procurement for ISDs and **certain** open-enrollment charter schools.

In Texas, state law requires competition for contracts valued at \$50,000 or more in accordance with [TEC §44.031 Purchasing Contracts](#). Therefore, small purchase procedures may only be used for procurements under \$50,000 for ISDs and certain charter schools.

[TEA's [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) explain that the FASRG procurement requirements are not applicable to charter schools unless the commissioner approved otherwise in the individual contract for the charter. Generally, [TEC §12.1053](#) provisions do not significantly limit the contracting and purchasing activities of open-enrollment charter schools. Open-enrollment charter schools should consult with their legal team to determine if certain state purchasing rules differ for their charter school, based on their charter.]

If small purchase procedures are used, price or rate quotations must be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources as determined appropriate by the LEA. [2 CFR §200.320\(a\)\(2\)](#)

Implementation:

The LEA defines small purchases as procurements with a dollar amount less than \$250,000.

Determination of 12-Month Aggregation

Requirement:

[TEC §44.031\(a\)](#) stipulates that school district contracts valued at \$50,000 or ***more in the aggregate for each 12-month period*** should be made by competitive procurement, using the best method in the options identified in the statute.

According to the [Purchasing Module](#) of TEA's FASRG, it is the responsibility of the school district to determine the method or structure of the aggregation process. Tracking of category spending by the purchasing department is vital.

The term "aggregate" as used in the [TEC §44.031\(a\)](#) can be defined as the total sum of demand for desired or "like" goods and services that in normal purchasing practices would be made in one purchase over a 12-month period for all campuses and departments within the school district. The term "aggregate" is not defined with the chapter of the Texas Education Code (TEC). The definition should be based on the resources available to the district, such as the ability to track purchases within the district's finance system, either by vendor (not suggested) or by a pre-determined set of categories or commodity codes (suggested).

The 12-month period can be calendar year or fiscal year. The district is advised to select the period

that best meets its tracking needs.

Implementation:

Once the aggregate amount for the year is reached for the specific “like-types” category, the LEA must then follow the appropriate procurement process, such as small purchase procedures or competitive procurement, applicable to the procurement cost.

Formal Procurement Methods (Sealed Bids and Proposals) [2 CFR §200.320\(b\)](#):

Requirement:

When the value of the procurement for property or services under a Federal financial assistance award exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold (SAT), or a lower threshold established by the non-Federal entity, formal procurement methods are required.

In Texas, state law requires competition for contracts valued at \$50,000 or more in accordance with [TEC §44.031 Purchasing Contracts](#). Therefore, the simplified acquisition threshold, currently set at \$250,000, is not applicable for ISDs and certain charter schools.

[TEA’s [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) explain that the FASRG procurement requirements are not applicable to charter schools unless the commissioner approved otherwise in the individual contract for the charter. Generally, [TEC §12.1053](#) provisions do not significantly limit the contracting and purchasing activities of open-enrollment charter schools. Open-enrollment charter schools should consult with their legal team to determine if certain state purchasing rules differ for their charter school, based on their charter.]

Two types of formal procurement methods are applicable under [2 CFR §200.320\(b\)](#): Sealed bids and Proposals. Formal procurement methods require following documented procedures. Formal procurement methods also require public advertising unless a non-competitive procurement can be used.

State Rules regarding Competitive Procurements:

The Texas Education Code, [TEC §44.031](#), lists several methods for competitive procurement. All school district contracts for the purchase of goods and services, except contracts for the purchase of produce or vehicle fuel, valued at \$50,000* or more in the aggregate for each 12-month period shall be made by the method, of the following methods, that provides the best value for the district:

- Competitive bidding for services other than construction services;
- Competitive sealed proposals for services other than construction services;
- A request for proposals, for services other than construction services;
- An interlocal contract;
- A method provided by [Chapter 2269, Government Code](#), for construction services;
- The reverse auction procedure as defined by [Section 2155.062\(d\), Government Code](#); or

- The formation of a political subdivision corporation under [Section 304.001, Local Government Code](#)

*Each contract proposed to be made by a school district for the purchase or lease of one or more school buses, including a lease with an option to purchase, must be submitted to competitive bidding when the contract is valued at \$20,000 or more. [TEC §44.031\(i\)](#)

The Texas [FASRG Purchasing Module](#) recommends that the LEA create procedures for the use of Federal funds for professional services that are based on the following best practices:

- Advertise and receive sealed qualifications packages for professional services whenever practical
- Evaluate and rank the respondents based on their demonstrated competence
- Document in writing the “fair and reasonable price” as determined by budget, comparisons to other districts/agencies, prices previously established with same/similar professionals, historical prices, and/or established market rates.

Federal Regulations Regarding Sealed Bids [2 CFR §200.320\(b\)\(1\)](#):

Sealed bids: A procurement method in which bids are publicly solicited and a firm fixed-price contract (lump sum or unit price) is awarded to the responsible bidder whose bid, conforming with all the material terms and conditions of the invitation for bids, is the lowest in price.

The sealed bids method is the preferred method for procuring construction, if the following conditions apply.

In order for sealed bidding to be feasible, the following conditions should be present:

- A complete, adequate, and realistic specification or purchase description is available;
- Two or more responsible bidders are willing and able to compete effectively for the business; and
- The procurement lends itself to a firm fixed price contract and the selection of the successful bidder can be made principally on the basis of price.

If sealed bids are used, the following requirements apply:

- Bids must be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources, providing them sufficient response time prior to the date set for opening the bids. Additionally, the bids must be publicly advertised;
- The invitation for bids, which will include any specifications and pertinent attachments, must define the items or services in order for the bidder to properly respond;
- All bids will be opened publicly at the time and place described in the invitation for bids;
- A firm fixed price contract award will be made in writing to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. Where specified in bidding documents, factors such as discounts, transportation cost, and life cycle costs must be considered in determining which bid is lowest. Payment discounts will

only be used to determine the low bid when prior experience indicates that such discounts are usually taken advantage of; and

- Any or all bids may be rejected if there is a sound documented reason

Texas Requirements for Competitive Bidding [TEC §44.0351](#)

Except to the extent prohibited by other law and to the extent consistent with this subchapter, a school district may use competitive bidding to select a vendor as authorized by [TEC 44.031\(a\)\(1\)](#).

Except as provided by this subsection, Subchapter B, Chapter 271, Local Government Code, does not apply to a competitive bidding process under this subchapter. [Sections 271.026, 271.027\(a\), and 271.0275](#), Local Government Code, apply to a competitive bidding process under this subchapter.

A school district shall award a competitively bid contract at the bid amount to the bidder offering the best value for the district. In determining the best value for the district, the district is not restricted to considering price alone but may consider any other factors stated in the selection criteria. The selection criteria may include the factors listed in [TEC 44.031\(b\)](#).

Federal Regulations Regarding Proposals [2 CFR §200.320\(b\)\(2\)](#):

Proposals: A procurement method in which either a fixed price or cost-reimbursement type contract is awarded. Proposals are generally used when conditions are not appropriate for the use of sealed bids. Proposals are awarded in accordance with the following requirements:

- Requests for proposals must be publicized and identify all evaluation factors and their relative importance. Proposals must be solicited from an adequate number of qualified offerors. Any response to publicized requests for proposals must be considered to the maximum extent practical;
- The LEA must have a written method for conducting technical evaluations of the proposals received and making selections
 - Please see the Contractor/Vendor Selection section of this manual for the LEA's procedures;
- Contracts must be awarded to the responsible offeror whose proposal is most advantageous to the LEA, with price and other factors considered, and;
- The LEA may use competitive proposal procedures for qualifications-based procurement of architectural/engineering (A/E) professional services whereby offerors' qualifications are evaluated and the most qualified offeror is selected, subject to negotiation of fair and reasonable compensation. The method, where price is not used as a selection factor, can only be used in procurement of A/E professional services. It cannot be used to purchase other types of services through A/E firms that are a potential source to perform the proposed effort.

Texas Requirements for Competitive Sealed Proposals [TEC §44.0352](#)

In selecting a vendor through competitive sealed proposals as authorized by [TEC 44.031\(a\)\(2\)](#), a school district shall follow the procedures prescribed by this section.

The district shall prepare a request for competitive sealed proposals that includes information that vendors may require to respond to the request. The district shall state in the request for proposals the selection criteria that will be used in selecting the successful offeror.

The district shall receive, publicly open, and read aloud the names of the offerors and, if any are required to be stated, all prices stated in each proposal. Not later than the 45th day after the date on which the proposals are opened, the district shall evaluate and rank each proposal submitted in relation to the published selection criteria.

The district shall select the offeror that offers the best value for the district based on the published selection criteria and on its ranking evaluation. The district shall first attempt to negotiate a contract with the selected offeror. The district may discuss with the selected offeror options for a scope or time modification and any price change associated with the modification. If the district is unable to negotiate a satisfactory contract with the selected offeror, the district shall, formally and in writing, end negotiations with that offeror and proceed to the next offeror in the order of the selection ranking until a contract is reached or all proposals are rejected.

In determining the best value for the district, the district is not restricted to considering price alone but may consider any other factors stated in the selection criteria.

The LEA must follow the most restrictive of Federal regulations, State law, and local policy.

Contractor/Vendor Selection

Requirement:

In accordance with [2 CFR §200.320\(b\)\(2\)\(ii\)](#), the LEA must have a written method for conducting technical evaluations of the proposals received and making selections.

In accordance with [TEC §44.031\(b\)](#), in determining to whom to award a contract, the LEA shall consider:

- The purchase price;
- The reputation of the vendor and of the vendor's goods or services;
- The quality of the vendor's goods or services;
- The extent to which the goods or services meet the LEA's needs;
- The vendor's past relationship with the LEA;
- The impact on the ability of the LEA to comply with laws and rules relating to historically underutilized businesses;
- The total long-term cost to the LEA to acquire the vendor's goods or services;
- For a contract for goods and services, other than goods and services related to telecommunications and information services, building construction and maintenance, or instructional materials, whether the vendor or the vendor's ultimate parent company or majority

owner: has its principal place of business in this state; or employs at least 500 persons in this state;

- Any other relevant factor specifically listed in the request for bids or proposals

Noncompetitive Procurement [2 CFR §200.320\(c\)](#):

Requirement:

There are specific circumstances in which noncompetitive procurement can be used.

Noncompetitive procurement can only be awarded if one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- The acquisition of property or services, the aggregate dollar amount of which does not exceed the micro-purchase threshold
 - Micro-purchases qualify as noncompetitive procurement since the micro-purchase method does not require quotes or formal competitive procurement
- The item is available only from a single source
 - Sole-source must be proven and adequately documented to justify the purchase is truly only available from one source
 - An affidavit or sole-source letter from the vendor is not sufficient documentation that the item or service is only available from a single source
- The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from **publicizing** a competitive solicitation
 - The LEA must demonstrate and document that the need was so immediate that **publicizing** through the competitive solicitation process would hinder the rapid resolution of an immediate concern
- The Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity (TEA) expressly authorizes a noncompetitive procurement in response to a written request from the non-Federal entity
 - If the LEA **chooses** to request authorization from TEA to purchase from a vendor without engaging in full and open competition, the LEA must submit either the “Noncompetitive Procurement (Sole Source)” form or the “Other Noncompetitive Procurement (Not Sole Source) to TEA for prior approval. The forms are located on TEA’s “[Forms for Prior Approval, Disclosure, and Justification](#)” webpage.
 - The LEA is not required to request approval from TEA to enter into a noncompetitive procurement. The request for TEA approval is simply one of the circumstances allowable for noncompetitive procurement of federally-funded procurement.
 - TEA provides broad, general authorization for goods and services to be purchased by the LEA from an Education Service Center (ESC) as a noncompetitive procurement. The LEA should annually maintain documentation of the prior written approval given to the ESC from TEA, which is typically posted to the ESC website.

- After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate

Interlocal Contract/Cooperative Purchasing

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, EISD can contract or agree with another local government, including a nonprofit corporation that is created and operated to provide one or more governmental functions and services, or with the state or a state agency, including the Comptroller, to purchase goods and any services reasonably required for the installation, operation, or maintenance of the goods.

Benefits of cooperative purchasing may be realized by EISDs of all sizes and can include:

- Cost savings on products or services. A cooperative purchasing arrangement can increase the buying power of a single EISD with volume discounts.
- Savings on administrative costs. A cooperative arrangement can reduce administrative costs relating to performing the purchasing function. Cost savings can include major areas such as salaries and benefits, supplies, office equipment and contracted services. A cooperative can result in the elimination of redundant costs which may be associated with individual EISDs performing their own purchasing functions. Although purchasing cooperatives may charge annual fees for overhead costs, many EISDs can realize savings on both products and administration.
- Accessibility to more products and services. A cooperative may provide EISDs the opportunity to buy a greater variety of products and services. The EISD chooses what is best for its needs at lower costs.

Local governments that are parties to an interlocal contract for the performance of a service, may, in performing the service, apply the law applicable to a party as agreed by the parties. Section 791.012, Government Code.

In accordance with Government Code 791.011(d), requirements for interlocal contracts include:

- Authorization by the governing body of each party to the contract
- Statement of the purpose, terms, rights, and duties of the contracting parties
- Specification that each party paying for the performance of governmental functions or services must make those payments from current revenues available to the paying party

Interlocal contractual payments must fairly compensate the party who performs the services or functions under the contract. In addition, the parties to an interlocal contract may create an administrative agency or designate an existing local government to supervise the performance of the contract. Consequently, the agency or designated local government can employ personnel, perform administrative activities and provide administrative services necessary to perform the interlocal contract. Government Code 791.011-791.025.

An LEA that enters into a purchasing contract valued at \$25,000 or more under certain cooperative purchasing contracts must document any contract-related fees, including management fees, and the purpose of each fee. The amount, purpose, and disposition of any fee must be presented in a written report annually as an agenda item in an open meeting of the board of trustees. TEC 44.0331.

Refer to page 41 for more information on the process used for interlocal contracts/cooperative purchasing.

Certain Exceptions to State Procurement Methods of TEC 44.031(a)

Computers and Computer-Related Equipment

In accordance with TEC 44.031(i), an LEA may acquire computers and computer-related equipment, including computer software, through the Department of Information Resources under contracts entered into in accordance with Government Code Chapter 2054 or 2157.

Emergencies or Catastrophes

If school equipment, school facility, or a portion of a school facility is destroyed, severely damaged, or experiences a major unforeseen operational or structural failure, and the board of trustees determines that the delay posed by the contract methods required in TEC 44.031(a) would prevent or substantially impair the conduct of classes or other essential school activities, then contracts for the replacement or repair of the equipment, school facility, or portion of the school facility may be made by a method other than the methods required by TEC 44.031(a).

Preference to Texas and United States Products*

“Agricultural products” includes textiles and other similar products.

“Processed” means canning, freezing, drying, juicing, preserving, or any other act that changes the form of a good from its natural state to another form.

TEC 44.042 requires an LEA that purchases agricultural products to give preference to those produced, processed, or grown in Texas if the cost to the LEA is equal and the quality is equal. If agricultural products produced, processed, or grown in Texas are not equal in cost and quality to other products, the LEA shall give preference to agricultural products produced, processed, or grown in other states of the United States over foreign products if the cost to the EISD is equal and the quality is equal. Additionally, an LEA that purchases vegetation for landscaping purposes, including plants, shall give preference to Texas vegetation if the cost to the LEA is equal and the quality is not inferior.

*Please see the federal requirements of 2 CFR §200.319 on page 21 that prohibit geographical preferences in most instances.

Professional Services Contracts

In accordance with TEC 44.031(f), the procurement methods listed in TEC 44.031(a) do not apply to a contract for professional services rendered, including services of an architect, attorney, certified public accountant, engineer, or fiscal agent. An LEA *may, at its option*, contract for professional services rendered by a financial consultant or a technology consultant in the manner provided by Government Code 2254.003, in lieu of the procurement methods provided in TEC 44.031(a).

In accordance with Government Code 2254.003, a governmental entity *may not* select a provider of professional services or a group or association of providers or award a contract for the services on the basis of competitive bids submitted for the contract or for the services, but shall make the selection and award: (1) on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications to perform the services; and (2) for a fair and reasonable price.

When procuring the services of an architect, engineer, or surveyor, the LEA complies with the requirements of Government Code 2254.004.

Federally-Funded Professional Service Contracts

The competitive procurement procedures described in TEC 44.031(a)(2)-(9), are for certain procurement situations as an alternative to the competitive bidding procedures of TEC 44.031(a)(1).

Government Code Chapter 2254.003 *prohibits* competitive bidding for certain types of professional services, including engineering, land surveying, architectural, accounting and certain other services.” Competitive proposal procedures are recommended where other procurement procedures are not required according to state or federal rules, laws or regulations, to stimulate competitive prices for services.

The “*Handbook on Purchasing for Texas Public Schools, Junior Colleges and Community Colleges*”, states that **federally-funded professional service contracts** must be let on a competitive basis (page 75). “Professional and nonprofessional service contracts involving federal funds are required to be let on a competitive basis, under 34 CFR Section 80.36 [now 2 CFR 200.319] (page 76). To avoid a conflict between federal regulations and Government Code Chapter 2254, it is recommended that the LEA only uses competitive proposal procedures to obtain professional services (page 133).

Texas Education Code §44.031(f). A school district may, at its option, contract for professional services rendered by a financial consultant or a technology consultant in the manner provided by

Government Code, Section 2254.003, in lieu of the methods provided by this section.

NOTE: federally funded professional service contracts must be let on a competitive basis.

Competitive bids shall not be solicited for “Professional Services” of any licensed or registered *Government Code §2254.002 (2)(b)*:

- A certified public accountant;
- An architect;
- A landscape architect;
- A land surveyor;
- A physician, including a surgeon;
- An optometrist;
- A professional engineer;
- A state-certified or state-licensed real estate appraiser; or
- A registered nurse.

Contracts for these professional services shall be made on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications to perform the services; and for a fair and reasonable price. *Government Code §2254.003(a)*.

School Bus Purchase or Lease

Each contract proposed to be made by an LEA for the purchase or lease of one or more school buses, including a lease with an option to purchase, must be submitted to competitive bidding when the contract is valued at \$20,000 or more. TEC 44.031(l).

USER RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE BID PROCESS

- Comply with the approved bid schedule developed by the Purchasing Department.
- Prepare specifications for the approved item and reviews bid specifications with the director of Purchasing. Bring a copy of the bid documentation. Do not change specifications once submitted to vendors. If a change is required, you must notify and coordinate through the Purchasing Director.
- Prepare a list of three or more local vendors and submits vendor list to Purchasing. Review the vendor list with the Purchasing Director
- Purchasing Department will open bids, evaluate, and make recommendations. Bids are accepted based on the “best value” and meeting District requirements.
- The requestor prepares Board Agenda Item for the board (if necessary) in the approved format and submits to the Chief Business and Finance Officer for review.
- An item that is recommended as the result of a Competitive Sealed Bids or Competitive Proposals, other than low bid, requires appropriate supporting documentation such as scorecard or total points scored and recommendations are reviewed by the Purchasing Director before final decision is made to submit bid for EISD Board Approval.

Inclusion of Purchasing during the planning phase allows everyone the opportunity to better understand and comply with bid requirements and processes and provides purchasing the flexibility to schedule its resources.

Please refer to the Contract Cost or Price Analysis section of this manual on page 48, which is required of all procurement actions in excess of the Simplified Acquisition Threshold.

WHEN TO USE A PARTICULAR PROCUREMENT METHOD			
USE WHEN DOLLAR AMOUNT IS:	RULE:	PROCUREMENT METHOD:	REQUIREMENT:
\$10,000 or less	Federal 2 CFR 200.320(a)	Micro-Purchase \$10,000 and below	One quote; Reasonable Price; Distribute equitably among qualified suppliers
<\$50,000	State	Quotes; Optional Method; Threshold defined by EISD	Obtain price quotes
\$10,000 - \$49,999	Federal 2 CFR 200.320(a)	Small Purchase Less than \$250,000	Obtain 3 price or rate quotations
>\$50,000	State TEC 44.031(a)	\$50,000 or more in the aggregate	7 options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competitive Bidding Competitive Sealed Proposals Request for Proposals Interlocal Contract (Purchasing Coop) Construction under Chapter 2269 Reverse Auction Political Subdivision for electric service
\$250,000 and more	Federal 2 CFR 200.320(b) 2 CFR 200.320(b)	Sealed Bids or Competitive Proposals	2 options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sealed Bids Competitive Proposals – must also have written method of conducting technical evaluations of proposals received <p>Must also perform Contract Cost or Price analysis prior to receiving bids or proposals (2 CFR 200.323)</p>

THE PURCHASING PROCESS

The purchasing process section of this manual describes the actual process for goods and services procurement, including vendor selection and relations, requisition process, purchase orders, receiving/distribution, and control environment.

Delegation

In accordance with TEC 44.0312, the LEA's board of trustees may, as appropriate, delegate its procurement authority under TEC 44 to a designated person, representative, or committee. In procuring construction services, EISD shall provide notice of the delegation and the limits of the delegation in the request for bids, proposals, or qualifications or in an addendum to the request. If EISD fails to provide that notice, a ranking, selection, or evaluation of bids, proposals, or qualifications for construction services other than by the board of trustees in an open public meeting is advisory only.

The board may not delegate the authority to act regarding a procurement action authorized or required by TEC 44 to be taken by the board of trustees of a school district.

Competitive Procurement Process

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, the following processes are essential for effective competitive bidding:

- **Requirements Planning.** EISD plans for major purchases to be made during the next twelve months identifying the products or services and when they are needed. The award of bids is scheduled to ensure timely delivery so that operations are not interrupted. From that schedule, a mechanism for coordinating bidding of like or similar items on a district-wide basis is developed. Requirements planning also enables EISD's purchasing official to analyze and plan their workloads.
- **Activities and Responsibilities for Bid Specifications and Bid Award.** This process structures the total bid package which includes developing and reviewing specifications, incorporating these specifications into a standard bid form, determining objective bid award criteria, advertising the bid, responding to vendor questions, tabulating/analyzing bid responses, and recommending a vendor for bid award.
- **Development of an Approved Vendor List.** The identification and qualification of vendors for specific products can facilitate the bid process in two ways. First, EISD can identify vendors who are interested in doing business with EISD and their products and services. Second, EISD can monitor the vendor's responses to bids and performance when they are awarded a bid.

In accordance with TEC 44.031(g), notice of the time by when and place where the bids or proposals, or the responses to a request for qualifications, will be received and opened shall be published in the county in which EISD's central administrative office is located, once a week for at least two weeks before the deadline for receiving bids, proposals, or responses to a request for qualifications. If there is not a newspaper in that county, the advertising shall be published in a newspaper in the county nearest the county seat of the county in which the EISD's central administrative office is located. In a two-step procurement process, the time and place where the second-step bids, proposals, or responses will be received are not required to be published separately.

Competitive Bids Process

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, the bid process is structured and incorporated into EISD purchasing procedures and involves:

- Development of clear specifications
- Advertising for competitive bids
- Responding to vendor questions
- Procedures for opening and tabulating the bids
- Analysis of the bids to ensure compliance with requirements
- Recommending the vendor(s) for bid award
- Award of the bid by the board

A request for bids contains the following elements:

- Purchase description or specifications covering the item(s) to be obtained
- Work and/or services needed
- Terms and conditions for the proposed bid contract
- Time and place for opening bids and other provisions

Local Government Code 271 in Relation to TEC 44

In accordance with TEC 44.0351, Subchapter B, Chapter 271, Local Government Code does not apply to a competitive bidding process under TEC 44, with the exceptions of Sections 271.026, 271.027(a), and 271.0275 Local Government Code:

- Section 271.026. Opening of Bids. (a) Bids may be opened only by the governing body of the governmental entity at a public meeting or by an officer or employee of the governmental entity at or in an office of the governmental entity. A bid that has been opened may not be changed for the purpose of correcting an error in the bid price. (b) This

subchapter does not change the common law right of a bidder to withdraw a bid due to a material mistake in the bid.

- Section 271.02. 7 Award of Contract. (a) The governmental entity is entitled to reject any and all bids.
- Section 271.0275. Safety Record of Bidder Considered. In determining who is a responsible bidder, the governmental entity may take into account the safety record of the bidder, firm, corporation, partnership, or institution represented by the bidder, or of anyone acting for such a firm, corporation, partnership, or institution if: (1) the governing body of the governmental entity has adopted a written definition and criteria for accurately determining the safety record of a bidder; (2) the governing body has given notice to prospective bidders in the bid specification that the safety record of a bidder may be considered in determining the responsibility of the bidder; and (3) the determinations are not arbitrary and capricious.

Competitive bidding is a formal process that may also be referred to as competitive sealed bidding, sealed bidding or formal bidding. Competitive bidding is the preferred method of procurement. The purpose of competitive bidding is to stimulate competition and obtain the lowest practical price for the work, service and/or item(s) needed

The competitive bidding process requires that bids be evaluated and awards made based solely upon bid specifications, terms, and conditions contained in the request for bids document, and according to the bid prices offered by vendors and pertinent factors that may affect contract performance.

The advertisement for bids, description in the request for bids of item(s), work and/or services and specific terms and conditions must be done in a manner that stimulates competition and obtains the lowest practical price. A request for bids contains the following elements:

- Purchase description or specifications covering the item(s) to be obtained
- Work and/or services needed
- Terms and conditions for the proposed bid contract
- Time and place for opening bids and other provisions

Electronic Bids or Proposals

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, an EISD may receive bids or proposals through electronic transmission if the EISD's board of trustees adopts rules to ensure the identification, security, and confidentiality of electronic bids or proposals and to ensure that the electronic bids or proposals remain effectively unopened until the proper time. An electronic bid or proposal is not required to be sealed, but if the governing statutes or rules require paper bids

or proposals to be sealed, the same requirements would apply to an electronic process. TEC 44.0313

EISD does not receive bids or proposals through electronic transmission.

Competitive Sealed Proposals/Request for Proposals Process

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, in selecting a vendor through competitive sealed proposals, the LEA shall prepare a request for competitive sealed proposals that includes information that vendors may require to respond to the request. EISD shall state in the request for proposals the selection criteria that will be used in selecting the successful offeror.

The RFP (Request for Proposal) is the mechanism that generates the receipt of competitive sealed proposals and should contain several key elements:

- Determination by board of trustees that this method will provide the best value for EISD must be done first, if a construction contract
- Newspaper advertisement
- Notice to proposers
- Standard terms and conditions
- Special terms and conditions
- Scope of work (scope and intent; definitions and applicable documents; requirements; quality assurance)
- Acknowledgement form/response sheet
- Felony conviction notice
- Contract clause

EISD shall receive, publicly open, and read aloud the names of the offerors and, if any are required to be stated, all prices stated in each proposal. Not later than the 45th day after the date on which the proposals are opened, EISD shall evaluate and rank each proposal submitted in relation to the published selection criteria.

EISD shall select the offeror that offers the best valued for the EISD based on the published selection criteria and on its ranking evaluation. EISD shall first attempt to negotiate a contract with the selected offeror. EISD may discuss with the selected offeror options for a scope or time modification and any price change associated with the modification. If EISD is unable to negotiate a satisfactory contract with the selected offeror, EISD shall, formally and in writing, end negotiations with that offeror and proceed to the next offeror in the order of the selection ranking until a contract is reached or all proposals are rejected.

An RFP may also be used as a procurement option to generate a non-sealed competitive proposal, but only for services other than construction services. In this instance, EISD may open the proposal upon receipt and begin the negotiation process for the offered goods/services.

In determining the best value for the LEA, the LEA is not restricted to considering price alone but may consider any other factors stated in the selection criteria. TEC 4.0352.

The competitive sealed proposal process is an alternative to competitive bidding. The terms and conditions are identical as those for competitive bidding except any reference to bids or proposers should be changed or interpreted as offers or offerors. Additionally, anything addressing the finality of the offer needs to be disregarded because proposals are negotiable. During the evaluation process prior to award a contract, the negotiation process allows modification and alteration of both the content of the proposals and price.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) is a part of the competitive sealed proposal process. *It is important to note that each element must be appropriately structured to suit the proposed items or services and to identify acceptable ways to customize request for proposal documents.* The RFP is the mechanism that generates the receipt of competitive sealed proposals and should contain several key elements:

- Newspaper advertisement
- Notice to proposers
- Standard terms and conditions
- Special terms and conditions
- Scope of Work - general in nature
- Scope and Intent
- Definitions and applicable documents
- Requirements - tend to be more open ended than competitive bid
- Quality Assurance
- Acknowledgment form/response sheet
- Felony conviction notice
- Conflict of Interest Questionnaire
- Contract clause
- Form 1295

Professional and nonprofessional service contracts involving federal funds are required to be let on a competitive basis, under 34 CFR Section 80.36 (Code of Federal Regulations).

Competitive procurement procedures, TEC Section 44.031(a) (2)-(8), are for certain procurement situations as an alternative to competitive bidding procedures. Government Code Chapter 2254,

prohibits competitive bidding for certain types of professional services, including engineering, architectural, accounting and certain other services; and requires a two-step procedure, as defined in Government Code Chapter 2254, for the procurement of architectural and engineering services.

Competitive proposal procedures are recommended, where other procurement procedures are not required according to state or federal rules, laws or regulations, in order to stimulate competitive prices for goods or services.

In connection with certain professional service contracts, specifically architectural or engineering, Government Code Chapter 2254, requires a two-step negotiation process. The two-step process only allows negotiation of price after an initial selection based upon demonstrated competence and qualifications of the person/firm.

Texas Education Code §44.031(b) states that in determining to whom to award a contract, the district may consider:

- The purchase price;
- The reputation of the vendor and of the vendor's goods or services;
- The quality of the vendor's goods or services;
- The extent to which the goods or services meet the district's needs;
- The vendor's past relationship with the district;
- The impact on the ability of the district to comply with laws and rules relating to historically underutilized businesses;
- The total long-term cost to the district to acquire the vendor's goods or services; and
- Any other relevant factor specifically listed in the request for bids or proposals. Factors that the district may consider relevant under this criteria would include:
 - Vendor response time
 - Compatibility of goods/products purchased with those already in use by the district.

The awarded vendor should take no action until they have been notified by the Purchasing Department for the product or service that they were awarded.

Change Orders Process

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, if a change in plans or specifications is necessary after the performance of a contract is begun or if it is necessary to decrease or increase the quantity of work to be performed or of materials, equipment, or supplies to be furnished, the LEA may approve change orders making the changes.

The total contract price may not be increased because of the changes unless additional money for increased costs is approved for that purpose from available money or is provided for by the authorization of the issuance of time warrants.

EISD may grant general authority to an administrative official to approve the change orders. The Superintendent or his designee is authorized to approve change orders.

A contract with an original contract price of \$1 million or more may not be increased by more than 25 percent. If a change order for a contract with an original contract price of less than \$1 million increases the contract amount to \$1 million or more, the total of the subsequent change orders may not increase the revised contract amount by more than 25 percent of the original contract price. TEC 44.0411.

Change orders valued at \$25,000 or more shall require Board approval. Change orders in any amount resulting in a change to the scope of the project shall require Board approval prior to any changes being made in the approved plans or the actual construction of a facility. The Superintendent or designee may approve a change order requiring a variance due to an unforeseen condition that does not change the scope of the project when the variance is valued at less than \$25,000, and there are sufficient funds budgeted for the project that will not cause the project to exceed the Board-approved budget. The Superintendent or designee shall provide the Board with notification of such change order as soon as reasonably practicable.

Interlocal Contract/Cooperative Purchasing Agreement Process

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, operating characteristics of cooperative purchasing agreements vary widely. In some cases, the lead agency in the cooperative, having received and combined orders from participating LEAs, purchases in bulk and stores purchases in a centralized warehouse. This lead agency then serves as the member districts' principal "vendor" and distributes goods as they are ordered and subsequently invoices the LEA. It may offer a catalog of centralized warehouse merchandise. Distribution may be either direct delivery to the LEA or by pick-up at the cooperatives' central warehouse.

Other operating arrangements may allow each LEA to order directly from approved vendors at bulk prices negotiated by the cooperative. A third arrangement may have a lead agency serving as a warehousing site for other LEAs with each LEA responsible for pick-up of goods and products.

EISD considers the following areas when determining whether to join a cooperative:

- Variety of products and services offered
- Cost of these products and services as compared with other cooperatives or the EISD's individual ability to buy these products or services
- Timing and method of delivery

- Participation charges, including administrative and operating costs
- Reputation for overall service delivery, including problem resolution
- Administrative requirements placed on member districts, including paperwork or related issues

EISD participates in multiple interlocal agreements/purchasing cooperatives. EISD's board adopts resolutions authorizing participation. Cost savings through a regional centralized purchasing function are achieved through both discounted prices and administrative cost savings to individual districts. If the district participates in a cooperative purchasing program, it satisfies any law requiring it to seek competitive bids. *Local Government code 271.102; Attorney General Opinion JC-37 (1999)*

Edgewood ISD utilizes the following cooperative (Approved Vendors):

Buy Board, TxMAS, Texas Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN), Region 16, Texas State Comptroller of Public Accounts, Region 20, US Communities, PACE Cooperative Purchasing, TIPS

For a complete list of Cooperatives visit the Purchasing Department homepage of the District's website at <https://www.eisd.net/cms/One.aspx?portalId=12152078&pageId=12922463>.

Centralized Purchasing

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, centralized purchasing is the act of combining related items/commodities of various departments to coordinate purchases and obtain better prices. Centralized purchasing enables an LEA to coordinate purchases when two or more campuses or departments have common requirements for supplies and equipment.

The centralized purchasing function is used to coordinate purchases of two or more campuses or departments as follows:

- Combining on purchase order forms the individual purchase requirements of two or more teachers, departments, or campuses; and
- Arranging for favorable purchase terms, for example discount from retail or catalog prices, for items to be purchased "as needed" by individual employees (minimizes cash flow and warehouse storage requirements associated with large single order quantities).
- Ensuring LEA compliance with state laws and local policies concerning purchasing.

Refer to page 70 for additional information on centralized vs decentralized purchasing.

VENDOR SELECTION AND RELATIONS

A good purchasing system establishes standards for both EISD personnel and vendors.

Vendor Communications

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, establishment of certain district-wide procedures regarding vendor contact is important to an effective purchasing design. Such policies and procedures may include requiring appointments with vendors be scheduled through the department responsible for purchasing or that a representative of the department responsible for purchasing (i.e., purchasing agent or equivalent) attends all meetings with vendors.

The EISD Purchasing Department is primarily responsible for vendor relations, contact, and communication. However, principals, department administrators', or staff may also communicate with vendors in order to obtain information necessary to properly prepare requisitions. Therefore, every employee involved in procuring goods or services for the LEA is responsible for fostering good vendor relations. It must be understood that contact and communication with vendors by principals, department administrators', or staff are not to represent a commitment to purchase; only authorized personnel are authorized to make purchase commitments.

Vendor List

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, the LEA compiles and maintains an approved vendor list. This list(s) includes the names and addresses of various vendors and the products and services they offer. Vendors are encouraged to submit their names for inclusion on the list and are asked to complete an application form. Soliciting and including as many vendors as possible results in a complete and functional list of vendors with whom the LEA conducts business.

The Purchasing Department maintains the vendor list(s), analyzing and updating on a periodic basis. The vendor list(s) are available on the EISD Purchasing Website to campuses and departments within the district so EISD employees are aware of the approved vendors.

The Vendor package is location on the Purchasing website www.eisd.net.

In accordance with 2 CFR §200.319(e), the LEA must ensure that all prequalified lists of persons, firms, or products which are used in acquiring goods and services are current and include enough qualified sources to ensure maximum open and free competition. Also, the LEA must not preclude potential bidders from qualifying during the solicitation period.

An **“Awarded Vendor”** is a vendor that has been awarded a Bid/Proposal through the EISD competitive procurement process or through an Interlocal Agreement. Awarded vendors are preferred because they have competed for business through the competitive procurement process.

List of “Awarded Vendors” by bid/proposal number and commodity can be obtained from the Purchasing Department and is also available on the purchasing website. Contact the purchasing department if unclear from which vendor to purchase a good or service.

The Purchasing Specialists are responsible for ensuring the standards and elements described above are met.

Vendor Award Determination Criteria

According to the Texas Education Code (TEC) 44.031(b), the LEA may consider the following when determining to whom to award a contract:

- 1) The purchase price;
- 2) The reputation of the vendor and of the vendor’s goods or services;
- 3) The quality of the vendor’s goods or services;
- 4) The extent to which the goods or services meet the LEA’s needs;
- 5) The vendor’s past relationship with the LEA;
- 6) The impact on the ability of the LEA to comply with laws and rules relating to historically underutilized businesses;
- 7) The total long-term cost to the LEA to acquire the vendor’s goods or services;
- 8) For a contract for goods and services (other than goods and services related to telecommunications and information services, building construction and maintenance, or instructional materials), whether the vendor or the vendor’s ultimate parent company or majority owner: (A) has its principal place of business in this state; or (B) employs at least 500 persons in this state; and
- 9) Any other relevant factor specifically listed in the request for bids or proposals. Factors the LEA may consider under this criteria includes:
 - Vendor response time
 - Compatibility of goods/products purchased with those already in use in the LEA

Also, refer to page 37, regarding the consideration of the bidder’s safety record.

Under TEC 44.035, the LEA must publish in the request for bids, proposals, or qualifications for construction services, the criteria that will be used to evaluate the offerors and relative weights given to the criteria.

Under 2 CFR §200.319(d), in all solicitations, the LEA identifies all factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.

Right to Work

In accordance with TEC 44.043, when the LEA is engaged in (1) procuring goods or services; (2) awarding a contract; or (3) overseeing procurement or construction for a public work or public improvement, the LEA may not consider whether a vendor is a member of or has another relationship with any organization; and shall ensure its bid specifications and any subsequent contract or other agreement do not deny or diminish the right of a person to work because of the person's membership or other relationship status with respect to any organization.

Contract with Person Indebted to the EISD

In accordance with TEC 44.044, the LEA's board of trustees by resolution may establish regulations permitting the LEA to refuse to enter into a contract or other transaction with a person indebted to the LEA. The LEA may, accordingly, refuse to award a contract to or enter into a transaction with an apparent low bidder or successful proposer that is indebted to the LEA.

In this context, "person" includes an individual, sole proprietorship, corporation, nonprofit corporation, partnership, joint venture, limited liability company, and any other entity that proposes or otherwise seeks to enter into a contract or other transaction with the LEA requiring approval by the board.

Debarment and Suspension

In accordance with 2 CFR §200.212, the LEA awards contracts only to responsible contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement. Consideration will be given to such matters as contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources.

EISD must not subcontract with or award subgrants to any person or company who is debarred or suspended. Purchasing Department is required to check for excluded parties at the System for Award Management website before any procurement transaction. This list is located at: <http://www.sam.gov/>.

Vendor Gifts and Relations

EISD officials and employees cannot accept anything of value from a vendor, such as personal gifts or gratuities, which may be construed to have been given to influence the purchasing process.

Refer to page 9 for policy and procedures regarding purchasing ethics and conflict of interest.

Vendor's Notification of Criminal History of Contractor

In accordance with TEC 44.034, a person or business entity that enters into a contract with EISD must give advance notice to the LEA if the person or an owner or operator of the business entity has been convicted of a felony. The notice must include a general description of the conduct resulting in the conviction of a felony. The vendor must submit the EISD Felony Conviction Form to the Purchasing Department before a contract is awarded.

The LEA may terminate a contract with a person or business entity if the LEA determines that the person or business entity failed to give notice as required by TEC 44.034(a) or misrepresented the conduct resulting in the conviction. The LEA must compensate the person or business entity for services performed before the termination of the contract.

EISD will process payment when an invoice is received from the vendor.

The requirements of TEC 44.034 do not apply to a publicly held corporation.

Vendor Performance Evaluation

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, a system for the evaluation of vendors and their performance is important to support an effective purchasing function. Factors considered by EISD for inclusion in the evaluation are:

- Timeliness of deliveries
- Service availability
- Completeness and accuracy of order
- Quality of products or services received

The requesting campus or department performs vendor performance evaluation upon completion of services.

Whenever problems are encountered with a vendor (i.e., a vendor fails to deliver certain items or delivery does not meet specifications), it is important to document the problem, noting the date and an accurate description of the problem. This information is provided to the Purchasing Department.

The vendor is contacted by the telephone or email by the Purchasing Department and informed of the problem and told specifically how EISD wants the problem corrected. EISD keeps a record of all such communication, including the dates and what was discussed. If the problem is not resolved or continues, the vendor is notified in writing, stating the problem, the corrective action required, and that the vendor's failure to correct the problem will be considered a breach of contract and could result in the cancellation of the contract. If significant problems are encountered with the vendor, EISD consults with legal counsel concerning the removal of the vendor from the approved vendor list and discontinuing any business with the vendor. The Purchasing Department is

responsible for consulting legal counsel. The Purchasing Department is responsible for removing the vendor from the vendor list, and notifying EISD staff of the removal of the vendor from the list.

This record of information about vendor performance is important in the evaluation of the vendor. All records of information, communication with the vendor, and evaluation of the vendor are maintained in the Purchasing Department.

EISD strives to develop an open and professional relationship with each vendor while still maintaining total independence and objectivity.

Protest Procedures to Resolve Dispute

The LEA maintains protest procedures to handle and resolve disputes relating to procurements and, in all instances, discloses information regarding the protest to the awarding agency.

EISD protest and disputes should be submitted directly Superintendent or his designee.

CONTRACTS

Contracting with Small and Minority Businesses, Women's Business Enterprises, and Labor Surplus Area Firms

In accordance with 2 CFR §200.321:

- (a) The LEA must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible.
- (b) Affirmative steps must include:
 - (1) Placing qualified small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises on solicitation lists;
 - (2) Assuring that small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises are solicited whenever they are potential sources;
 - (3) Dividing total requirements, when economically feasible, into smaller tasks or quantities to permit maximum participation by small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises;
 - (4) Establishing delivery schedules, where the requirement permits, which encourage participation by small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises;
 - (5) Using the services and assistance, as appropriate, of such organizations as the Small Business Administration and the Minority Business Development Agency of the Department of Commerce; and
 - (6) Requiring the prime contractor, if subcontracts are to be let, to take the affirmative steps listed in paragraphs (1) through (5) above.

EISD shall endeavor to adopt specifications for product purchasing, construction, and professional services that will, in the district's judgment, provide the best value to the district and that do not unreasonably restrict the exclusion of Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), Small Business Enterprises (SBEs), and Women-owned Business Enterprises (WBEs) from competing for such contracts.

Contract Cost or Price Analysis

In accordance with 2 CFR §200.324:

- (a) The LEA must perform a cost or price analysis in connection with every procurement action in excess of the Simplified Acquisition Threshold, including contract modifications. Currently, the Simplified Acquisition Threshold is \$250,000. Please refer to page 48 for more information about the Simplified Acquisition Threshold.

The method and degree of analysis is dependent on the facts surrounding the particular procurement situation, but as a starting point, the EISD must make independent estimates **before** receiving bids or proposals.

- (b) The LEA must negotiate profit as a separate element of the price for each contract in which there is no price competition and in all cases where cost analysis is performed. To establish a fair and reasonable profit, consideration must be given to the complexity of the work to be performed, the risk borne by the contractor, the contractor's investment, the amount of subcontracting, the quality of its record of past performance, and industry profit rates in the surrounding geographical area for similar work.
- (c) Costs or prices based on estimated costs for contracts under the federal award are allowable only to the extent that costs incurred or cost estimates included in negotiated prices would be allowable for the LEA under the Cost Principles of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E. The LEA may reference its own cost principles that comply with the federal cost principles.
- (d) The cost plus a percentage of cost and percentage of construction cost methods of contracting must not be used.

Contract Provisions

EDGAR Requirements

In accordance with 2 CFR §200.327, all federally-funded contracts must contain the applicable provisions described in Appendix II to 2 CFR Part 200 – Contract Provisions for non-Federal Entity Contracts Under Federal Awards:

- (A) Contracts for more than the Simplified Acquisition Threshold currently set at \$250,000 must address administrative, contractual, or legal remedies in instances where contractors

violate or breach contract terms, and provide for such sanctions and penalties as appropriate.

- (B) All contracts in excess of \$10,000 must address termination for cause and for convenience by the LEA, including the manner by which it will be effected and the basis for settlement.
- (C) Equal Employment Opportunity. Except as otherwise provided under 41 CFR Part 60, all contracts that meet the definition of “federally assisted construction contract” in 41 CFR Part 60-1.3 must include the equal opportunity clause provided under 41 CFR 60-1.4(b).
- (D) Davis-Bacon Act. When required by Federal program legislation, all prime construction contracts in excess of \$2,000 awarded by LEAs must include a provision for compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act.
- (E) Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act. Where applicable, all contracts awarded by the LEA in excess of \$100,000 that involve the employment of mechanics or laborers must include a provision for compliance with 40 USC 3702 and 3704.
- (F) Rights to Inventions Made Under a Contract or Agreement. If the federal award meets the definition of “funding agreement” under 37 CFR §401.2(a) and the recipient or sub recipient wishes to enter into a contract with a small business firm or nonprofit organization regarding the substitution of parties, assignment or performance of experimental, developmental, or research work under that “funding agreement” must comply with the requirements of 37 CFR Part 401, “Rights to Inventions Made by Nonprofit Organizations and Small Business Firms Under Government Grants, Contracts and Cooperative Agreements.”
- (G) Clean Air Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. Contracts and subgrants of amounts in excess of \$150,000 must contain a provision that requires the non-Federal award to agree to comply with all applicable standards, orders or regulations issued pursuant to the Clean Air Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.
- (H) Debarment and Suspension. A contract award must not be made to parties listed on the government wide exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM).
- (I) Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment. Contractors that apply or bid for an award exceeding \$100,000 must file the required certification.
- (J) Procurement of Recovered Materials described in 2 CFR §200.323.

TEA Best Practices for Federally-Funded Contracts

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires all contracts be effective only during the period of availability of funds identified in the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA).

The contract should contain the following provisions: (b) The contract period is aligned to the grant period of availability as stated on the NOGA from the awarding agency (period of availability). (c) All services will be completed during the effective dates of the contract. (d) All services will be invoiced after services are received (rather than paid lump sum at the beginning of the period of availability before services are rendered) and paid upon verification of receipt of services. (e) The regulations for procurement in 2 CFR §§200.318-323 are followed in issuing the

contract. (f) All professional services provided under the contract will follow the provisions of 2 CFR §200.459 Professional service costs. (g) The contract identifies the funding sources that will be charged for the services provided, including the specific amount and/or percentage of the total contract amount to be charged to each funding source. (h) The contract identifies and lists only reasonable, necessary, and allocable services to be provided during the period of availability of the funding sources listed in the contract. (i) The administrative costs charged to the grant in the contract must comply with any limitations for administrative costs for funding sources (if applicable). (j) The contract specifies that the invoice provided by the contractor will include the list of services provided, dates of services, and location(s) where services were provided during the billing period.

Contract Administration

The LEA maintains the following oversights to ensure that contractors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts or purchase orders.

For EISD Procedures related to Property Management; please refer to the EISD Property Management section located in EISD Federal Grants: Financial/Administrative procedures manual beginning on page 77.

All contracts and service agreements, etc. must be signed by the Superintendent or designee. Only the Superintendent or designee is authorized to sign a contract or agreement on behalf of EISD. Contracts that exceed \$25,000.00 shall be approved by the School Board.

An employee who signs a contract or agreement without proper authorization will be personally liable for the terms of the contract or agreement and the act may be grounds for termination of employment.

The Purchasing Department maintains a copy of the signed contract, agreement, or purchase order for services performed and the rationale or procedure for selecting a particular vendor.

Contracts or agreements in excess of \$10,000 describe conditions under which the contract may be terminated for cause or for convenience by the LEA, including the manner by which it will be effected and the basis for settlement. Appendix II to 2 CFR Part 200.

Contracts for more than the simplified acquisition threshold must address administrative, contractual, or legal remedies in instances where contractors violate or breach contract terms, and provide for such sanctions and penalties as appropriate. Appendix II to 2 CFR Part 200.

If the contract is to develop materials, concepts, or products, the agreement or contract contains provisions that protect and retain ownership of such materials, concepts, or products by TEA, the State of Texas, and the federal government, as applicable (including copyright, patent, trademark).

The Purchasing Department maintains evidence that awards were made only to contractors or consultants possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed contract or procurement.

The Purchasing Department maintains evidence that consultants were selected based on demonstrated competence, qualifications, experience, and reasonableness of costs and that consideration was given to contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, past performance, and financial and technical resources.

The Purchasing Department maintains evidence that an employee did not participate in selection or award of a contract if a conflict of interest was involved.

Rental of Facilities: The Superintendent or his designee will coordinate the rental of EISD facilities. A Rental Agreement is required for all rentals of facilities by outside organizations. All contracts will include security deposits (unless waived), charges for facility usage, custodial services, and other related charges, if applicable. The EISD Board of Trustees is authorized to waive security deposits.

Procedures for Submitting a Consultant Service Contract:

A. Submit the Consultant Service Contract to the Purchasing Department for review.

B. Obtain the following documents from the consultant and submit with the purchase order to the Purchasing Department: A completed W-9 Form; A Felony Conviction Form; A Criminal Check Authorization and Fingerprinting Form, if the consultant will work directly with students; A Conflict of Interest Questionnaire; Documentation of insurance, such as general liability, workers compensation, and auto liability, if applicable.

C. Follow the procedures for Suspension and Debarment Verification for transactions supported with Federal funds outlined in this manual, as applicable.

The requesting campus or department will ensure that contractors, consultants, service providers, and vendors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts or purchase orders.

Prior to disbursement of funds to a contractor, consultant, service provider, or vendor, documentation must be provided to the EISD to support the goods or services rendered.

Documentation includes, but is not limited to: Description of the goods or services rendered; Dates; Rate; Total Hours, if applicable; Number of students served or names of students served, if applicable.

When procuring contracted services with Federal funds, EISD will ensure that every purchase

order or contract includes language to ensure services align with allowable use of grant funds, if applicable.

Accountability:

EISD ensures that contractors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts or purchase orders.

a) EISD obtains written contracts or purchase orders.

b) Contracts for services include a description of the services to be performed, the date(s) the services will be performed, the location(s) of where the services will be performed, the number or type of beneficiaries to be served, if applicable, and when payment(s) will be made, specifying verification before payment. The terms of the contract will include language that assures the activities performed by the contractor are allowable activities according to the Federal program, if applicable.

c) Purchase orders for goods include a description of the goods to be delivered, the date(s) the goods will be delivered, the location(s) of where the goods will be delivered, and when payment(s) will be made, specifying verification before payment.

d) Invoices match the contracts or purchase orders, including a description of services performed by the contractor or goods delivered by the vendor, the date(s) services were performed or goods delivered, the location(s) where the services were performed or goods were delivered, and if applicable, the number of beneficiaries served and identifying information of the beneficiaries who were served.

e) The requesting campus or department verifies that the services were performed or the goods were received before issuing payment. The requesting campus or department verifies that the contractor or vendor met all of its responsibilities under the contract or purchase order before approving payment. Invoices that merely state “for services rendered” will not be approved for payment. Invoices for services provided to students must indicate which student(s) was served and under which program.

The requesting campus or department maintains records on services performed – date of service, purpose of service – ensuring that services were consistent and satisfactory as described in the signed contract or purchase order.

EISD Accounts Payable Department maintains electronic support that payment was made only after the service was performed or goods received, and not before. Advance payment to contractors is prohibited.

PETTY CASH

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, a petty cash fund may be used to reimburse employees for small expenditures for LEA supplies or services and to make small district purchases. Such a fund can save time, paperwork, and associated administrative costs. Authorization to purchase from this source should be clearly defined in district or campus procedures and the dollar amount for each purchase should be limited (usually between \$50-\$100). Purchases made with petty cash may occur at both the campus and departmental level. It is important that petty cash purchases be kept at a minimum and that accurate accounting records be maintained for all purchases by employees who have been assigned as custodians of the petty cash funds.

EISD does not authorize the use of Petty Cash.

If applicable, refer to page 74 of the EISD's Financial/Administrative manual for petty cash procedures.

CREDIT, DEBIT, GIFT, & PROCUREMENT CARDS

Procurement Cards

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, purchasing cards (p-cards) can provide efficiency, transparency, and security when utilized correctly. As the volume of transactions increases, more transactions can be processed without the addition of staff to handle labor-intensive purchase order processes and employees can focus on doing the job at hand rather than the paperwork (requesting, approving, logging, and ordering). The software tools provided allow supervisors to review details on vendors, timing of purchases, and the actual amount spent. Purchasing staff can focus their attention on the larger dollar, infrequent purchases and their compliance requirements.

In order to avoid fraud and waste, purchasing cards must be controlled closely. The superintendent, business manager, human resources director, and procurement director must work together to set and enforce policies and procedures. It should be clear that misuse and abuse will not be tolerated. Two ways of demonstrating this are including the use of the card as a factor in performance appraisals and employing a 3-strikes-you're-out feature, where an employee who misused the card or couldn't provide receipts would have card privileges revoked or terminated. Reviewers should be held to the same standards as cardholders. The same set of rules should be applied to all card users, although spending limits may vary.

Restrict card usage by spending limits, unauthorized merchant category codes, and time of use to business hours. Only issue cards to employees after they have completed training on the purchase card program.

Segregation of Duties

- The same employee should not buy, receive, approve, and reconcile card purchases
- Different employees should set up cardholders and reviewers in the P-card system and the banking system

Cardholders

- Cardholders must turn in detailed receipts in accordance with policies and document the business reason. Restaurant receipts should include line-by-line detail of the order.
- Cardholders must complete training prior to receiving a card and acknowledge in writing receipt of the policy and procedure manual

Reviewers

- If a reviewer does not review and approve transactions according to policy, that department's card privileges should be revoked
- Reviewers should call the employee immediately upon noticing a questionable transaction rather than waiting for the due date of receipts
- Reviewers must complete training prior to reviewing transactions and acknowledge in writing receipt of the policy and procedure manual
- Reviewers should be responsible for 4 to 10 cardholders at most, in order to be effective

Monitoring and Oversight

- Be selective when issuing cards – focus on repetitive, small-dollar purchases
- Keep limits as low as possible to accommodate normal business needs. If there is a need to allow for emergency purchases, certain employees can have a higher limit
- Selection of card reviewers should follow the same high standards applied to cardholders
- The business office staff should review the work of the card reviewers and the list of P-card users should be reviewed annually
- Use the software to review the average spend by cardholder, purchases from unauthorized suppliers, purchases shipped to the cardholder's home, and purchase amounts slightly below purchase limits
- Review reports provided by the P-card programs, such as declined authorizations report, disputes report, and lost/stolen card report, which can reveal employees in need of additional training or attempting to misuse the card
- Review district-wide activity periodically to identify frequently used vendors or products to consider negotiating volume discounts in order to obtain best prices for the EISD

- Encourage staff to contact the hotline used to report any fraud

EISD does not participate in Procurement Card purchases.

Credit and Debit Cards

EISD does not authorize the use of credit cards or debit cards for purchases with federal funds.

Gift Cards

EISD does not authorize the use of gift cards for purchases with federal funds. Gift cards are not authorized for purchases with Federal grant funds because they do not provide adequate accountability for ensuring allowable use of funds.

Purchase or Credit/Debit Card Rebates or Discounts

EISD does not participate in Credit/Debit rebates or discounts for Federal Funds.

REQUISITIONS

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, a requisition is an internal document by which a campus or department of the LEA requests the purchasing department to initiate a purchase order. It is a request generated manually or electronically (through use of automated systems) for the purchase of supplies, services, equipment, etc.

Approval of Requisitions

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, requisitions should be initiated by those having proper authority, as defined by the LEA. Requisitions initiated by instructional, maintenance, and support personnel should then be approved by the appropriate person, either the principal, department head or superintendent. Requisitions which require expenditures from the Special Revenue Fund should be approved by the program administrator.

TEC 44.052 states that a Superintendent that approves any expenditure of school funds in excess of the amount appropriated for that item(s) in the adopted budget or supplementary, amended budget commits a Class C misdemeanor offense. Consequently, close supervision and monitoring of the availability of budget dollars and of the approval process for requisition are important elements of the LEA's purchasing process.

Requisition Format

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, requisitions should include certain items:

- A description of items to be purchased

- The quantity needed
- A suggested vendor (should be from the EISD's approved vendor list, if applicable)
- The code of the account to be charged

The requisition should be in a standard format so that the information can be readily identified and transferred to a purchase order. If proper control procedures are used, the requisition and the purchase order can be combined on one form. For example, an unnumbered requisition, once properly approved, may become a numbered purchase order.

EISD's requisition form is automated on-line through the Frontline software.

Flow of Requisitions

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, requisitions are received by the LEA's central purchasing department or department responsible for this function. In smaller LEAs, requisitions may be received by the business office or by the superintendent. When received, the requisition should be reviewed for the following:

- Accuracy
- Availability of funds
- Proper signatures
- Adequate description
- Proper account coding
- Overall completeness

The request is then assigned a purchase order number, vendor number (if applicable), purchase order date, and a cancellation date. The LEA should ensure that the appropriate competitive purchasing method is determined and performed before the requisition is approved for processing.

After approval by the designated authority, a purchase order is issued to the vendor.

ENCUMBRANCES

Encumbrances are funds that have been reserved when a purchase requisition is finalized and encumbered. When a requisition is processed, funds are placed aside for that transaction and are no longer available for use in other transactions to prevent the possibility of budget overspending. Encumbrances are used as a general planning tool, to predict cash outflow, and to avoid overspending. The amount of the encumbrance will not be included in the actual funds balances since payment has not been generated. Once payment is made, the encumbrance will be reversed and the funds will appear under the actual funds balance rather than the encumbrance balance.

The Business Office utilizes the Frontline Business Software to generate obligation, encumbrance, and expenditure information on a monthly basis to monitor and review budget performance

PURCHASE ORDERS

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, purchase orders are among the most commonly utilized method for procuring goods and services. As its name indicates, this document serves as a formal order for goods, materials, and/or services from a vendor. A purchase order, once approved, is a binding commitment for an LEA to remit payment to the vendor after the item(s) and an invoice are received by the LEA.

A purchase order is also an important accounting document. It contains information on the expenditure to be made and the account code to be charged. Once issued, the purchase order encumbers funds, which serves as an expenditure control mechanism. Finally, the purchase order is utilized in the accounts payable process as it documents that an order has been received and accepted by the user and payment can be made to the vendor.

EISD's Purchase Order form is automated on-line through the Frontline software.

Items requiring purchase orders include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- a) Capital Outlay/Fixed Assets (Equipment, furniture, etc.);
- b) Travel Expenses for Outside Consultants;
- c) Travel by Employees (Hotel, airfare, rental car expenditures require purchase orders; Mileage, parking, meals, and other approved incidentals may be reimbursed without a purchase order, by utilizing the Travel Reimbursement Form) (Exception: Emergency Only);
- d) Registration fees for conferences;
- e) Instructional Materials (Exception: Situations which would render the purchase order procedure impractical);
- f) Office Supplies not stocked/available through the EISD warehouse;
- g) Professional and Contracted Services (Exception: Equipment Repair).

Purchases from vendors that do not accept purchase orders will be used in extenuating circumstances only. EISD participates in several cooperative purchasing programs. A list of these programs is available from the Purchasing Department Website. Priority should be given to

these vendors since the goods and/or services have been subjected to the rigor of a competitive bid process.

Reimbursements for goods/services purchased personally will be reimbursed only if an approved purchase order is in place prior to the purchase of the goods and does not exceed the amount of the purchase order (shipping costs should be included in the purchase order). No changes, substitutions, or increases in funds may be made without approval from the Executive Business Officer.

EISD personnel are required to follow the following guidelines for any purchase, regardless of fund source. In addition, Federal Program personnel will adhere to the applicable statute, regulations, and other grant requirements when making purchases. Employees who violate the EISD's purchasing procedures shall be held personally liable for the debt incurred.

Purchase Order Process

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, a purchase order should be of a standard format to facilitate processing and should contain the following items:

- Vendor name and address
- Quantity of goods
- Description of goods
- Account codes
- Price (per unit and in total)
- Payment terms
- Discounts, if any
- Transportation arrangements
- Other pertinent factors, such as delivery destination
- Cancellation terms

It is recommended that purchase orders include a signed assurance that purchases with federal funds have been reviewed for allowability and meet the federal cost principles. Refer to page 28 of the LEA's Financial/Administrative Procedures Manual for procedures on determining allowability of costs charged to federal grants.

As indicated in this manual, purchase orders start with a requisition which may be prepared manually or electronically. Requisitions originate with the user or user department and describe the item to be purchased, the quantity, pricing (if known), the account to be charged, and normally a suggested vendor. From the requisition, a purchase order authorizing the purchase is prepared.

Most purchase orders are available in electronic format which may include a(n):

- *Vendor Copy* which is available in Frontline Business Software

- *Accounting Copy*, which is available in Frontline and available to the EISD's Accounts Payable Department and used for encumbering funds from the proper account
- *Receiving Copy*, which is available in Frontline Business Software when the order is received, confirming that payment can be made according to the EISD's accounts payable process
- *User or File Copy*, are kept in Frontline by the user department for financial management purposes

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, the LEA should establish purchase order cancellation procedures. Vendors should be informed of these procedures and the cancellation terms should be stated on the face of the purchase order itself. For example, an LEA may establish that purchase orders shall be cancelable if merchandise is not received within 60 days. Depending on certain factors relating to the purchase, flexible cancellation dates may be more appropriate (i.e., proximity of vendor, availability of merchandise, quantity ordered, etc.).

EISD cancellation terms are referenced on the face of the purchase order, to inform vendors of purchase order cancellation procedures. For EISD cancellation terms refer to the Purchasing Website located at WWW.EISD.NET/PURCHASING.

In the event it is necessary to cancel a purchase order, the requesting campus or department notifies the Purchasing Department in writing via email so the encumbrance can be liquidated.

Approval and Processing of Purchase Orders

All purchase orders require approval. No confirmation ("after-the-fact") purchase orders will be allowed without a Validation Form approved by the Superintendent or his designee.

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, the purchase order should be approved through one central office by a responsible, designated official who is educated about purchasing law, policies, and procedures. In larger LEAs, the purchase order may be approved by the purchasing agent; in smaller LEAs, by the superintendent.

For costs charged to federal grants, a determination of allowability of costs is performed prior to approval. Refer to page 28 of the EISD's Federal Grants: Financial/Administrative Procedures Manual for procedures on determining allowability of costs charged to federal grants.

During review and approval of requisitions and purchase orders, special attention should be given to the account coding. If there are not sufficient funds in the account the expenditure is to be coded to, the requesting campus or department will request either a budget amendment or budget transfer. Expenditures that are not correctly coded will be returned to the department, causing delays in the expenditure process.

The purchasing department may maintain a record of all purchase orders issued for control purposes. The log should include the date of submission, purchase order number, vendor name, and campus/department name.

EISD maintains a record of all purchase orders in electronic format in Frontline.

Blanket Purchase Orders

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, a blanket purchase order is issued to a pre-approved vendor authorizing purchases from that vendor over a period of time. Blanket purchase orders are valuable because they allow the purchase of items quickly. Both paperwork and related processing costs usually are reduced by blanket purchase orders. However, blanket purchase orders must follow certain criteria:

- Pre-qualification of vendors
- Limitation on the maximum amount for purchases (usually up to \$3,000 per purchase order)
- A specific time frame for purchases covered by the blanket purchase order (usually one month), and
- Identification of authorized purchasers

Blanket purchase orders are issued so that supplies, materials, or services are available “as needed” by user departments. For example, blanket purchase orders may be requested on a regular basis by the Food Service department for perishable items. Commonly used in larger LEAs, these purchase orders eliminate numerous individual purchase orders for small dollar-value items. Blanket purchase orders are requested by user departments and, if approved by centralized purchasing, issued to vendors.

Usually this type of purchase order remains in effect for only a specified amount of time and has a specified dollar limit. During this time period, the LEA may purchase certain specified items from the vendor not exceeding the total dollar limit without issuing additional purchase orders. The user department must issue a new requisition if items are requested beyond the specified time period. The advantage of blanket or open purchase orders is that merchandise is accessible to users with some flexibility and without the effort of processing purchase orders.

Certain controls, however, should be in place for the use of blanket purchase orders:

- The number of vendors to whom blanket purchase orders are issued should be limited
- Those who can make purchases under blanket purchase orders should be clearly designated
- Dollar limits should be carefully observed

All blanket (open) purchase orders are generated with a broad description and liquidated prior to year-end.

Emergency Purchases

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, two types of emergency purchases are made in LEAs. One type results from an eminent threat to the health, safety, or welfare of students. Such purchases must comply with state law and may be made only after a formal board action declaring an emergency and authorizing the purchase. An example of an emergency purchase of this type is the authorization to repair a school after a fire or a natural disaster.

Emergency purchases exceeding the dollar amount triggering competitive procurement requirements shall be made in conformance with TEC 44.031(h).

The second type of emergency purchase is defined by local policy to provide for the acquisition of goods or services to meet an immediate need such as purchases to repair damage to a facility which may imperil students or the security of the facility. For example, if windows are broken at a school by vandals, an immediate need exists to not only secure the building, but also to protect the contents from damage by the elements. This type of emergency purchase is normally utilized after regular business hours or on weekends and holidays. After purchases of this type are made, a purchase order should be issued after the fact on the next business day. Care should be taken that emergency purchases do not result from improper planning rather than from a true emergency.

It is important that the EISD attempts to eliminate emergency purchases for non-emergency situations as much as possible and requires that all emergency purchases be fully justified.

In the event of a catastrophe, emergency, or natural disaster affecting the EISD, the board of trustees may delegate to the superintendent or designated person the authority to contract for the replacement, construction, or repair of school equipment or facilities under TEC 44 if emergency replacement, construction, or repair is necessary for the health and safety of EISD students and staff.

Two types of emergency purchases are made in districts. Emergency purchases exceeding the dollar amount triggering competitive procurement requirements shall be made in conformance with *subsection (h) Section 44.031 Texas Education Code*.

First type results from an eminent threat to the health, safety, or welfare of students. An example of an emergency purchase of this type is the authorization to repair a school after a fire or a natural disaster.

Second type of emergency purchase usually is defined by local policy to provide for the acquisition of goods or services to meet an immediate need such as purchases to repair damage to a facility which may imperil students or the security of the facility. For example, if windows are broken at a school by vandals, an immediate need exists to not only secure the building, but also to protect the contents from damage by the elements. This type of emergency purchase is normally utilized

after regular business hours or on weekends and holidays. After purchases of this type are made, a purchase order should be issued after the fact on the next business day.

If your campus or department encounters an emergency as described above, immediately thereafter process a validation memo and submit to the Accounting Department. Validation memo must indicate a thorough justification for the reason of the emergency and all receipts must be attached.

Warehouse Requisitions

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, some LEAs keep inventories of office and teaching supplies and materials in a central warehouse. Such inventories provide ready access to supplies that are commonly used. If the LEA has such a warehouse, a warehouse requisition may be used to obtain supplies or materials. A warehouse requisition is completed at the department or campus level and submitted to the warehouse. Warehouse personnel then review the requisition for accuracy, completeness, and availability of funds. After processing the requisition, the supplies and materials are removed from the warehouse stock and delivered to the appropriate party.

The EISD Purchasing Department keeps inventory of copy paper and the Custodial Services Department maintains a limited amount of custodial supplies.

RECEIVING AND DISTRIBUTING PURCHASES

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, carefully checking deliveries and making sure that those needing the delivered goods and services actually receive them as ordered is part of the purchasing process. Centralized receiving, which is recommended, and decentralized receiving departments and campuses are both used; however, their missions are the same.

The Receiving Function

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, purchases may be received by a central receiving department or at campuses in a decentralized plan.

Centralized Receiving

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, central receiving may consist of more than one warehouse (i.e., food service, maintenance, instructional supplies, athletic supplies, etc.) and provides more control. Having only one centralized receiving point ensures that merchandise received agrees with merchandise ordered. Also, it provides for inventorying and tagging fixed assets upon receipt before distribution to campuses or departments. In certain instances, however, it may be in the best interest of the LEA for the vendor to deliver items directly to a campus or department (known as “drop shipped”). The LEA should, therefore, establish and adhere to

procedures for handling alternative delivery locations, ensuring that proper approvals are obtained for items which are drop shipped.

Decentralized Receiving

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, some LEAs may have decentralized receiving, although it is not recommended. If receiving is decentralized, the LEA should ensure that only authorized individuals trained in receiving procedures at the various campuses or departments are receiving goods. Policies and procedures must be in place regarding such receipt of goods, and monitoring should be performed to ensure that standardized policies and procedures are implemented and adhered to by those receiving goods and services. These include checking the quantity and quality of merchandise and procedures to ensure that required inventory records are maintained.

EISD is decentralized; this means the schools and departments (customers) determine what they need and when they need it. The final commitment of District funds can only occur by the Purchasing Department.

The purchasing department shall oversee the purchase of all materials, supplies, equipment, and services for the District.

Receiving Report

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, a receiving report should be prepared for all merchandise that is received by the LEA. The receiving report may be either a part of the purchase order (i.e., a receiving copy) or a separate report. Upon receipt of merchandise ordered, receiving personnel compare items received to the purchase order. Receiving personnel must have access to the specifications of the purchase prior to delivery to check for deficiencies in the order. All exceptions are noted on the receiving report which is then dated, signed and returned to the accounting department to be reconciled to the invoice. Damaged merchandise also should be noted on the receiving report. The department responsible for purchasing is also responsible for contacting the vendor regarding any deficiencies.

If an order is received in partial shipments, each shipment should be recorded on the receiving report and submitted to the accounting department. The accounting department maintains a record of receipts to date until all items have been received or the purchase order has been canceled.

Monitoring the delivery and receipt of purchase orders is the end user's responsibility and should be performed as soon as merchandise is received. Locate the **“packing slip.”** The packing slip must include the following:

- Date of shipment from the vendor
- EISD Purchase Order Number

- Quantities and descriptions of items shipped
- Compare the packing slip with the Purchase Order and verify that the shipment is intended for your school or department. If yes, continue the receiving procedures. If you have confirmed the shipment is not for your school or department, refuse the shipment or aid in determining the proper destination.
- Ensure that the items on the packing slip match the items on the Purchase Order. Contact the vendor for instructions for handling the incorrect items.
- Examine the outside of the containers for damage:
 - **Severe Visible Damage** - The process for severely damaged boxes differs depending on whether the order was shipped “Free On Board” (FOB) Origin or (FOB) Destination; it is a transportation term that indicates that the price for goods includes delivery at the vendor’s expense to a specified point (normally your destination i.e. school, department, or the EISD warehouse).

Quality Assurance

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, appropriate steps should be taken to assure the quality of merchandise received. The first step is to examine the merchandise for obvious defects or damages. All defects and damage should be documented on the receiving report and reported to the department responsible for purchasing who should then contact the vendor.

Other more formal methods may be used to test the quality of merchandise, especially in larger LEAs. It may be more cost-efficient to perform inspection and testing only on purchases of larger dollar amounts. It is important that LEA personnel who are responsible for receiving and inspecting items are trained in testing procedures. Alternatively, product testing may be an interactive process involving user departments.

Distribution

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, distribution procedures should be in place for goods received at central locations. Receiving personnel may contact the ordering campus or department to inform them that goods have been received. Personnel should then distribute goods according to the specifications to the proper location and/or staff members. For control purposes, the requesting campus or department should then compare goods received to its copy of the purchase order to ensure that they agree.

INVOICES

Vendors are required to submit all invoices to the Accounts Payable Department. If an invoice is received at the campus or department, the secretary or bookkeeper will sign (if the goods/services were received) and attach the invoice to the applicable purchase order and forward to the Accounts Payable Department.

Texas law requires that all invoices be paid to vendors within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the goods/services. If the EISD fails to pay promptly, the vendor can assess penalty interest charges. All invoices must be submitted to the Accounts Payable Department within 5 business days of receipt to ensure prompt payment to the vendor. If a school employee neglects to submit an invoice on a timely basis, he/she may be held personally liable for the penalty interest charges.

Invoices for goods must contain a clear description of the merchandise. Invoices for contracted services must include documentation containing dates, hours, students served, if applicable, and services provided, along with the total amount due for services rendered. A statement on the invoice “for services rendered” will not be accepted in lieu of a detailed description of the services performed. Invoices are signed by the appropriate administrator or designee.

PURCHASING DEADLINES

Summer needs for staff development and summer school should be anticipated and ordered prior to the start of summer school.

Purchasing documents for services and supplies should be submitted within thirty (30) calendar days from the date in which it was incurred.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Third-party documentation is required to support disbursement of funds.

Documentation includes, but is not limited to:

- Purchase Orders;
- Purchase Acquisitions;
- Invoices;
- Original Receipts;
- Packing Slips

EISD will maintain records sufficient to detail the significant history of procurement with Federal funds.

In addition to the documentation listed above, these records will include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- a) Rationale for the method of procurement;
- b) Selection of contract type;
- c) Contractor selection or rejection; and
- d) The basis for the contract price.

Registration Fees

The requisition/purchase order for registration must include the date of the event and the number/names of attendees. A copy of the approved travel must accompany the requisition/purchase order in Frontline before any payments will be made.

If registration fees are paid with Federal funds, relative benefit to the federal program must be demonstrated. For a discretionary grant that will be ending at the end of the grant period and no continuation funding is expected, the benefit must be received within the grant period. For a formula entitlement grant that will receive a continuing funding allocation in the subsequent year, benefit may be received during the liquidation period (the time period from the end of the grant period to the due date of the revised final expenditure report).

According to guidance in TEA's *New EDGAR Regulations Frequently Asked Questions* document, the LEA has discretion on whether to obligate registration fees as a travel expense or as personal services by a contractor (non-employee of the LEA). If the registration fee is obligated as travel, the registration fee may not be paid with federal funds until the travel is taken. It must be obligated the day the conference or meeting begins. If the registration fee is obligated as personal services by a contractor, the registration fee may be paid with federal funds at the time the registration is submitted. The benefit of obligating registration fees as personal services by a contractor is that the LEA may benefit from reduced cost registration fees when registering earlier for conferences or trainings.

For complete details regarding registration fees. Please refer to the EISD Federal Grants: Financial/Administrative Procedures Manual on pages 64.

Sales Tax Exemption Form

The Sales Tax Exemption Form shall be used for school-related purchases only. Misuse of the exemption form for personal purchases constitutes a misdemeanor.

Copies of the exemption form may be obtained from the Purchasing Department. Taxes, which should have been exempt, will be unauthorized for reimbursement if the exemption form was not presented to the vendor at the time of the purchase.

CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, an LEA needs a strong control environment in which to perform the purchasing function. The procurement manual is the primary tool for establishing a strong control environment, and it should be strictly adhered to by employees of the LEA. If a situation occurs which is not addressed in the procurement manual, it should be referred to the department responsible for purchasing to determine the proper course of action. If it is likely that this situation may reoccur, it should be considered for inclusion in the procurement manual.

One of the most important components of an effective purchasing system is a good organization that is staffed with well-trained people. Roles and related responsibilities must be clearly defined and be adapted to meet the unique operating environment of the LEA. The organizational unit responsible for purchasing should strive toward enhancing efficiency and competency through training for both purchasing staff and users.

User Interface

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, most important to the central purchasing function are the users. The foundation of purchasing is the identification of the needs of the users. To be successful, the needs of the users must be met satisfactorily. If the purchasing process is not responsive or slow to respond, the user may attempt to obtain goods and services using alternative methods which may violate purchasing policies.

The key to the success of the purchasing system is a free flow of information between the purchasing department and the users. The central purchasing department should attempt to obtain feedback from the user community. Also, users must be provided with information to properly administer their functions. For example, a short instruction sheet can provide the user with information on how to complete a requisition form. Coordination and cooperation must be developed to unite the technical expertise of purchasing and the needs of the users to effectively meet the educational objectives of the LEA.

Purchasing Functions and Roles

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, the organization of the purchasing function within an LEA may depend on various factors, one of which is the size of the LEA. In smaller LEAs, administrators and support staff “wear many hats” and they may be responsible for purchasing in addition to several other major functional areas. In larger LEAs, staffing levels are greater, allowing for personnel to be more specialized and to perform a specific function, such as purchasing.

The purchasing process includes a wide range of procurement functions, including planning, acquisition, quality assurance, contract administration and distribution. Basic purchasing functions include the following:

- The organization and administration of procurement/purchasing as determined by the superintendent and the board.
- The acquisition of goods and services requested, consistent with state and federal law, board of education policies, and sound business practices.
- The distribution of goods and services to users in a timely and responsive manner with assurance that quality standards have been met.

Assignment of roles may vary according to the number of people employed in purchasing, but typical assignments include:

- A *purchasing director or purchasing agent* is primarily responsible for the effective operation of the purchasing system. Typically, this position:
 - Manages the procurement of goods and services in a timely and cost efficient manner
 - Approves purchase orders and service contracts, including competitive procurement specifications and tabulations
 - Assists in the development and modification of purchasing policies and procedures and is responsible for the implementation of such policies and procedures
 - Resolves problems encountered within the purchasing function
 - Establishes and monitors good working relations with vendors
 - Provides for communication with vendors (i.e., pre-competitive procurement conferences, competitive procurement openings, etc.) and approves vendor communication with campuses and departments
 - Ensures that EISD staff are aware of relevant purchasing statutes, regulations, and board policies through either formal or informal training programs
 - Stays current on purchasing statutes, regulations, and practices
- A *purchasing supervisor/Buyer* assists the purchasing director by:
 - Managing assigned activities within the purchasing department
 - Preparing competitive procurement specifications

- Evaluating competitive procurement tabulations
- Maintaining vendor list
- Supervising the processing of purchase orders for approval by the purchasing director
- Evaluating the performance of vendors
- Assisting users
- Supervising buyers
- *Purchasing Staff* are responsible for the purchase of goods and services for the EISD, following state and federal laws and local board policy. They may:
 - Write, review, and modify specifications for competitive procurements
 - Assist in the evaluation of competitive procurements
 - Identify sources to obtain competitive prices and terms
 - Assist in maintaining an updated vendor list from which purchases can be made
 - Obtain and verify vendor price quotes
- The clerical *support staff* perform the daily clerical activities within the purchasing department, including:
 - Typing competitive procurement specifications and competitive procurement award notices
 - Assisting in competitive procurement tabulations
 - Distributing requisitions/purchase orders copies to campuses/departments and vendors
 - Performing other miscellaneous clerical support tasks
 - Assisting users

Centralized vs. Decentralized Purchasing

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, an LEA should strive to maximize the efficiency of its purchasing function. As recommended by TEA, the purchasing function should be centralized within the LEA for maximum efficiency to be achieved. Centralized and decentralized purchasing is defined by the Council of State Governments publication, *State and Local Governmental Purchasing*, as follows:

- *Centralized Purchasing* is defined as “a system of purchasing in which authority, responsibility, and control of activities are concentrated in one administrative unit”
- *Decentralized Purchasing* is defined as “a system of purchasing in which there is a varying degree of delegation of authority, responsibility, and control of purchasing activities to the several using agencies”

Decentralized Purchasing

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, in decentralized purchasing, campuses and departments may issue purchase orders, communicate directly with vendors, and receive goods at other than central locations. If purchases are made inappropriately, violation of laws, regulations, and school board policies may result.

Centralized Purchasing

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, centralized purchasing is more efficient than decentralized purchasing because it enables an LEA to coordinate the common purchase requirements of campuses and departments to obtain better prices. For example, when two campuses requisition the same goods and/or services, a centralized purchasing department may combine the goods/services on the same purchase order and arrange for more favorable price terms. Better planning, reduced paperwork, and reduced costs result from centralized purchasing.

Centralizing the purchasing function strengthens internal controls. A centralized purchasing department typically:

- Receives and coordinates purchasing requisitions/purchase orders from campuses or departments
- Communicates with vendors regarding prices and terms of purchases
- Processes and approves all purchase orders
- Issues purchase orders to vendors
- Receives purchases at central warehouse locations
- Coordinates competitive procurement processes
- Distributes goods based on purchase requirements

Centralizing the purchasing function does not erode the principles of site-based management. Purchase requisitions still originate at the campus or department level where needs are identified. Centralized purchasing carries out the site-based requisitions and improves the internal controls within the purchasing function.

The area in which internal controls are improved most is in the purchase approval process. In centralized purchasing, every purchase within the LEA is reviewed by the centralized purchasing department to prevent violations of state and federal law and local school board policies. A centralized purchasing function with varying levels of authority and a receipt and distribution process provides another strong internal control.

Centralized purchasing may, however, delegate certain routine activities. Well-written instructions for the delegated activities and careful monitoring of their performance are recommended.

In summary, a centralized purchasing function is essential to efficiency in purchasing, for the following reasons:

- It provides for the coordination and consolidation of smaller purchases into larger, volume purchases for the entire LEA
- Vendors and the business community have a single central contact within the LEA
- The purchasing department and its personnel have experience and are trained in purchasing, sourcing, prices, and vendor relations, which saves the LEA money and allows for a more efficient process
- The purchasing department and its personnel are trained in state and federal laws and local board policies applicable to purchasing, thereby providing for better compliance

EISD is decentralized; this means the schools and departments (customers) determine what they need and when they need it. The final commitment of District funds can only occur by the Purchasing Department.

Training and Staff Development

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, an LEA should provide for purchasing training and staff development. This training should extend beyond the professional staff to include other staff who are often involved either directly or indirectly in the purchasing process.

Training should be ongoing. Individuals within the department responsible for purchasing, such as the buyers and clerks, should receive ongoing instruction about changes in relevant statutes and purchasing practices. Campus principals and other departmental staff should also receive ongoing training, to accommodate changes in staffing. Training should consist of updating staff on recent developments in purchasing, including changes in purchasing statutes and regulations, and changes in the purchasing policies and procedures. Training and staff development may be provided by either external or internal resources. Throughout the training and staff development, a common basis of purchasing theory should be established and reinforced – ensuring that the principles and standards of good public purchasing are applied consistently.

Control Environment

According to the Purchasing Module in the FASRG, expenditure of public money requires a strong control environment. The following items should be present in the purchasing control environment:

- *Approval of purchase requisitions at the campus and departmental levels.* The campus principal or department head should review for need and approve purchase requisitions before they are submitted to the centralized purchasing department for processing.
- *Approval of purchase orders.* The purchasing director or other designated official should review for compliance before approving purchase orders for issuance to vendors. If a

purchase is to be federally funded, approval should first be obtained from a special programs administrator, to ensure allowable use of funds.

- *Supervision of purchasing process.* Vigilance in the supervision of the entire purchasing function on a daily basis is essential.
- *Segregation of duties among purchasing and accounting personnel.* The purchasing director, along with the finance director, and ultimately the superintendent, are responsible to ensure that duties among purchasing and accounting personnel are properly segregated (to the degree possible) to provide a checks-and-balances environment.
- *Maintenance of purchasing files and records.* The purchasing clerks should be trained and supervised so that purchasing files and records are complete and maintained in an orderly fashion for the period required by law.
- *Control over incoming merchandise.* Receiving personnel (either centralized or decentralized) should be trained and monitored to ensure that the proper procedures are followed with incoming merchandise (i.e., the counting and inspection of merchandise received, and the completion of receiving reports).
- *Verification of invoices with purchase orders and receiving reports.* Although receiving personnel are responsible for the initial verification of invoices, accounting personnel verify that the invoice, the purchase order, and the receiving report match before presenting the invoice for approval for payment.
- *Verification of delivery.* The requesting campus or department is responsible for ensuring that the order is in agreement with its original purchase order.
- *Internal review of the purchasing process.* An internal review of the purchasing process should be performed periodically. This review usually is made by the EISD's internal audit department and ensures that purchasing policies and procedures are being followed by EISD personnel.

Procurement Records

In accordance with 2 CFR §200.318(h)(i), the LEA must maintain records sufficient to detail the history of all procurements. These records will include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following: rationale for the method of procurement, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, the basis for the contract price (including a cost or price analysis), and verification that the contractor is not suspended or debarred.

Please see pages 95-101, IV. Record Keeping in the EISD's Financial/Administrative Procedures Manual for more information on the EISD's record policies.

Procurement Review by USDE or TEA

In accordance with 2 CFR §200.324, the LEA must make available, upon request of the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity (TEA):

- Technical specifications on proposed procurements
- Procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, or independent cost estimates

LEGAL AUTHORITIES AND HELPFUL RESOURCES

The following documents contain relevant grants management requirements. Staff should be familiar with these materials and consult them when making decisions related to the federal grant.

- Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR)
 - <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html>
- Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200)
 - <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ccccf77e01c9e6d4b3a377815f411704&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5>
- USDE's Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 3474)
 - http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ccccf77e01c9e6d4b3a377815f411704&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr3474_main_02.tpl
- Federal program statutes, regulations, and guidance
 - <http://www.ed.gov/>
- TEA's Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG), Module 5 Purchasing Guide
 - [http://tea.texas.gov/Finance and Grants/State Funding/Additional Finance Resources/Additional Finance Resources/](http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/State_Funding/Additional_Finance_Resources/Additional_Finance_Resources/)
-
- TEA's New EDGAR Regulations Frequently Asked Questions
 - [http://tea.texas.gov/Finance and Grants/Grants/Administering a Grant/The New EDGAR/](http://tea.texas.gov/Finance_and_Grants/Grants/Administering_a_Grant/The_New_EDGAR/)
- EISD regulations, rules, and policies
 - WWW.EISD.NET