

Reagan County Independent School District Purchasing Manual

NOTE: This is a draft of our Purchasing Manual only.

Purpose: Summarize the District's purchasing procedures for use by its employees. Please note that the content of this manual is not intended to change the actual policies of the district as spelled out in our policy manual, nor can it change the legal requirements spelled out in the Texas Education Code.

Roles and Responsibilities of District Personnel

Purchasing is the responsibility of all employees of the District. The responsibility of managing our purchasing begins with the careful consumption of our existing resources. When buying, select goods and services that meet your requirements and are cost-effective. . Ask yourself if the items being considered are really needed. Will you still need the item tomorrow or next week? Shop around and find the vendor that provides the best product and value. We encourage shopping at home when possible. After the goods are received, you still have an important job to do. You must evaluate the products you received, and ensure that they are what you ordered, that your order is complete, and that there are no problems.

The campus secretary plays a key role in the purchasing system. They provide the critical first step in keeping up with the available budget and where the District stands in it's spending. The secretary must know when there is enough budget available to handle the order requested. They must keep up with what orders have not been received, and see that shipments are routed to the right location.

The Principals and Department heads are charged with the correct use of our resources at your location. They are held accountable for the wise use of the resources allocated to them in the budget. They must be involved in the decision process to determine if the goods and services being requested meet the needs of the school and the programs we have in place.

The central office staff must receive purchase orders, receiving documents, and invoices on a timely basis in order to process these transactions and pay our vendors within the required time limits set by law. It is imperative that we receive all information from the campuses in a timely manner. The central office also is charged with maintaining the books and records of the District. Only by receiving all required documents that have been properly filled out and turned in on a timely basis can that be accomplished. The books and records are how we answer to the taxpayers and the state about our use of our resources. The accurate and timely preparation of our records is critical to our continued obtaining of funds necessary to offer the programs and education for our youth. Also, the central office staff is responsible for determining that all expenditures meet the legal and contractual obligations of the funding we receive. We get money from local, state, and federal sources, all with different requirements and restrictions. We have to prove that money we receive has been spent for the purposes for which it was intended.

The superintendent is ultimately responsible for our purchasing function. He is the one that has to face the public and the elected board members representing the taxpayers and answer to them for all of our actions.

Competitive Procurement Options

State law provides for purchases as follows: Competitive sealed proposals, Request for proposals, Interlocal contracts, Catalogue purchases through the General Services Commission, Competitive bidding, Job order contract for facilities repair process, and other options specifically for construction. In addition the these competitive procedures, the law allows for price quotations on certain purchases within the \$10,000 to \$25,000 annual range. Most of our everyday purchases fall within this category.

Items Exceeding \$25,000

The law requires competitive procurement for any items that, in the aggregate, exceed \$25,000 per year. Please note that there are exceptions to this rule. Buses that exceed \$20,000 must be competitively purchased. Motor fuel and produce used by our food service, in excess of \$10,000 annually, must be obtained competitively. Splitting up purchases throughout the year for the purpose of circumventing the dollar thresholds above is illegal. There are criminal sanctions spelled out in the code (TEC (B) 44.032). Purchases should be from the vendor offering the best value to the District.

Categories with Purchases between \$10,000 and \$25,000

In determining what constitutes an item for purposes of the spending thresholds, similar items are grouped together in categories. The following categories fall within the \$10,000-25,000 range for our school:

- Copier purchases and maintenance
- Vehicle parts and repairs
- Building and grounds repairs
- Long-distance phone service
- Cellular Phone service
- Janitorial supplies
- Instructional supplies and equipment
- Athletic supplies
- Office supplies
- Property insurance
- Vehicle insurance
- Student insurance
- Furniture
- Computers and related technological equipment
- Library books

If you purchase any items within these categories, you must get quotes from three different vendors before ordering. These quotes must be kept by you, in case our auditors ask to see them.

Purchases shall be made from the lowest responsible bidder.

Purchasing Cooperatives

There is an exception to obtaining 3 quotes from vendors. If items are purchased from a vendor who is a member of Region 18's purchasing cooperatives, or a member of the General Services Commission Purchasing Coop. The vendor used must be a member of a coop we participate in to qualify. However, we still urge all employees to obtain 3 price quotes before purchasing anything.

Purchase Orders

Purchase orders should be used with any vendors that charge to the District. Most purchases will be with a purchase order. You should complete all the information asked for by the form. List all items individually, with quantities, description, unit price, and extended totals.

Check Requests

Check Requests should be for any purchases that require immediate payment or for vendors who will not charge to the District. If the vendor will not charge to the District or accept a purchase order, then a check request should be used. Examples of this would be to request checks for registration fees, miscellaneous fees that require immediate payment, and other items that we cannot charge.

Please note that the Check Request also doubles as approval to use a school credit card. Use this only when it is not possible to know in advance what payment will be required. An example of this would be entry fees to something that students will attend, but you are not certain how many will attend until the day of the event, or would otherwise be impossible to know how much to ask for in advance.

Local Vendor Purchases

The District maintains a form to use in purchasing small amounts from local vendors who allow the District to charge. It replaces the purchase order. This form requires approval from an administrator before the purchase. The form should be signed and dated by the store and returned with the invoice when presented for payment.

Meal Vouchers

The District requires the use of meal vouchers for all student trips. The vouchers should be approved in advance. The voucher authorizes the sponsor to charge the meal to the District. If the restaurant will not charge to the district, then payment by credit card is authorized. Indicate on the voucher that the meal was paid for by credit card.

Indicate on the meal voucher if you want to be advanced money to use to buy meals, or to hand out allowances to students and sponsors during the trip. You must account for the advance when you return. A list of the students and sponsors who received meal allowances should be attached.

The District expects meals for student trips should average \$5 per person, including sponsors.

Employee Travel

Use the Travel form to report professional travel not involving students. Complete all of the information about your trip, including departure and arrival, destination, purpose, and any other pertinent information. If you want an advance on your travel allowance, then request it on the form.

For meals, you may use the allowance amount as specified or report actual expenses incurred. You may not choose a mixture of the two.

For safety and convenience, we encourage employees to stay in hotels where conferences and training are scheduled if at all possible. Please note that there are restrictions in place by the state and federal government on how much can be paid for overnight trips. Please keep this in mind when booking reservations at hotels in cities with higher room costs.

Spouses who travel with employees on business must pay their own way. In the event that extra charges are incurred by their travel with the employee, then the additional cost must be born by the employee.

Mileage will be reimbursed based on the Comptrollers' site listing mileage between cities for the round trip if the employee drives his own vehicle.

Trips to the Region 18 Education Service Center or other trips within 150 miles of Big Lake will be limited to day trips only. No meal allowance will be allowed, and no overnight stay will be paid. If unusual circumstances warrant, the superintendent **may** allow overnight stay on certain trips.

Personal Purchases and Reimbursement of Employees

Purchase of personal items through the school is not allowed. The District does not reimburse employees for purchase of goods and services, except in cases of emergency. (Travel expenses are an exception)

Activity Fund Purchases

Purchases made using campus activity funds are required to follow all laws governing use of public funds.

Law

Cites to the laws governing purchasing can be found in the Texas Education Code, Subchapter B, Section 44. Other references can be found in the Texas Government Code, section 271.