

Houston County Board of Education

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in September	Descriptor Term: <h2 style="text-align: center;">Purchasing</h2>	Descriptor Code: 2.805	Issued Date: 09/09/24
		Rescinds:	Issued: 07/08/13; 10/11/99

General

The school district will purchase competitively and seek maximum educational value for every dollar expended. Authorization to purchase shall be provided by the Board. The Director of Schools shall serve as purchasing agent for system-wide purchasing.¹ Principals shall serve as purchasing agents for individual schools.

Purchases made by anyone not authorized by the appropriate officials shall become the personal responsibility of the persons making the purchase agreement. The Board will not, under any circumstances, be responsible for payment for any materials, supplies, or services purchased by unauthorized individuals or in an unprescribed manner.

No school shall be obligated to pay for any expenditure made by a student, a teacher, or any other employee unless he/she first receives a written purchase order from the proper office or unless prior written permission or arrangements are made with the principal.

The Board shall purchase locally whenever the conditions are comparable or when it is most practical under the circumstances.

Individual Schools

The Director of Schools/Designee shall approve the following purchases:

1. A single piece of equipment costing more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00);
2. One that is to be attached to or one that requires alteration of the building; or
3. One that will become a permanent fixture.

Central Office²

ROUTINE PURCHASES

Routine purchases shall include expenditures for supplies, salaries, and routine expenditures required for the operation of the school district. These expenditures shall be anticipated and provided for in the budget and will normally be authorized by the Board at the beginning of the fiscal year. The Director of Schools/designee shall make all routine purchases without further board authorization; however, the Board shall be promptly informed if any substantial variation from budgeted estimates occurs or becomes necessary.

SPECIAL PURCHASES

Special purchases are those which are not routine and which may or may not be specifically identified by line item in the budget. Examples of special purchases are all capital expenditures such as for vehicles, buildings, major contracts, purchases of major equipment, items for long-term use, and supplies of an unusual quantity or nature. All purchases in this category shall require specific prior board approval on an item-by-item basis. In its approval, the Board may place constraints on the Director of Schools requiring board evaluation and/or approval at various steps in the procurement process. This will be determined by the Board on an individual basis depending on the nature of the procurement action.

EMERGENCY PURCHASES

Emergency purchases are those which are necessary to avert hazards which threaten health or safety, to protect property from damage, or to avoid major disruption of educational activities. If within budgetary limits and deemed essential, emergency purchases may be made by the Director of Schools. However, if the purchase is of such significant magnitude as to impact the integrity of the budget, the Chair shall call a meeting of the Board to deal with the matter. In any event, the Board shall be advised promptly of all emergency purchases.

PURCHASING OF SURPLUS PROPERTY

The Director of Schools and other employees designated by the Board shall be authorized to act for the Board in acquiring federal surplus property through the Tennessee General Services Department and in entering into agreements, certifications, and covenants of compliance concerning the use of federal surplus property.

Further, the Director of Schools is authorized to purchase any needed items through suppliers approved on the state bid list.

COOPERATIVE PURCHASING³

The Board may join in cooperative purchasing to take advantage of lower prices for bulk purchasing and to reduce the cost involved in bidding whenever such buying appears to be to the benefit of the district.

ONLINE PURCHASING

The Board recognizes that online purchasing may provide opportunities for savings, but extra precaution shall be used to ensure that accounting procedures are followed. Online purchasing shall be permitted with the following requirements:

1. Prior authorization shall be obtained from the Director of Schools before setting up new online accounts, and schools shall maintain a list of accounts;
2. Online purchases shall be for school purposes and made in accordance with established policies and procedures. School employees are prohibited from making personal purchases even with

the intent of reimbursing the school district. School employees are prohibited from using a school's tax exempt status for personal purchases of any kind;⁴

3. The availability of money for the fund/account in question shall be determined before purchase orders are approved;
4. All purchase orders shall be properly filled out and approved prior to a purchase; and
5. Price quotes shall be obtained where possible and/or practical and retained with other purchase documentation.

PURCHASING WITH FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS

Before grant funds are obligated or expended, the Director of Schools/designee shall review the cost of a proposed expenditure and determine if it is an allowable use of federal grant funds.⁵ The Director of Schools will minimize the time that elapses between the transfer and disbursement of funds once an expenditure is approved.

No person officially connected with or employed by the school district may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by a federal award if he/she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. A real or apparent conflict of interest arises when the employee, officer or agent, any member of his/her immediate family, his/her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract. Upon discovery of any potential conflict, the Director of Schools shall disclose the potential conflict to the federal awarding agency in writing.⁶

Legal References

1. [TCA 49-2-206\(b\)\(3\); TCA 6-36-115](#)
2. [Internal School Funds Manual, Section 4-8](#)
3. [TCA 12-3-1205](#)
4. [TCA 49-2-608](#)
5. [2 CFR § 200.403](#)
6. [2 CFR § 200.112](#)

Cross References

Executive Committee 1.301
 Credit Cards/Credit Lines 2.8051
 Purchase Orders and Contracts 2.808
 Conflict of Interest 5.601