



PURCHASING

Background

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to ensure that procurement of goods and services provides the best value to the Division and is undertaken in an open, fair, ethical, and competitive manner while remaining in full compliance with legislation.

Code of Ethics

1. Employees who undertake purchasing activities on behalf of the Division must do so with integrity, accountability, transparency and with the utmost consideration for the responsible spending of public dollars.
2. Division business shall be conducted, with all current and prospective suppliers/vendors, in good faith.
3. Employees shall not use their authority or office for personal gain (incentive packages, rebates or free gifts) while engaging in purchasing activities on behalf of the Division.
4. Should an employee hold a personal or financial interest, which may be reasonably deemed by others to impinge on the employee's impartiality (conflict of interest) in any matter relevant to their duties, that conflict shall be declared to their immediate supervisor.

General Guidelines

5. This administrative procedure is for all Division purchases of goods and services, including school generated funds.
6. The Division shall seek maximum value for expended funds.
7. Consideration should be given to the supplier's reputation and experience, the ability to deliver or perform within the time specified, and the ability to provide after sales maintenance and service. Past experience on previous orders may also be considered.
8. The Division shall abide by provincial and federal legislation, including, but not limited to:
 - 8.1 The Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA)
 - 8.2 The New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA) including NWPTA thresholds
 - 8.2.1 \$75,000 or greater for goods;
 - 8.2.2 \$75,000 or greater for services; and
 - 8.2.3 \$200,000 for construction.



- 8.3 Canada-Europe Trade Agreement (CETA)
- 8.4 United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)
- 8.5 Canadian United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement (TCA)
- 9. To the extent that is reasonable, efficient and consistent with school-based management philosophy, the Division supports the concept of centralized purchasing to service the needs of schools and individual sites in the Division.
- 10. All items purchased with Division funds shall become the property of the Division.
- 11. All purchases must be approved by an appropriate signing authority.
- 12. Prior to authorizing an expenditure, the approving authority shall confirm that:
 - 12.1 Sufficient funds remain within the relevant budget to fund the purchase;
 - 12.2 The purchase is necessary and appropriate.
- 13. If a contract or standing offer exists with a supplier who can supply the required goods or services, then these goods and/or services shall be ordered from the contracted supplier.

Purchasing Guidelines

- 14. The purchase of goods and services with an estimated total cost exceeding:
 - 14.1 \$5,000 but less than \$25,000, requires two or more telephone (document details), Web Advertisement Quote, email solicitations or other available pricing confirmation from potential suppliers where possible and practical;
 - 14.2 \$25,000 but less than \$75,000, requires written quotations from a minimum of three potential suppliers where possible and practical; and
 - 14.3 \$75,000 and above requires a competitive bidding process such as a Request for Proposal (RFP), Request for Quote (RFQ) or Request for Tender (RFT).
- 15. Construction projects with an estimated total cost exceeding:
 - 15.1 \$50,000 but less than \$200,000, requires written quotations from a minimum of three potential suppliers where possible and practical;
 - 15.2 \$200,000 requires a formal competitive bidding process such as a Request for Proposal (RFP) or a Request for Quote (RFQ) or Request for Tender (RFT).



16. Purchases exceeding NWPTA thresholds (14.3 and 15.3) are required to be electronically posted on the Alberta Purchasing Connection (APC).

Other Purchasing Considerations

17. The purchase of Division materials or services from Division employees is discouraged unless approved by the Superintendent.
18. Any capital projects, including playgrounds or building enhancements, must be coordinated and approved by the Director of Facilities and Technology.
19. Purchasing of goods such as furniture, fixtures and equipment that result in physical changes to the Division buildings or facilities, requires the approval of Director of Facilities and Technology.
20. Purchases involving the acquisition of furniture, appliances and technology including communication technologies, must be done with prior approval of the Director Facilities and Technologies. These purchases may include but not limited to:
 - 20.1 Computers, tablets or peripheral supporting technology,
 - 20.2 Servers and other Technological Equipment,
 - 20.3 Projectors,
 - 20.4 Major audio systems,
 - 20.5 Photocopiers,
 - 20.6 Appliances
21. The purchase of new computer software or computer hardware may require a privacy impact assessment.
22. Personal purchases on the Division purchasing cards are not permitted;
 - 22.1 If a personal charge does occur, the employee shall provide payment by cash or cheque to the Division immediately; and
 - 22.2 Repeated occurrences may result in the card being terminated, disciplinary action and possible termination.
23. Any suspected fraudulent purchasing activities may result in severe consequences up to and including termination.



Sole Sourcing

24. Sole sourcing is a non-competitive procurement process used when goods or services are acquired from a single supplier without a competitive bidding process, under circumstances where competition is not feasible or practical.
25. The Division is committed to fair, transparent, and competitive procurement processes. Sole sourcing may only be used in exceptional cases where a competitive process is not viable. All sole source procurements must be justified, documented, and approved in accordance with this procedure.
26. Sole sourcing may be permitted under the following conditions, consistent with applicable trade agreements and procurement regulations:
 - 26.1 Emergency Situations: When an urgent need arises due to an unforeseen situation where delay would pose risk to health, safety, or critical operations.
 - 26.2 Lack of Competition: When no reasonable alternative or substitute exists, and only one supplier is capable of meeting the requirements.
 - 26.3 Compatibility or Standardization: When goods or services must be compatible with existing equipment or systems and the original supplier is the only one capable of ensuring such compatibility.
 - 26.4 Proprietary or Confidential Services: When the supplier owns the intellectual property or holds exclusive rights.
 - 26.5 Continuity or Warranty Considerations: When changing suppliers would void warranties or disrupt continuity of service or support.
 - 26.6 Sole sourcing also may be used where the safety and security of students and staff are a primary concern and where the work requires suppliers or vendors to be present on school premises. In such cases, pre-vetted suppliers on the Division's Trusted Vendor List may be used.

Competitive Process Guidelines

27. Competitive bidding (tender) specifications shall be developed by the Director of Facilities and Technologies or Designate.
28. All competitive bidding solicitations must indicate:
 - 28.1 Specifications for the goods and services to be purchased;
 - 28.2 The place where bids are to be delivered



- 28.3 Person to which tender documents, and queries are to be directed;
- 28.4 Person to which tender documents may be obtained;
- 28.5 The date and time after which bids will no longer be accepted
- 28.6 Template contracts where appropriate;
- 28.7 Evaluative tool, which will determine the successful bidder;
- 29. All bids must be date and time stamped upon receipt and must not be opened until the specified closing time.
- 30. Any bid received after the closing date and time shall be returned unopened to the originator unless stated otherwise in the RFP.

Contracts

- 31. Prior to entering into any contractual arrangements, it's necessary to ensure all of the following criteria have been met:
 - 31.1 The contract is in the best interests of the Division;
 - 31.2 Appropriate consultation, if applicable, has occurred with Division departments and/or schools which have an interest in the contract;
 - 31.3 The contract has been reviewed from both a financial and a resources perspective by the appropriate authorities;
 - 31.4 The contract is operationally feasible;
 - 31.5 The contract is in accordance with any legislative or regulatory requirements, such as policies, guidelines, collective agreements, or other obligations of the Division;
 - 31.6 There is no conflict of interest; and
 - 31.7 Provision has been made for adequate indemnity, insurance and risk management plans, and other appropriate protections.
- 32. Once a contract has been approved and signed, Division staff administering the contractual arrangement shall ensure the Division and other contracting parties meet their respective obligations under the contract.



Commercial Purchase Cards

- 33. The Division has established a commercial purchase card program to provide a more convenient, efficient, and cost-effective method of purchase and payment for transactions and to provide schools and departments with a simple method of direct purchases.
- 34. Commercial purchase cards will be made available to individuals authorized by the Secretary Treasurer to make purchases on behalf of the Division and have completed and signed the Commercial Card Request Form and Commercial Cardholder Agreement found in the Commercial Card Guidelines.
- 35. Individual purchase cardholders shall have a monthly spending limit as authorized by the Secretary Treasurer.
- 36. Division-issued purchase cards are to be used only for Division business. If a personal purchase is made in error, the employee must reimburse the Division at the time of submission of receipts.
- 37. Purchase Card expenditures submissions must be accompanied by the itemized documents showing what exactly was purchased.
- 38. Itemized meal receipts shall show the items purchased.
- 39. The purchase of alcohol is not permitted.

Exceptions

- 40. Exceptions to this Administration Procedure may be granted by the Superintendent.

Reference: Section 33, 52, 68, 197, 222, 225 Education Act
Canadian Free Trade Agreement
Canada-Europe Trade Agreement
United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement
Canadian United Kingdom Trade Continuity Agreement