

THE HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
10910 Clarksville Pike
Ellicott City, MD 21042

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Chief Operating Officer

Procurement Procedures

TO: All Staff

FROM: Camille B. Jones, Chief Operating Officer

All employees of the Howard County Public School System are entrusted with the responsibility of expending funds on behalf of the Board of Education and have a fiduciary responsibility to follow the rules and guidelines promulgated by the Purchasing Office.

For ALL contracts, the Board of Education has established Policy 4050 Procurement of Goods and/or Services to address the procurement of materials, supplies, equipment and services for the school system. All employees must comply with the procedures established for the expenditure of ALL funds in an efficient manner.

To maintain compliance with the Board of Education policy, the Purchasing Office would like to highlight the following:

- All procurements, contracts/agreements and purchase orders shall be reviewed and approved by the Purchasing Office and/or the Office of Risk Management. To facilitate school/office access to approved contracts, Board of Education approved contracts are posted on the Purchasing Office web page, www.hcpss.org/about-us/purchasing. Please access this web page for approved contracts, purchasing card information, approved fund raising vendors and proper handling of surplus property.
- Purchases and contracts with a total value of \$25,000 or more, except as noted in Policy 4050 (e.g. books and materials of instruction), require the approval of the Board of Education. Purchase orders and contracts may not be split or divided as in the case of installment payment plans or lines of credit to circumvent the procurement process. Purchase orders, agreements/contracts and other documentation must include the date of approval by the Board of Education and the assigned agreement/contract number.
- The Purchasing Director shall determine the applicability and the use of other contracts as allowed by State Law and Board policy. Existing contracts established by another entity (government agency, consortium or other cooperative group) utilized by the school system with an estimated value over \$25,000 must be presented to the Board of Education for approval prior to the use of the contract.
- Prior to the delivery or start of any work, a purchase order must be prepared, approved and issued. Failure to follow this process puts staff and the school system at risk for not having sufficient funds to cover the obligation.

- Purchases and contracts for services with a total value less than \$25,000 require the approval of the Purchasing Director. Purchases may not be split or divided to lower the total value under the \$25,000 threshold. The Purchasing Director may recommend to the Superintendent that certain procurements or contracts be presented to the Board of Education.
- All other procurements, contracts and purchase orders using school system/Board of Education funds shall be authorized by the Purchasing Director or his/her designee.
- Unless otherwise authorized, no other school system staff has approval to enter into, either in writing or verbally, any agreement or contract. Any agreement or contract not having the appropriate approvals is void.
- The Purchasing Office has established a purchasing card program. All employees assigned a purchasing card (pcard) are required to follow the guidelines and rules for use. Being assigned a pcard is a privilege and failure to follow the rules for use will be cause for suspension/termination of the card and may also be reflected in an employee's evaluation.
- Principals are reminded that school activity funds are to be expended in accordance with Board Policy 4030 School Activity Funds, effective July 1, 2012. The Purchasing Office may establish system-wide contracts for various school services such as vending and photography services. Schools are expected to make use of these contracts.
- To facilitate the obtaining of materials, supplies, equipment and services, the Purchasing Office has developed a Procurement Manual. The manual is accessible at the Purchasing Office web page at www.hcpss.org/aboutl-us/purchasing under "Purchasing Forms". The manual provides the procedures and direction for the efficient and effective handling of procurements for the school system.
- All effort should be made to obtain competition for all expenditures. However, there will be needs that are unique with only one supplier/vendor available to provide those services. In that case, staff is to complete and submit with their procurement request the Single/sole source justification form located on the Purchasing web page under Purchasing Forms, copy attached.
- All schools and offices are notified that effective July, 1, 2015 that amendments to § 6-113 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code require that a contractor or subcontractor for a local school system may not knowingly assign an employee to work on school property with direct, unsupervised, and uncontrolled access to children, if the employee has been convicted of, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to, a crime involving a sexual offense, child sexual abuse and crimes of violence. All Contractors shall certify that the necessary criminal history records checks including fingerprinting have been conducted and that their employees comply with the requirements. Contractors must be able to provide a listing of all employees that may be on school property prior to the start of work.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Purchasing Office at 410.313.6644.

CBJ/DP