

January 26, 2015

Chief Operating Officer

Procurement Procedures

TO: All Staff  
FROM: Camille B. Jones, Chief Operating Officer

All employees of the Howard County Public School System entrusted with the responsibility of expending funds on behalf of the Board of Education 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. To facilitate school/office access to approved contracts, Board of Education approved contracts are posted on the Purchasing Office web site, [www.purchasing/hcpss.org](http://www.purchasing/hcpss.org). 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 Director of Purchasing 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 appropriate funding in place prior to the delivery of goods or the performance of services. Budget approval is not a substitute for an approved purchase order.

- Purchases and contracts for services with a total value less than \$25,000 require the approval of the Director of Purchasing. Purchases may not be split or divided to lower the total value under the \$25,000 threshold. The Director of Purchasing 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 Director of Purchasing or his/her designee. Unless otherwise provided, 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 when possible.
- The Howard County Public School System encourages the participation of the minority business community and the achievement of specific participation goals. The Purchasing Office reserves the right to solicit minority firms to provide goods and/or services, either directly or indirectly.
- 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 site at <http://purchasing.hcpss.org> under the "Office Procedures" tab. The manual provides the procedures and direction for the efficient and effective handling of procurements for the school system.

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

CBJ/DP/vw

Attachment: Board of Education Policy 4050