

# **LIVINGSTON PARISH PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## **PURCHASING MANUAL**

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## FOREWORD

The purchasing, procuring, receiving, storing, and distribution of necessary items of supplies and equipment for use in the educational program of a school system in conjunction with the maintenance and operation of the system's school buildings all represent a very sizeable expenditure of money and involve a substantial percentage of the school budget. Consequently, it is necessary that basic policies and procedures be established to serve as guidelines in this area of responsibility.

In government, the purchasing function has become so important that the centralization of responsibility in a purchasing agent is now officially recognized and authorized. Like his counterpart in industry, the purchasing agent for a school system should be the coordinator for all procurement and should represent his board of education in all dealings with vendors. To a greater extent than the buyer for a private industry, the school purchasing agent is governed by federal and state laws and school board regulations which tend to restrict his operations and actions; however, in most instances, these restrictions help the purchasing agent maintain a reputation for fairness in his relationships with vendors.

The purchasing agent has two major and sometimes conflicting responsibilities. He is responsible to the various schools and departments for procuring the necessary items of supplies and equipment when they are needed and, at the same time, he has a responsibility to the taxpayers for purchasing the approved items at the best possible value and for providing adequate records to show that this was done. It will aid the purchasing operation if teachers, principals, and other administrators understand that upon the purchasing agent rests the obligation to assure open competition and to maintain adequate accounting records. However, the purchasing agent must never forget the importance to the educational process of obtaining the right supplies at the right time. In order to serve best that the most important end product, the student, purchasing is the support service for the teacher, principal, custodian, secretary and other individuals who use their services to provide for education of the student. For an efficient operation there simply must be close cooperation between the purchasing agent and the using department, school or person.

The policy manual has been prepared primarily for the guidance of the administrative personnel responsible for purchase and supply; however, it is felt the information and guidelines contained in the document will be of value to the several schools and departments served by the purchasing department.

## PURCHASING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Purchasing Agent performs the following primary functions:

- ❖ Becomes familiar with the products and services commonly used by the school system.
- ❖ Studies price trends and market conditions; keeps informed of sources of supply and new product developments.
- ❖ Studies the Louisiana Public Bid Law relative to the proper acquisition of goods and services. Determines that all purchases are in accordance with the bid law.
- ❖ Contacts vendors relative to supply and equipment availability, purchase orders, and contracts.
- ❖ Assists the warehouse personnel in keeping records for the shipping and receiving for the School System.
- ❖ Purchases all goods, services, and equipment used in the school system upon receipt of properly approved requisitions.
- ❖ Monitors purchase requisitions to insure correctness of data.
- ❖ Maintain an accurate and up to date system of records and files.
- ❖ Prepares bid documents, including notice to bidders, instruction to bidders, specifications, and form a proposal based on School Board Policy.
- ❖ Tabulates bids and prepares recommendations for presentation at Board Meetings.
- ❖ Interviews salesmen and/or vendors.
- ❖ Strives to maintain up to date files of responsible bidders to assure the Board gets the best price available on the desired product, consistent with quality and service.
- ❖ Makes every effort to obtain the highest quality items for the lowest prices.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Purchasing Department for Livingston Parish Public Schools (LPPS) is to support the educational process by obtaining quality materials and services in a timely and cost-effective manner. This involves creating a setting where the department would utilize the most effective and innovative methods for procuring quality goods and services. Responsibilities include providing the school system with policies and procedures that foster an ethical, responsive and efficient environment and recognizing the department's obligations to suppliers and internal customers. The LPPS Purchasing Department is committed to the highest standard of service and continuously strives for improvement in all areas of procurement practices.

## CODE OF ETHICS

LPPS recognizes the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the practices of the purchasing agent. Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The Code of Ethics states the values to which the purchasing agent is committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of procurement profession. The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making.

- Uphold the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships in order to merit the respect and inspire the confidence of the school system and the public served.
- Value the dignity and worth of the services rendered and the social responsibilities assumed as a trusted public servant.
- Give first consideration to the interests of the school system and the betterment of its educational program by obtaining the greatest value from every tax dollar expended.
- Conduct business with all potential and current suppliers in an atmosphere of good faith, devoid of intentional misrepresentation.
- Abstain from personal aggrandizement or personal profit that may be obtained through misuse of public or personal relationships.
- Keep the governmental organization informed, through appropriate channels, on problems and progress of applicable operations by emphasizing the importance of the facts.
- Refuse to accept gifts, gratuities or other things of value from suppliers, which might influence or appear to influence purchasing decisions.
- Enhance the proficiency and stature of the purchasing profession by acquiring and maintaining current knowledge as to procurement laws and guidelines.
- Commit to the highest standard of service and continuously strive for improvement in all areas of procurement practices.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PURCHASING

### The Purchasing Agent

Responsible for the oversight of the various purchases made involving the school board's funding and the implementation of this policy manual. The Purchasing Agent will provide for compliance of this policy, state bid law, and all other applicable provisions of state and federal law governing the purchasing and contracts. This position reports to the Business Manager of the Business Department.

### Types of Purchases

There are several different types of purchases that require different approaches. Non-routine categories of purchases frequently will take longer to process and should be minimized.

- **Non-Stocked Items** – These items are not stocked or warehoused. They may or may not be a standardized item, but they are in such constant demand to be considered a supply or other stocked item.
- **Stocked or Warehouse Items** – These items are used constantly and are stocked routinely. Examples include janitorial supplies, food service supplies, ink/toner and duplicating supplies.
- **Public Emergency or Extreme Public Emergency Purchases** – Louisiana law defines a public emergency as “an unforeseen mischance bringing with it destruction or injury of life or property or the imminent threat of such destruction or injury.” A public emergency must be approved by the Superintendent or his designee.
- **Sole Source Purchases** – Sole source purchases are goods and services available from only one supplier because of patents, copyrights or simply because the vendor is the only one which supplies that product or service. Generally speaking, these purchases are usually exempted from the purchasing requirement but require special documentation for auditing purposes. One example would be customized software for computers.
- **Registrations** – Registrations for conferences, seminars and conventions are approved after permission to travel outside the parish has been authorized by the Superintendent or his designee.
- **Books, Magazines, and Newspapers** – These items include library books, textbooks (print, digital, electronic), magazines, periodicals and newspapers.
- **Contracted Services** – Examples include plumbers, electricians, and carpenters.

- **Insurance** – This includes general liability insurance, property & casualty insurance, errors and omissions insurance, fleet insurance, medical insurance, dental insurance, etc. These purchases are usually exempt from Section 2 – Basic Purchasing Requirements.
- **Investments** – This includes the purchase of certificates of deposits, treasury notes, T-Bills, etc. These purchases are usually exempt from Section 2 – Basic Purchasing Requirements.
- **Professional Services** - Examples include receiving services from medical doctors, occupational therapists, physical therapists, auditors, accountants, and lawyers. These services are usually exempted from the purchasing requirements.
- **Procurement Card Purchases** – Currently not available for LPPS
- **Leases or Rentals** – Leases and rentals require authorization from the Superintendent or his designee. If the lease or rental extends beyond the school year, School Board approval is needed. Additional approval must be granted by the Louisiana State Bond Commission for Lease Purchase Contracts if the lease agreement doesn't have a non-appropriation clause in it.
- **Vehicles and Buses** – Vehicles and buses can only be purchased on state contract or through formal competitive bidding if the total cost exceeds \$29,999.99.

#### Price or Estimated Price Used to Determine Purchasing Method

Louisiana law and School Board Policy utilize one of the purchasing methods listed below to control the purchasing of goods and services.

#### The Purchase Order

The LPPS System purchase order is the seller's authority to ship and invoice for the goods specified on the order. The purchase order is a legal document which symbolizes the acceptance of an offer. When the purchase order is submitted to a vendor, a contractual relationship is established.

The purchase order is the most important of the purchasing forms. While it is unnecessary to employ intricate legal phrasing in the text of the order, its importance as a legally binding document should not be minimized. It should cover definitely and precisely the essential elements of the purchase in such a manner as to preclude future misunderstandings which are invariably costly.



Important elements of the purchase order are:

- Purchase order number
- Date Printed
- Vendor name and address
- Vendor number
- Delivery address
- Quantity of items being ordered
- Unit price
- Shipping cost if applicable
- Extended total
- Sum total
- Accounting fund and account number
- Signature of purchasing agent

#### Authority to Issue Orders

Regulations regarding the issuance of purchase orders are as follows:

1. The school board must approve all formal bids, and
2. The purchasing department has the authority to issue orders under circumstances other than that specifically requiring board approval. Telephone, fax and written quotes are used to secure goods that are not formally bid.

## ORDERING PROCEDURES

LPPS shall require, in accordance with sound principles of financial accounting, appropriate steps to follow in obtaining items purchased in the name of the Board. All such purchases must follow these guidelines in order to be considered by the administrative staff:

1. Determine Needs – Check with your immediate supervisor to determine if the needed items can be supplied through existing inventory within your facility.
2. Determine Funding Authority – If this item is not available within your facility, check with your immediate supervisor to determine if funding is available in the current budget. If funding is not available through the current annual operating budget, you should put your request in writing. Please include a cost estimate and the justification or purpose of the request.
3. Complete Requisition Form – Secure a requisition form online in Munis and fill out completely. The user should indicate the account to be charged. This is subject to approval of the accounting department and may be changed as appropriate. The user should show a suggested source or possible vendor; however, the purchasing department will determine the final source of supply. A description of the articles requested must be clear and concise. It is helpful if a known source or catalog number is included in the description.
4. Obtain Approval of Requisition – Your immediate supervisor will approve your request and secure the approval of the supervisor or director in charge of the area under which the request falls. Areas include, but are not limited to, Special Education, Vocational Education, Title 1, Maintenance, School Food Service and Transportation. All requests for purchases are subject to approval by one of the Assistant Superintendents and the Business Manager.
5. Submit to the Central Office – After the preceding steps have been completed, the requisition will be sent to the purchasing department to secure final approval.
6. Processing Requisition – The purchasing agent will analyze the requisition and take one of four steps, as listed below:
  - a) Issue a purchase order outright;
  - b) Obtain informal quotes before issuing a purchase order;

- c) Buy off of state contract; and
- d) Obtain formal sealed bids.

7. Issuing Purchase Orders – Once the requisition has been processed and/or bids have been approved, the purchase order is sent to the vendor.
8. Receive Merchandise – All supplies and equipment will be delivered to the location that was listed on the requisition, which is mainly the Central Office warehouse. However, LPPS prefers to have large orders of furniture and computers delivered directly to their respective sites.
9. Payment of Purchases – After merchandise is received and inspected, the invoices will be processed by the purchasing agent, and then forwarded to the accounts payable department for payment.

## BIDS AND QUOTATIONS

### Public Works

The LPPS System shall advertise and receive bids through the formal sealed bidding process, for all public works exceeding \$157,700.00 Bids are publicly opened and read aloud for interested parties in attendance. The contract shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder who has bid according to the contract, plans, and specifications advertised. The winning bidder must have a current state license. The board may undertake public works, other than the construction of buildings, with its own employees.

As an evidence of good faith of the bidder, the board shall require bidders for construction, improvement, repair, or other work to attach a bid bond, a certified check, or a cashier's check of not more than five percent (5%) of the contract work to the submitted bid.

When any bid is accepted for construction or doing any public works, a written contract shall be entered into by the successful bidder and the school board, and the successful bidder shall furnish a performance bond for at least 50% of the contract amount, to insure the faithful performance of his or her duties.

Under no circumstances shall there be a division or separation of any public work project whereas the division or separation would have the effect of avoiding the public bid law.

Additional requirements of the Public Bid Law are:

- Construction of buildings may be undertaken with school board employees if the total construction cost is less than \$157,700.00. Otherwise construction of buildings must be contracted out.
- Contracts for construction, which are over \$50,000.00, even if not bid out, will require the use of a state licensed contractor.
- All public works contracts in excess of \$5,000.00 must be reduced to writing and recorded with the Clerk of Court.
- All public works contracts in excess of \$25,000.00 must have a payment bond for at least 50% of the contract amount. A payment bond is for the protection of sub-contractors, laborers, and suppliers.
- Performance bonds on jobs of less than \$25,000.00 are optional.

### Materials and Supplies

The LPPS System shall advertise and receive bids through the formal sealed bidding process for purchases of materials or supplies exceeding the sum of \$30,000.00. The bid shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder who has bid according to the specifications as advertised.

Purchases of materials or supplies of at least \$10,000.00, but not more than \$30,000.00, shall be made by obtaining at least three written, faxed, or emailed quotes. If a vendor is selected because of reasons other than the lowest price, those reasons will be fully documented and notation shall be entered into the file as to the reasons for rejection of the lower quotes.

The public bid law for purchases of materials and supplies of less than \$10,000.00 specifies no procedure. However, the Purchasing Agent advises that at least three telephone quotes for purchases of more than \$1,000.00 be obtained, this insures that the school board receives the best possible goods at the lowest price.

As an alternative, if equipment, materials or supplies are available from a State of Louisiana Contract, the purchasing agent may approve the purchase, if advantageous to the school board. Expenditures may be made by a requisition approved by the supervisor or director in charge of the area under which the request is made and for which funds are budgeted.

### Public Bid Law Application

The Louisiana Public Bid Law, Louisiana Revised Statutes, Title 38, Chapter 10, applies to public works and to purchases of materials, supplies, and vehicles, as stated above.

### Purchases Exempt from Price Quotations or Bids:

- ❖ Professional Services – Doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, physical and occupational therapists, certified public accountants, land surveyors, and real estate appraisers
- ❖ Publications – Textbooks, library books, magazines and newspapers
- ❖ Insurance – General liability, property & casualty, errors & omissions, fleet, faithful performance bonds, student accident, medical, dental and life.
- ❖ Dues & Fees – Registrations for conferences, seminars and workshops; Membership in trade and professional organizations; Processing fees for the

Louisiana State Police to run background checks on prospective employees; Election fees; Sales tax collection fees; Property tax collection fees; or fees to colleges and universities for teacher recruiting.

- ❖ Labor Only Contracts – Computer repair technicians, carpenters, plumbers, painters and electricians
- ❖ Sole Source Purchases – Goods protected by Patents and Copyrights
- ❖ Extreme Public Emergency Purchases as defined by Louisiana Law.
- ❖ State Contract Purchases – Materials, supplies, equipment, furniture, and other items that are available from a State of Louisiana Contract.
- ❖ Piggy Back Purchases – Formal competitive bids by another School Board or other political subdivisions of the State of Louisiana.

### Emergencies

In cases of extreme emergency when time is not sufficient to advertise for bids for public works or material and supplies, the board is permitted by law to declare that a public emergency exists and extend a contract for more than the sums mentioned without going out to bid; however, in such cases every effort shall be made by the administration to secure competitive quotations through negotiations.

### Bid Advertisements

All advertisements for formal bids shall appear in the newspaper selected as the official journal for the school board, except in extreme emergencies as may be declared by the board. Any advertisement for any contract for public works, when published, shall appear once a week for three weeks in the official journal and the first advertisement shall appear at least twenty-five days before the opening of the bids. Public works bids must be posted to an online website for public viewing also.

Any advertisement for the purchase of materials or supplies shall be published two times in the official journal, the first advertisement appearing at least fifteen days prior to the opening of bids.

**In any advertisement, the first publication shall not occur on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.**

The school board shall not issue or cause to be issued any addendum modifying plans and specifications within a period of seventy-two hours prior to the bid opening; however, if the necessity arises to issue an addendum modifying plans and specifications within the seventy-two hour period prior to the bid opening, the opening of bids shall be extended at least seven days, but not to exceed twenty-one days, without the requirement of re-advertising. The addendum shall state the revised time and date for the opening of bids.

### Opening of Bids

All bids shall be opened and read aloud in public in the presence of one or more witnesses, at the time and place designated in the invitation for bids. Each bid, together with the name of the bidder, shall be recorded and opened to public inspection. However, the school board shall not accept or take any bids including receiving any hand delivered bids, on days which are recognized as holidays by the United States Postal Service. The purchasing agent shall review, summarize and report bids to the board with recommendations for final action.

Bids are public records and are subject to inspection and copying; however, the purchasing agent should take precautions to avoid tampering. No comment should be made at the bid opening regarding the low bid or about award. The purchasing agent may state that the bids will be taken under advisement and a recommendation will be made to the school board.

When a purchase is to be made, the purchasing agent strives and is obligated to select the best bid in the interest of the school system. The lowest and best bid is the lowest bid meeting specifications. Should, for any reason, the lowest bid not meet specifications or acceptance, the next acceptable bid is taken. When the best bid is not the lowest received, the purchasing department requests justification. The justification may be requested in writing from the using department giving complete details on why the low bid should be waived. On orders requiring approval of the board, the justification is included in the board report. Each bid is carefully analyzed as to:

- Quality
- Price
- Delivery

If the school board proposes to disqualify any bidder, the school board shall:

- a. Give written notice of the proposed disqualification to the bidder, and include in the written notice all reasons for the disqualification; and
- b. Give bidder, who is proposed to be disqualified, the opportunity to be heard at an informal hearing, at which time bidder is afforded the opportunity to refute the reasons for the disqualification.

### Bid Specifications

Quality is just as important as price, and it is the duty of the purchasing department working in conjunction with the using department to secure the best quality for the purpose intended. Quality buying is defined as the purchase of goods, supplies, materials, equipment, or services that will fulfill but not exceed the requirements for the purpose intended.

Proper specifications aid in obtaining proper quality. The purchasing agent must work closely with the using departments in writing adequate specifications for large purchases and updating current specifications. Bid specifications, briefly defined, are an accurate description of the material to be purchased. Specifications must be:

- Simple, clear, and concise.
- Thorough to discourage the bidding of materials not consistent with the quality requested.
- Capable of being checked. If a specification cannot be checked, it is of little value.
- Capable of being met by several bidders unless there is only one supplier (sole source). "Sole Source" letters are secured from vendors as verification in such an event.
- As fair to the vendors as possible.

Specification may use a brand name and model number to indicate general quality and character of product sought, but must also clearly state the products of similar quality and character will be acceptable (brand name or approved equal).



Certain commodities such as gasoline may require the use of an index price to establish a price that adjusts with market conditions. Competition between bidders is based solely on the “margin over index price” which the bidder offers.

Specifications can call for no more than three alternates and when making an award, alternates must be accepted in the order that they are listed in the solicitation unless doing otherwise has no impact of the award.

### Awarding of Bid

The awarding of a bid is based upon bidder responsiveness as well as the bidder’s capacity to perform. In contracting by sealed bidding, the award goes to the low, responsive, responsible bidder whose price is both fair and reasonable.

A responsive bid is one that conforms to the material requirements of the invitation to bid. It is the bidder’s promise to provide the school system exactly what is being asked for as outlined in the bid document. Any bid that fails to conform to the invitation to bid is rejected as being non-responsive. Factors considered when evaluating bidder responsiveness are based upon the following information:

1. Does the bid conform to the delivery scheduled as specified?
2. Does the bid offer the supplies or services as required in the bid specifications?
3. Does the bid provide clearly written prices on the bid form?
4. Does the bidder offer conditions to the bid that are not authorized?
5. Has the bidder accepted all of the terms and conditions as indicated in the bid?
6. Has the bid been submitted timely and according to the required method of delivery?

The responsiveness requirement stands for the proposition that the purchasing agent must reject any bid that fails to comply with the invitation to bid in any material manner.

Bidder responsibility involves the question of whether the company can or will perform as he has promised. The question of performance is central in determining responsibility. Determining responsibility should be done prior to the bid award and may involve the following:

1. The vendor should have a satisfactory performance record.
2. The vendor must be able to perform the work or services required in the contract.
3. The vendor must be available to perform.
4. The vendor should have no record of criminal offenses in connection with attempting to obtain an entity contract or subcontract.
5. The vendor should be financially sound.
6. The vendor must be able to meet any special standards.

Adequate records and data are important in determining contractor responsibility. The burden of proof lies with the contractor. The prospective contractor can provide data to support its claim of responsibility such as previous records that demonstrate performance, financial records, quality and quantity of personnel employed to do the job, technical level of manufacturing capability, etc. If the prospective contractor is found to be non-responsible, the purchasing agency should document the file with the reasons for the determination of non-responsibility.

#### List of Bidders

After sufficient specifications have been developed by the user and the purchasing department, quotations must be secured. It is the responsibility of the purchasing department to maintain active and up-to-date files on vendors wishing to participate in the bidding and to send interested bidders invitation to quote. Purchasing must also comply with the Louisiana Public Bid Law as stated above.

The purchasing agent is expected to encourage competitive bidding by extending a courteous reception to interested parties, giving equal brands fair consideration and seeking competitive sources of supply.

#### Request for Proposals

Professional services, telecommunications, data processing equipment, software, and equipment leases may be acquired either by public bidding or by means of a Request for Proposals (RFP). An RFP may give greater flexibility in making an award since the proposers may be graded on a variety of criteria. The criteria in an RFP may be set forth and weighted in the process of evaluating proposals. Prospective proposers should be informed in advance of the criteria to be utilized and the weight assigned to each criterion.

The purchasing agent must seek the permission of the school board and its approval of the specifications to be utilized for the RFP. The purchasing agent shall recommend to the school board an award to the responsible offeror whose proposal is determined in writing to be the most advantageous, taking into consideration the price and other evaluation factors set forth in the RFP.

### Rejection of Bids

Any and all bids received in response to an invitation to bid can be rejected if the bidder is not deemed responsible, or the character or quality of the services, supplies, equipment, or labor does not conform to requirements or if the board's interest is otherwise served thereby. "Responsibility" refers to the character or quality of the bidder – whether is an entity with which the school board considers safe doing business. Past performance is considered when determining a bidder's responsibility.

Bids may be rejected when the best price received is unreasonable or unjustified. When appropriate, the purchasing agent may recommend rejection to re-bid for a reasonable price. When the low bid does not meet specifications, bidders shall be notified in writing the reason(s) for the rejection, per R.S. 38:2212.

### Late Bids

All formal invitations to bid must specify a specific date and time for the public opening of the bid. Each vendor has the responsibility for seeing that his bid arrives in time.

Bids may be hand delivered, and a receipt obtained, or bids may be mailed certified, return receipt. Any bid not delivered on time or not hand delivered/mailed certified is returned unopened.

### Sole Source Items

Certain software, testing materials, instructional materials are "Sole Source" items than can only be obtained from one vendor. These items do not have to be bid. The purchasing agent should secure "Sole Source" letters from the vendors as verification and these are kept on file as part of the purchase order documentation.

### Federal GSA Contracts

Purchases may be made from federal GSA contracts, if advantageous to the school board. Such purchases need not comply with the competitive bidding requirements, however, such materials, supplies, or equipment shall not be purchased at a price higher than the price of the same item listed on any available state purchasing contract. No use shall be made of federal General Services Administration supply schedules under the

provisions of this Section without the participation of a Louisiana licensed dealer or distributor.

### Louisiana Preference

Preferences for purchases of materials, supplies, and provisions, produced, grown, manufactured or processed in Louisiana are entitled to a mandatory 10% price preference over products produced elsewhere. There is no preference for a Louisiana vendor, only for Louisiana produced products. Also, the preference does not apply to any school food service purchases.

There is no preference in contracts for public works, only a retaliatory preference. If the state of the out of state low bidder has a preference for its contractors, then the same preference for Louisiana contractors will be given when bids include those out of state contractors here.

For all other products purchased, the school board may choose to allow a bidder offering a Louisiana product and whose price is within 10% of the low bid to receive the award if the bidder is willing to sell at the low bid price.

The Public Bid Law does not allow local preferences for purchases of equipment and supplies (this includes any purchase of materials and supplies over \$10,000.00). However, in keeping with the belief that local businesses help to support our school system, the board allows a local preference of 5% for purchases of goods amounting to less than \$10,000.00. The only exception regarding local preferences is for purchases by school food service, since the U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits any preferences.

### Mistakes in Bidding

Prior to the opening of any bid, the vendor retains the right to withdraw his bid for any reason. The bid will be reaccepted any time prior to the stated opening time and date.

If a mistake is discovered after the opening of the bid but prior to acceptance by the board, relief may be provided at the discretion of the purchasing agent. Requests for relief by withdrawal must be made in writing. To qualify for relief the error must be obvious or have been made under other circumstances considered excusable. The purchasing agent then may grant the vendor's written request to withdraw his bid with or without prejudice. Further, simple and very obvious mathematical errors such as improper placement of a decimal or transposition of numbers or neglecting the carry forward totals from one bid page to the other can be corrected by the purchasing agent with the bidder's knowledge. The corrections of any errors that cannot be clearly defined or that would in any way cause or appear to cause a questionable award are not permitted.

Only the board can correct mistakes that are discovered after the board has already awarded the bid. The vendor must explain his mistake in writing for the board's

consideration at their next regular meeting. Relief may or may not be granted as the board determines, but such relief, if given, may carry a penalty as provided in the specifications.

### Tie Bids

Tie bids, quality being equal, are decided in the following manner:

Method of awarding: Flip of Coin

- Ties between local bidders
- Ties between intrastate bidders – not local
- Ties between out-of-state bidders

Method of awarding: Award to Local Bidder – Ties between local bidder and out-of-town/out-of-state bidder

Method of awarding: Award to Louisiana Bidder – Ties between Louisiana bidder and out-of-state bidder

### Deposits of Good Faith (Bid Bond)

On certain bids the purchasing agent may deem it necessary to require deposits of good faith. A bid bond for 5% of the anticipated contract amount is mandatory on all public works solicitations advertised for bid. A bid bond is optional on any solicitation for the purchase of materials and supplies. The invitation to bid specifies the deposit amount. A certified check, cashier's check, money order, or properly executed bond should accompany the bid proposal. Checks should be made payable to the Livingston Parish Public School System.

Deposits of the bidders are held until the award of the order and/or a contract is made. The deposit of the successful bidder is held until he has completed delivery or services or, if required provided a performance bond.

## RECEIVING AND WAREHOUSING

### Follow-Up and Expediting of Orders

Routinely, the purchasing agent handles, and is ultimately responsible for, the follow-up and expediting of purchase orders.

Other areas requiring follow-up by the purchasing agent are as follows:

1. Price discrepancies;
2. Incorrect or substandard items received from the vendor; and
3. Coordination of delivery schedules.

### Receipt of Purchased Items

Proper receipt of purchased items is just as important as any of the other steps in the purchasing process. Since the purchasing department seldom receives the merchandise ordered, the agent must rely heavily upon the warehouse to be fully informed.

The warehouse should follow certain simple steps in checking goods received:

1. Check to see if the shipment has been delivered to the right address.
2. Check the carton externally for evidence of severe damage that may indicate it has been dropped, crushed, etc. If the carton is damaged, it should be brought to the attention of the driver and noted by him on his delivery receipt. Should a container be so damaged that it can easily be determined that the contents are damaged, the purchasing department should be notified at once. Further instructions will be received.
3. Check the contents of the carton against the packing list and the receiver's copy of the purchase order. Any item appearing on the packing list that is not in the carton should be noted on the driver's receipt form in ink as well as on the Munis program for receiving.
4. Carefully check the quality of the shipment against quality asked for on the purchase order copy. If there is any doubt as to what should be received, notify the purchasing department at once.
5. If the items received are in good condition and complete the purchase order, then the items should be marked on the Munis program as received. This signed certification of receipt permits the prompt payment of the seller's invoice.