

# **HOW TO DO BUSINESS**

## **WITH THE COBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**



# **VENDOR HANDBOOK**

## **2024**



## Table of Contents

Purpose	3
From the Director	4
About the Cobb County School District	5
What We Believe	6
Procurement Services Staff	7
Directions to Procurement Services	8
General Purchasing Information	9
Competition Thresholds	10
Competitive Solicitation Process	11-18
Exceptions to Full & Open Competition	19-21
Vendor Code of Ethics	22
Tips to be Successful	23



## **Purpose of the Vendor Handbook**

The purpose of the Vendor Handbook is to provide information to prospective vendors that will make doing business with the Cobb County School District a professional, effective, and efficient process.

CCSD values each relationship and strives to create a purchasing atmosphere which is equitable, transparent and leads to a mutually beneficial solution for all parties involved.

While this handbook does not encompass every detail of all laws, regulations, policies, and processes governing CCSD purchasing practices, it does provide the basic principles of CCSD procurement methods.

Feel free to call or email the Procurement Services Department with any questions pertaining to this handbook, CCSD Purchasing Regulations or processes. We appreciate your feedback.



## Procurement Services Department

Dear Vendor:

Thank you for your interest in doing business the Cobb County School District. While most governmental purchasing departments function in similar ways, there are often unique characteristics of each entity that are important to consider. The intent of this handbook is to allow all prospective vendors the opportunity to earn business with the District by learning how we function. Full and open competition is the foundation of our purchasing program as we abide by the policies and procedures mandated by the Cobb County Board of Education and all applicable Federal and State regulations.

As mentioned, this publication is an overview of who we are and how we operate. Understanding this information will increase the likelihood of earning business and increasing the return on your investment. We have found that there is a positive correlation between the vendors that understand public purchasing principles and the vendors that are awarded contracts. We look forward to establishing a mutually beneficial business relationship with your organization. Please contact us at 770-590-4524 if we can provide any additional information not included in this manual. Refer to the [CCSD Procurement Services website](#) for information regarding regularly held "How to do Business with CCSD" seminars.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Bates, CPPB, NIGP-CPP  
Director of Procurement Services

### AWARDS

To date, the Cobb County School District (CCSD) Procurement Services Department has received the following awards for "Best Practices" in governmental purchasing:

- The Accreditation for Quality Public Procurement Departments (QPPD) (formally the Outstanding Agency Accreditation Achievement Award (OA4)) - 7 consecutive three-year certifications: 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018 & 2021. CCSD is 1 of 4 government agencies in Georgia, 1 of 4 school districts nationwide, and 1 of 50 total government agencies currently accredited.
- The Achievement of Excellence in Procurement (AEP) - annual award for Nineteen consecutive years: 2005—2023. Currently, CCSD is 1 of 10 agencies in Georgia and 1 of 25 School Districts in the United States and Canada to receive this award.
- Pareto is the most prestigious and highest award of agency achievement in our profession. Pareto may be earned only by agencies that have achieved OA4 accreditation and successfully completed a prescribed peer review process.





## About the Cobb County School District

### Schools

**Total number of schools - 112**

Elementary Schools – 66

Middle Schools - 26

High Schools - 17

Charter Schools - 1

Special Education Centers - 1

Adult Education Center - 1

CCSD also has 7 high school magnet programs for advanced studies in:

- Math, Science & Technology
- International Studies
- Engineering & Biotechnology
- International Baccalaureate
- Performing Arts
- Medical Sciences & Research

22 National Blue Ribbon Schools and 56 Georgia Schools of Excellence

### Students

#### **Enrollment**

- 106,358\*
- 2nd largest district in Georgia
- 23rd largest in United States

#### **Student Demographics**

- White - 32.7%
- Black - 29.9%
- Hispanic - 25.7%
- Asian - 5.9%
- Other - 5.7%

#### **Graduation Rate**

- 87.7%

### Faculty and Staff

- Largest Employer in Cobb County
- Employees— 17,881
- 65 % of Teachers have advanced degrees



## What We Believe

### Vision

To deliver cost reduction solutions while providing outstanding customer service and achieving excellence in governmental purchasing for the Cobb County School District.

### Mission

The mission of the Cobb County School District Procurement Services Department is to be a part of the One Team, One Goal: Student Success by providing students and staff with a selection of quality products, services and vendors for the benefit of the educational process, accomplished through cost effective, moral, ethical, and prudent purchasing practices.

### Values

We strive to provide excellent customer service to the students and staff of the CCSD by ensuring that the responsibilities incumbent upon the procurement operation are performed effectively, efficiently and with the utmost accountability by:

- Providing acceptable quality goods at lowest price;
- Ensuring transparency in use of public funds;
- Protecting against conflicts of interest;
- Maximizing competition;
- Fostering equal and fair competition; and
- Adhering to legal/regulatory guidelines.

### Code of Ethics

The CCSD Procurement Services Department recognizes Public Procurement as a profession and adopts the Code of Ethics promulgated by the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP).

The CCSD Procurement Services Department recognizes that the Code of Ethics sets appropriate standards for purchasing and the CCSD Procurement Services Department expects adherence to the Code of Ethics by all employees of the Department.

The CCSD Procurement Services Department recognizes that employees of the Procurement Services Department are public employees. As such, these employees have the responsibility to uphold the public trust and to refrain from using their position for private benefit.

Therefore, it is the policy of the CCSD Procurement Services Department that employees shall, in addition to all other expectations and job requirements, refrain from conflicts of interest and avoid the appearance of unethical or compromising practices in business relationships, actions and communications.

Reference: [NIGP Code of Ethics](#)



## Procurement Services Staff

### Contact Information

Department Phone: 770-590-4524

Title	Name	Phone	Email
Director	Barbara Bates	770-590-4592	Barbara.Bates@cobbk12.org
Assistant Director	Gary Blount	770-590-4546	Gary.Blount@cobbk12.org
Purchasing Agent	Daphne Farley	770-429-5870	Daphne.Farley@cobbk12.org
Purchasing Agent	Jeanette Gray	770-426-3362	Jeanette.Gray@cobbk12.org
Purchasing Agent	Wendy Bell	770-426-3333	Wendy.Bell@cobbk12.org
Senior Buyer	Debbie Mosher	770-590-4522	Debbie.Mosher@cobbk12.org
Senior Buyer	Christie Allen	770-426-3415	Christie.Allen@cobbk12.org
Buyer	Lyn Vermilya	770-426-3365	Lyn.Vermilya@cobbk12.org
Buyer	Lori Franji	770-426-3364	Lori.Franji@cobbk12.org
Buyer	Stephanie Runge	770-426-3524	Stephanie.Runge@cobbk12.org
Buyer	Kristine Hadaway	770-426-3369	Kristine.Hadaway@cobbk12.org



## Directions to the Procurement Services Department

### DRIVING DIRECTIONS

#### Cobb Parkway/Hwy 41

- Take Cobb Parkway/Hwy 41 North and cross Barrett Parkway
- Go to the 4th traffic light and turn left onto Cobb International Blvd.
- We are approximately 1.6 miles on the left at 6975 Warehouse Bldg.

#### Coming from I-75

- Take 75 to Chastain, Exit 271
- Proceed West on Chastain and it will become Cobb International Boulevard after crossing Cobb Parkway (Hwy. 41)
- Go approximately 1.6 miles to 6975 Warehouse Bldg. on the left

#### Coming from I-285

- Take I-285 to I-75N and follow directions above

#### Coming from: I-575

- Take I-575 to Chastain Road, Exit 3 and go West on Chastain Road
- Proceed West on Chastain and it will become Cobb International Boulevard after crossing Cobb Parkway (Hwy. 41)
- Go approximately 1.6 miles to 6975 Warehouse Bldg. on the left





## General Purchasing Information

### The Purchasing Process

Procurement Services facilitates the purchasing process between CCSD schools/departments and vendors according to all applicable laws, policies and regulations. The purchasing cycle begins when a school or department (end-user) presents a purchasing need to Procurement Services. As the subject matter expert, the end-user is responsible for writing the specifications which detail the need or desire. Jointly, the end-user and procurement representative work to finalize the Invitation for Bid/Request for Quote/Request for Proposal document for solicitation. Responses are evaluated against specifications by both the end-user and procurement staff. Procurement will issue an award letter to the winning vendor(s). From this letter, the end user is able to place orders per the terms and conditions of the contract.

### What We Purchase

CCSD has the need for an extensive variety of commodity goods, finished products and services to support the educational process for the District. This range of needs includes, but is not limited to, office supplies, school buses, paper products, food items, pest control, technology items, sports equipment, band instruments, outsourced services, custodial supplies and much more. The District website, [www.cobbk12.org](http://www.cobbk12.org), contains a link to the Procurement Services website. The link is located under "Departments". The Procurement Services website provides a wealth of information, including a list of current awarded contracts that should prove very informative for potential vendors.

### How We Purchase

CCSD schools and departments make most purchases using one of three methods: (1.) Purchase Order (2.) Procurement Card (3.) Performance Contract. Each school/department enters its own Purchase Orders into the CCSD online financial system. After proceeding through the internal approval process, the order is then automatically sent to the vendor via fax or email. The Procurement Card is a VISA card issued by a local bank. Each school and most departments within CCSD have a procurement card to make low dollar transactions for goods. The cards are restricted by dollar limits and by merchant category codes (MCC's). The MCC's assigned to a business is controlled by the VISA authorities, which assign the codes by business type. Our cards restrict purchases to those MCC's that offer goods and services most likely to be used by a K-12 school system. The Performance Contract is used to pay for services.



## Competition Thresholds

Except for purchases made in accordance with other provisions of CCSD Purchasing Regulations, all purchases for goods or services with District funding shall be based on competitive solicitations as detailed below. Complete CCSD Purchasing Regulations can be viewed by accessing the Procurement Services website via the link on the District website located at [www.cobbk12.org](http://www.cobbk12.org).

**Purchases less than \$9,999 and not already under contract** may be accomplished without multiple quotes. Purchaser should use their best judgment when making the purchase.

**Purchases from \$10,000 to \$99,999.99 and not already under contract** require the Procurement Services Department to make every attempt to secure at least three competitive quotes.

**Purchases totaling \$100,000 or more and not already under contract** require a formal Invitation for Bid (IFB) or Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Procurement Services will issue the IFB/RFP and make every attempt to solicit at least three responsive and responsible offers. Board approval is required for award of IFBs/RFPs greater than \$200,000 with the exception of those products/services included on the Board Pre-Approved List.



## Competitive Solicitation Process

### CCSD utilizes three competitive solicitation methods:

1. Request for Quote
2. Invitation for Bid
3. Request for Proposal

### **Request for Quote (RFQ)**

As previously stated, regulations allow for each school/department to make purchases at the local level within the parameters described under the competition thresholds. Procurement Services must be involved in any competitive purchase over \$10,000.00. Listed below is some general information about an RFQ.

1. The CCSD end-user (school/department) notifies Procurement Services of the good or service needed and provides specifications.
2. Procurement Staff will work with the end-user to prepare a RFQ for the particular product or service.
3. The RFQ is posted to the CCSD Bonfire Interactive Portal <https://cobbk12.bonfirehub.com/portal/?tab=publicContracts>, the Georgia Procurement Registry, and advertised on local public educational TV stations.
4. The RFQ is typically “on the street” for five (5) business days.
5. Vendors are required to complete the RFQ form(s) and submit to the CCSD Bonfire Interactive Portal by the date set forth in the RFQ.
6. Once responses are received, Procurement tabulates results and verifies the validity of the response before sending a recommendation of award to the end-user.
7. After confirmation from the end user, Procurement issues an award letter to the lowest responsive, responsible offeror(s) meeting specifications and requirements in the RFQ and the school or department is then able to proceed with the purchase.
8. Quotations can be written with firm pricing up to a year and may or may not be available to be renewed annually.



## Competitive Solicitation Process

### **Invitation for Bid (IFB)**

Purchases totaling \$50,000.00 or more must be made through the formal Invitation for Bid or Request for Proposal process. The IFB document is used by the CCSD to purchase goods or services and should not be construed as an order by CCSD to make any purchase. The bidder should review instructions and conditions of the IFB and include all information and signatures as required. The bid documents must be returned to Procurement Services before the time and date indicated for the bid opening as determined by the official date/time stamp of CCSD Procurement Services.

1. The CCSD end-user (school/department) notifies Procurement Services of the good or service needed and provides specifications.
2. Procurement staff will work with the end-user to prepare an IFB for the particular product or service.
3. The IFB is posted to the CCSD Bonfire Interactive Portal <https://cobbk12.bonfirehub.com/portal/?tab=publicContracts>, the Georgia Procurement Registry, and advertised on local public educational TV stations.
4. The IFB is typically open for solicitation or “on the street” for a minimum of two weeks (10 business days). During this time, there may be a pre-bid meeting and a question and answer period. All questions and answers are published on the CCSD Interactive Portal for equal access to all vendors.
5. The due date/time stated designates the bid “opening”. Responses received by the deadline indicated are opened and prices are read publicly at the date/time stated in the IFB document.
6. Following receipt of responses, Procurement tabulates results and verifies the validity of the response before sending a recommendation of award to the end-user.
7. After confirmation from the end user and Board Approval when applicable, Procurement issues an award letter to the vendor(s) and the school or department is then able to proceed with the purchase.
8. For all purchases accomplished by sealed bidding, the award will be made to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder meeting terms, specifications and requirements. This is the bidder who submits the lowest price, whose bid meets the specifications, terms, and conditions set forth in the IFB, and who is clearly capable of delivering the product or services specified. The lowest responsible bidder will not, therefore, always be the bidder who has submitted the lowest monetary bid. Award will be made in the best interest of CCSD.
9. Bids can be written with firm pricing up to a year and usually contain an option to renew annually if agreeable to both the successful vendor and the CCSD.



## Competitive Solicitation Process

### **Construction/Capital Projects**

All new construction and improvements to District property must comply with CCSD Administrative Rules FEAE-R, FEAB-R, FGC-R, FGD-R, and FGG-R. This includes any improvements to existing Cobb County School District property, whether new construction, modification, alteration or renovation, either interior or exterior in nature. All Construction/Capital Projects with an estimated cost exceeding \$10,000.00 must be formally solicited by Procurement Services. CCSD generally adheres to the Design/Bid/Build construction delivery method in compliance with all applicable state school board rules, state and/or federal laws.

### **Rejection of a Bid**

The failure of a bidder to observe and follow the instructions and conditions of a bid can constitute grounds for rejection of a bid and/or removal from the list of bidders. CCSD Procurement Services reserves the right to reject any and all offers submitted in response to any solicitation document, to reject any portion thereof, to accept portions of the offer from several bidders, or to waive any minor irregularity. CCSD Procurement Services reserves the right to award a solicitation under the most beneficial economic terms for the CCSD.

### **Common reasons for bid rejection**

1. Any response received after the designated time will be deemed late and will not be considered by the CCSD.
2. Bids containing provisions for late charges, whether designated as interest charges or otherwise, will not be considered for an award. Bidders are instructed to refrain from presenting any such provisions, as it may be grounds to consider the bid disqualified and, therefore, rejected.
3. Procurement Services generally requires a minimum of thirty (30) days to evaluate bids/proposals for award. Therefore, those that limit the acceptance period to less than thirty (30) days may be rejected. When it is determined that a time period other than thirty (30) days is appropriate, the solicitation document will so indicate.
4. Failure on the part of the bidder to submit requested samples within the time specified.



## Competitive Solicitation Process

The addition by the bidder of price escalator clauses, minimum order requirements, or other additional pricing terms not included in the terms and conditions of the solicitation document.

Failure to bid in accordance with an addendum.

The bid contains terms and conditions which are in conflict with the solicitation or CCSD regulations.

### **Request for Proposal (RFP)**

As stated previously, purchases totaling \$50,000.00 or more must be made through the formal solicitation process. The RFP “serves to promote fair and just competition while allowing the procuring entity the flexibility of evaluation through weighted criteria, in contrast to competitive bids that are awarded on price alone.” (*National Institute of Governmental Purchasing*) The RFP is the preferred method when specifications are either 1) not clearly defined or 2) also include service related elements such as installation and/or support. In general, the RFP process is longer than other types of solicitations because it involves an evaluation process that may include vendor presentations and extensive negotiation.

1. The CCSD end-user (school/department) notifies Procurement Services of the good/service needed and provides specifications.
2. Procurement staff will work with the end-user to prepare the RFP document for the particular product or service. During this development stage, the committee responsible for evaluating the responses to the RFP is usually selected.
3. The RFP is posted to the CCSD Bonfire Interactive Portal <https://cobbk12.bonfirehub.com/portal/?tab=publicContracts>, the Georgia Procurement Registry, and advertised on local public educational TV stations.
4. The RFP is typically open for solicitation or “on the street” for a minimum of two weeks (10 business days). During this time, there may be a pre-proposal meeting and a question and answer period. All questions and answers are published on CCSD Bonfire Interactive Portal for equal access to all vendors.
5. The due date/time of the RFP marks the “closing” of the window for submitting proposals and no further information is revealed at that time. The non-cost portion of the vendor response is submitted separate from the cost proposal to ensure that price does not affect the non-cost scoring portion of the process. Since price is not the sole determining factor in the RFP solicitation process, there is no public opening and reading of prices as with an IFB.



## Competitive Solicitation Process

### **Request for Proposal (continued)**

6. The procurement staff begins the RFP evaluation process by tabulating vendor responses, while simultaneously checking for responsiveness and contacting references.

7. The evaluation committee typically has evaluation meetings to review and grade each vendor response. Responses are scored consistently against the specifications, requirements and evaluation criteria published in the RFP document. This step may include clarification of vendor information and may include interviews or demonstrations.

8. In most cases, vendors scoring at least 70% of the possible non-cost points advance to the next phase of evaluation, unless state/federal evaluation rules mandate otherwise.

9. Cost is evaluated following completion of all non-cost scoring. Vendors that make it to this phase may be sent a request for Best and Final Offer (BAFO) where they are allowed to improve their offer by cutting costs, adding services, or some combination of both.

10. The evaluation committee signs a consensus form recommending a vendor(s) for award. The recommendation is then sent to the Board of Education if applicable or awarded and listed on CCSD website for review.



## Competitive Solicitation Process

### **Rejection of a Proposal**

The failure of an offeror to observe and follow the instructions and conditions of a RFP can constitute grounds for rejection of a proposal and/or removal from the list of offerors. CCSD Procurement Services reserves the right to reject any and all offers submitted in response to any solicitation document, to reject any portion thereof, to accept portions of the offer from several offerors, or to waive any minor irregularity. CCSD Procurement Services reserves the right to award a solicitation under the most beneficial economic terms for the CCSD.

#### **Common causes for proposal rejection**

1. Any response received after the designated time will be deemed late and will not be considered by the CCSD.
2. Proposals containing provisions for late charges, whether designated as interest charges or otherwise, will not be considered for an award. Offerors are instructed to refrain from presenting any such provisions, as it may be grounds to consider the bid disqualified and, therefore, rejected.
3. Procurement Services generally requires a minimum of thirty (30) days to evaluate proposals for award. Therefore, those that limit the acceptance period to less than thirty (30) days may be rejected. When it is determined that a time period other than thirty (30) days is appropriate, the solicitation document will so indicate.
4. Failure on the part of the offeror to submit requested samples within the time specified.
5. Failure on the part of the offeror to provide any information requested by the deadline indicated throughout the evaluation process. It is the offeror's responsibility to ensure timely receipt of all requested information.
6. The addition by the offeror of price escalator clauses, minimum order requirements, or other additional pricing terms not included in the terms and conditions of the solicitation document.
7. Failure to propose in accordance with an addendum.
8. The proposal contains terms and conditions which are in conflict with the solicitation or CCSD regulations.





## Competitive Solicitation Process

### **Protest of an Award or Decision to Award**

All protests disputing a competitive solicitation award must be submitted in writing to the Director of Procurement Services within five (5) working days of the award date of the solicitation. All protests disputing irregularities in the solicitation process or any violation of federal or state law with respect to the solicitation process must be submitted in writing to the Director of Procurement Services within five (5) working days of when Vendor knew or should have known of the irregularities or the award date of the solicitation, whichever occurs first. Any protests disputing a single source, sole source or emergency purchase must be submitted in writing to the Director of Procurement Services within five (5) working days of the award date, Board approval date or purchase order issue date, whichever occurs first. Any protest received after the time periods set forth above will not be considered. CCSD will only consider protests from Vendors who submitted a timely bid/proposal for the applicable contract or those who were prevented from doing so due to an alleged irregularity.

The initial protest should include all matters the Vendor wishes CCSD to consider in deciding the protest outcome. At a minimum, the protest must include the following:

1. Name and number of the solicitation (if applicable);
2. School name and project description (if applicable);
3. Nature of protest and grounds therefore;
4. Documentation supporting the protest and/or allegations, including any supporting exhibits and/or evidence;
5. Statement of the specific relief requested; and
6. Signed by a company officer authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the vendor submitting the protest.

Issues not raised in the initial protest may, at CCSD's discretion, be deemed waived with prejudice.

An aggrieved Vendor may supplement its protest with supporting exhibits, evidence or documents that were not available at the time of the initial protest filing. However, such supplemental documentation must be provided to CCSD as soon as such documentation is reasonably available and must be provided prior to any ruling on the protest.



## Competitive Solicitation Process

### **Protest of an Award or Decision to Award (continued)**

Protests should be sent by U.S. Mail, overnight delivery or hand delivery to:

Director of Procurement Services  
Cobb County School District  
6975 Cobb International Blvd.  
Kennesaw, GA 30152

The outside of the envelope should clearly state "Protest IFB/RFP/RFQ xx-xx" in large, bold letters.

Protests will be deemed received when they are physically received by the Procurement Services Department. Emails and faxes are unacceptable methods of delivery and will be rejected.

CCSD will thoroughly review and evaluate all protests and base the decision on the merits of the protest. A written response will be provided by CCSD within five (5) working days of the receipt of the protest. Any appeal must be filed within three (3) working days of receipt of the Director of Procurement Services' protest decision. Protest appeals should be sent in the same manner and to the same address provided above. Appeals will be reviewed by the Senior Executive Director, Business Services and a written response provided. The Senior Executive Director's decision as to any appeal shall be final.

### **Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance**

CCSD adheres to requirements set forth in the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act, as Amended by the Illegal Immigration Reform Act of 2011, OCGA 13-10-90, et al. Applicable documents are included in each solicitation released by CCSD Procurement Services and must be properly executed by responding suppliers (including notarization) in order to be considered for contract award.



## Exceptions to Full & Open Competition

**Procurement Services recognizes the following situations which necessitate exceptions to full and open competition through competitive solicitation:**

**Sole/Single Source Purchase** — When supplies or services are readily available from one responsible source. Use of this authority may be appropriate in situations such as the following, (the examples are not intended to be all-inclusive and do not constitute authority in and of themselves):

- When there is a reasonable basis to conclude that the minimum needs can best be satisfied by unique supplies or services readily available from one source with unique capabilities.
- The existence of limited rights in data, patent rights, copyrights, or secret processes; the control of basic raw material; or similar circumstances make the supplies and services available from one source.
- When purchasing utility services (gas, electric power, etc.), circumstances may dictate that only one supplier can furnish the service.
- When the Superintendent or designee has determined in accordance with a program for standardization or continuity that it is in the best interest of CCSD to limit purchases to specified makes and models of equipment and parts to satisfy needs for additional units or replacement items.
- The school/department must submit a “Sole/Single Source Justification” form to Procurement Services prior to making the purchase which includes the following information:
  - Explain why this is the only product or service that can meet the need of the purchasing agency.
  - Explain why this vendor is the only practical available source from which to obtain this product or service. Include any documentation from the manufacturer or publisher to support the sole source status.
  - Describe what efforts were made to conduct a negotiation to get the best price, delivery, warranty and payment terms for the Cobb County School District. Procurement Services reserves the right to negotiate further with the vendor for discounts, best value, etc.
  - Provide a letter from the vendor confirming sole source status.



## Exceptions to Full & Open Competition

**Emergency Requirement** - Emergency Requirement can be cited when the urgent need for supplies or services will not permit a delay resulting from a competitive solicitation and the school or school system could be seriously injured. Use of this authority applies in those situations where delay in award would result in serious injury, financial or other, to CCSD. The Director of Procurement Services shall approve use of this exception, upon recommendation by the division administrator of the user department. It is the customer's responsibility to gain the appropriate approval.

**Academic Prerogative** - (Do not use if the purchase is using Grant/Federal Funds) Academic Prerogative can be cited when contracted services or academic materials, such as books, posters, displays, games or art materials are needed for compatibility/continuity with existing curriculum programs or to meet state/federal requirements. Academic materials can be selected from a source (such as a catalog) at the discretion of a teaching professional in the performance of teaching duties. Contracted staff development/professional learning services, including training and consultative services, can be selected from a source identified as providing the expertise and availability on the particular topic at the discretion of the Director of Professional Learning, Chief Academic Officer or Superintendent to provide training to teachers and other certified staff members. Additionally, contracted services for guest performers to provide performances, workshops and/or other instructional services for the Performing Arts Magnet School(s) and feeder schools for the Performing Arts Magnet(s) can be selected from a source identified as providing the expertise and availability on the particular topic at the discretion of the Performing Arts Magnet School(s) principal(s). No special authority is necessary, unless the Director of Procurement Services challenges a purchasing action as an abuse of this exception. The Chief Academic Officer, along with the Senior Executive Director of Business Services, shall be the determining authorities for such a challenge.

**School Safety Operations/Police Department** - (Do not use if the purchase is using Grant/Federal Funds) Products and services related to safety and security can be selected at the discretion of a safety/security professional. Prior approval from Procurement Services is not necessary.

**Venues, Products, Events and Services for Student and Staff Activities** - (Do not use if the purchase is using Grant/Federal Funds) The selection of venues, products, events and services for some student activities/products, including but not limited to, field trips, homecoming, prom and graduation activities does not lend itself to the competitive procurement processes utilized by the District. Schools may make such purchases without competitive solicitation or involvement of the Procurement Services Department. District approved accounting practices will be followed in the expenditure of these funds. Venues, products, events and services for staff activities including, but not limited to, meetings, speakers, luncheons, and hospitality events are excluded from the competitive process as well. No special authority is necessary, unless the Director of Procurement Services challenges a purchasing action as an abuse of this exception. The Chief Technology & Operations Officer, along with the Senior Executive Director of Business Services shall be the determining authorities for such a challenge.



## Exceptions to Full & Open Competition

**Professional Services** - (Do not use if the purchase is using Grant/Federal Funds) Contracted professional services such as architectural, engineering, consultative or advisory services can be selected from a source identified as providing the expertise and availability on the particular topic at the discretion of the applicable Department Head. The Department Head will negotiate fees in compliance with state law when applicable. For fees for services not governed by state law, the Department Head will utilize industry standards and market conditions in negotiating fees. No special authority is necessary, unless the Director of Procurement Services challenges a purchasing action as an abuse of this exception. The Chief Technology & Operations Officer, along with the Senior Executive Director of Business Services, shall be the determining authorities for such a challenge.

**Charter Bus Services** – (Do not use if the purchase is using Grant/Federal Funds) Charter bus services are procured in some cases for off-site student events such as, but not limited to, field trips, athletic, music, academic or other events and competitions. Student safety is the primary concern in such instances. Therefore, charter bus services are excluded from the formal competitive solicitation process. CCSD Risk Management will maintain a list of carriers that have been pre-approved for liability purposes.

**Federal Awarding Agency Approval** - (This can only be used if the purchase is using Grant/Federal Funds) The Federal awarding agency or pass through entity expressly authorizes non-competitive proposals in response to a written request from CCSD.

**Federal Awarding Agency Approval** - (This can only be used if the purchase is using Grant/Federal Funds) After a solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.



## Vendor Code of Ethics

**The Cobb County School District (CCSD) Procurement Services Department is a strong proponent of ethical conduct throughout the procurement process. Its agency procurement staff abides by the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, Inc. (NIGP) Code of Ethics. Similarly, the same level of conduct is expected of the vendors who do business with the CCSD.**

A vendor doing business with CCSD shall:

1. Understand the dignity and worth of services rendered by your organization and the social responsibilities assumed as a supplier of goods and services to the CCSD;
2. Avoid attempts to influence CCSD staff with the intent to impair the objectivity or independence of judgment of a purchasing transaction;
3. Avoid any appearance of unethical or compromising practices in business relationships, actions and communications;
4. Identify and eliminate participation of any individual in procurement situations where a conflict of interest may be involved;
5. Understand that CCSD procurement staff shall at no time or under any circumstances, accept directly or indirectly, gifts, favor, service, gratuities or other items of value from your organization;
6. Adhere to all applicable laws, regulations and procedures to ensure the integrity of the CCSD procurement process;
7. Perform or render goods or services in accordance with the agreed upon specifications for which the supplier has contracted with the CCSD;
8. Constantly strive for the highest standards of ethical behavior, trust, respect, fairness, integrity and credibility.

### **Website Instructions for Current Solicitations and Award Information**

Current Solicitations and Contact Awards can be viewed at:

- ◆ [www.cobbk12.org](http://www.cobbk12.org)>Click **Menu**
- ◆ Select **Departments** then choose **Procurement Services**
- ◆ On the Procurement Services website click on **Current Solicitation/Awarded Contract List. CCSD Bonfire Interactive Portal** to view what is available for vendors to submit pricing.
- ◆ Click on Public Contracts to find award letter and evaluation sheets for each contract.

### Tips for successfully doing business with the Cobb County School District

- **Check the CCSD Bonfire Interactive Portal regularly** to stay aware of business opportunities with the District.
- **Read carefully!** Each solicitation contains complete information regarding the product/service sought, date/time to submit responses and how the solicitation will be awarded (i.e. for bids—award will be to the lowest priced responsible, responsive bidder meeting specifications and requirements; RFPs will include evaluation criteria detailing how your response will be scored.)
- **Provide all information requested, in the format requested.**
  - References— We DO check references. Provide all contact information requested, especially fax numbers and email addresses as we prefer to have your references respond in writing.
  - Samples—Provide samples when and if they are requested.
  - Pricing—Provide pricing in the format requested. Procurement must be able to analyze prices on an equivalent basis across all participating vendors. For example, if pricing is requested per carton of twelve items, pricing should be provided as requested rather than per each item, etc.
  - Insurance — Note the insurance requirements in each solicitation and ensure you have the necessary coverage. Proof of the required coverage will be requested prior to award.
- **Ask questions!** Should you have questions concerning a particular solicitation, submit them in the manner stipulated in each IFB/RFQ/RFP document.
- **Submit your response on time!** Allow plenty of time for you to complete your submission before the deadline indicated. Late submissions will not be accepted.
- **Follow-up!**
  - If your company is not successful on a particular solicitation, you may request a debrief to review all submissions. Our files are open for public inspection and our staff is happy to answer questions.