

Administrative Regulation

Bids

AR 3311

Business and Noninstructional Operations

Note: Pursuant to Government Code 54202, school districts are mandated to adopt bidding procedures governing the purchase of equipment and supplies.

Note: The following administrative regulation is for use by districts that have not adopted the provisions of the Uniform Public Construction Cost Accounting Act (UPCCAA). Procedures and bid limits under the UPCCAA are specified in Public Contract Code 22030-22045.

Advertised/Competitive Bids

The district shall seek competitive bids through advertisement for contracts involving an expenditure of \$15,000 or more for a public project. Public project means construction, reconstruction, erection, alteration, renovation, improvement, painting, repainting, demolition, and repair work involving a district owned, leased, or operated facility. (Public Contract Code 20111, 22002)

Note: Pursuant to Public Contract Code 20111, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) is required to annually adjust the monetary requirement for contracts to be competitively bid to reflect U.S. Department of Commerce data. The following optional paragraph allows the amount to escalate automatically once the SPI has made the annual determination. For 2010, the bid limit is \$78,500.

The district shall also seek competitive bids through advertisement for contracts exceeding the amount specified in law, and as annually adjusted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, for any of the following: (Government Code 53060; Public Contract Code 20111)

1. The purchase of equipment, materials, or supplies to be furnished, sold, or leased to the district
2. Services, not including construction services or special services and advice in accounting, financial, legal, or administrative matters
3. Repairs, including maintenance that is not a public project

Maintenance means routine, recurring, and usual work for preserving, protecting, and keeping a district facility operating in a safe, efficient, and continually usable condition for the intended purpose for which it was designed, improved, constructed, altered, or repaired. Maintenance includes, but is not limited to, carpentry, electrical, plumbing, glazing, and other craft work designed to preserve the facility, as well as repairs, cleaning, and other operations on machinery

and other permanently attached equipment. This definition does not include, among other types of work, janitorial or custodial services and protection provided by security forces, nor does it include painting, repainting, or decorating other than touchup. (Public Contract Code 20115)

Note: Pursuant to Public Contract Code 20111, a contract required to be put out to bid must be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. A "responsible bidder" is one who possesses the quality, fitness, and capacity to satisfactorily perform the proposed work. (City of Inglewood-Los Angeles County Civic Center Authority v. Superior Court) In addition, for a bid to be successful, it must conform to specifications. (Konica Business Machines v. Regents of the University of California) Before determining whether or not a bid conforms to specifications or a bidder is a responsible bidder, legal counsel should be consulted, as appropriate.

Unless otherwise authorized by law, contracts shall be let to the lowest responsible bidder who shall give such security as the Governing Board requires, or else all bids shall be rejected. (Public Contract Code 20111)

When letting a contract for the procurement and/or maintenance of electronic data processing systems and supporting software, the Board may contract with any one of the three lowest responsible bidders. (Public Contract Code 20118.1)

The Board shall secure bids pursuant to Public Contract Code 20111 and 20112 for any transportation service expenditure of more than \$10,000 when contemplating that such a contract may be made with a person or corporation other than a common carrier, municipally owned transit system, or a parent/guardian of students who are to be transported. The Board may let this contract to other than the lowest bidder. (Education Code 39802)

No work, project, service, or purchase shall be split or separated into smaller work orders or projects for the purpose of evading the legal requirements of Public Contract Code 20111-20118.4 for contracting after competitive bidding. (Public Contract Code 20116)

Instructions and Procedures for Advertised Bids

The Superintendent or designee shall call for bids by placing a notice at least once a week for two weeks in a local newspaper of general circulation published in the district, or if no such newspaper exists, then in some newspaper of general circulation circulated in the county. The Superintendent or designee also may post the notice on the district's web site or through an electronic portal. The notice shall state the work to be done or materials or supplies to be furnished and the time and place and web site where bids will be opened. The district may accept a bid that has been submitted electronically or on paper. (Public Contract Code 20112)

The notice shall contain the time, date, and location of any mandatory prebid conference, site visit, or meeting. The notice shall also detail when and where project documents, including final plan and specifications, are available. Any such mandatory visit or meeting shall not occur within a minimum of five calendar days of the publication of the initial notice. (Public Contract Code 6610)

Bid instructions and specifications shall include the following requirements and information:

1. All bidders shall certify the minimum, if not exact, percentage of post-consumer materials in products, materials, goods, or supplies offered or sold. (Public Contract Code 22152)

(cf. 3510 - Green School Operations)

2. All bids for construction work shall be presented under sealed cover and shall be accompanied by one of the following forms of bidder's security: (Public Contract Code 20107, 20111)
 - a. Cash
 - b. A cashier's check made payable to the district
 - c. A certified check made payable to the district
 - d. A bidder's bond executed by an admitted surety insurer and made payable to the district

The security of unsuccessful bidders shall be returned in a reasonable period of time, but in no event later than 60 days after the bid is awarded. (Public Contract Code 20111)

3. When a standardized proposal form is provided by the district, bids not presented on the standard form shall be disregarded. (Public Contract Code 20111.5)
4. Bids shall not be accepted after the advertised bid opening time, regardless of whether the bids are actually opened at that time. (Public Contract Code 20112)
5. When two or more identical lowest or highest bids are received, the Board may determine by lot which bid shall be accepted. (Public Contract Code 20117)

Note: Public Contract Code 20103.8 specifies that, in those cases when the bid includes items that may be added to or deducted from the scope of the work in the contract, the bid solicitation must specify the method to be used to determine the lowest bid, as detailed below. Districts should consult with legal counsel, as appropriate, as to the applicability of this law to school districts and other unclear provisions of this law.

6. If the district requires that the bid include prices for items that may be added to or deducted from the scope of work in the contract, the bid solicitation shall specify which one of the following methods will be used to determine the lowest bid. In the absence of such a specification, only the method provided in item #a below shall be used. (Public Contract Code 20103.8)
 - a. The lowest bid shall be the lowest total of the bid prices on the base contract without consideration of the prices on the additive or deductive items.

- b. The lowest bid shall be the lowest total of the bid prices on the base contract and those additive or deductive items that were specifically identified in the bid solicitation as being used for the purpose of determining the lowest bid price.
- c. The lowest bid shall be the lowest total of the bid prices on the base contract and those additive or deductive items that, when taken in order from a specifically identified list of those items in the solicitation, and added to or subtracted from the base contract, are less than or equal to a funding amount publicly disclosed by the district before the first bid is opened.

The lowest bid shall be determined in a manner that prevents any information that would identify any of the bidders or proposed subcontractors or suppliers from being revealed to the district before the ranking of all bidders from lowest to highest has been determined. (Public Contract Code 20103.8)

7. Any subsequent change or alteration of a contract shall be governed by the provisions of Public Contract Code 20118.4.

8. After being opened, all submitted bids become public records pursuant to Government Code 6252 and shall be made available for review pursuant to law, Board policy, and administrative regulation.

(cf. 1340 - Access to District Records)

Alternative Bid Procedures for Technological Supplies and Equipment

Rather than seek competitive bids, the Board may use competitive negotiation when it makes a finding that a district procurement is for computers, software, telecommunications equipment, microwave equipment, or other related electronic equipment and apparatus. Competitive negotiation shall not be used to contract for construction or for the procurement of any product that is available in substantial quantities to the general public. (Public Contract Code 20118.2)

The competitive negotiation process shall include, but not be limited to, the following requirements: (Public Contract Code 20118.2)

1. The Superintendent or designee shall prepare a request for proposals (RFP) that shall be submitted to an adequate number of qualified sources, as determined by the district, to permit reasonable competition consistent with the nature and requirement of the procurement.
2. Notice of the RFP shall be published at least twice in a newspaper of general circulation, at least 10 days before the date for receipt of the proposals.
3. The Superintendent or designee shall make every effort to generate the maximum feasible number of proposals from qualified sources and shall make a finding to that effect before proceeding to negotiate if only a single response to the RFP is received.

4. The RFP shall identify all significant evaluation factors, including price, and their relative importance.
5. The Superintendent or designee shall provide reasonable procedures for the technical evaluation of the RFPs received, the identification of qualified sources, and the selection for the award of the contract.
6. The Board shall award the contract to the qualified bidder whose proposal meets the evaluation standards and will be most advantageous to the district with price and all other factors considered.
7. If the Board does not award the contract to the bidder whose proposal contains the lowest price, then the Board shall make a finding setting forth the basis for the award.
8. The Board, at its discretion, may reject all proposals and request new RFPs.
9. Provisions in any contract concerning utilization of small business enterprises that are in accordance with the RFP shall not be subject to negotiation with the successful proposer.

Bids Not Required

Note: The following paragraph lists those items that may be purchased through a "piggybacked" bid; see the accompanying Board policy. Many districts have used the piggyback procedure to purchase portable and relocatable buildings. The Attorney General has opined (89 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 1 2006) that a district may not rely on the piggyback exception to contract for the acquisition and installation of factory-built modular building components (i.e., roofs and walls) for installation on a permanent foundation. However, this opinion does not apply to typical portable or relocatable single-classroom buildings, because they lack a permanent foundation and building mobility. Districts considering using the piggyback process for relocatables, portables, modulars, and the like should consult district legal counsel. While Attorney General opinions are not binding, they are often given deference by the court and may also be considered by the State Allocation Board when making funding decisions.

Without advertising for bids and upon a determination that it is in the best interest of the district, the Board may authorize by contract, lease, requisition, or purchase order, another public corporation or agency to lease data-processing equipment or to purchase materials, supplies, equipment, automotive vehicles, tractors, and other personal property for the district in the manner that the other public corporation or agency is authorized to make the leases or purchases from a vendor ("piggyback"). (Public Contract Code 20118)

(cf. 3300 - Expenditures and Purchases)

Alternatively, if there is an existing contract between a public corporation or agency and a vendor for the lease or purchase of personal property, the district may authorize the lease or purchase of personal property directly from the vendor by contract, lease, requisition, or

purchase order and make payment to the vendor under the same terms that are available to the public corporation or agency under the contract. (Public Contract Code 20118)

Supplementary textbooks, library books, educational films, audiovisual materials, test materials, workbooks, instructional computer software packages, or periodicals may be purchased in any amount without taking estimates or advertising for bids. (Public Contract Code 20118.3)

(cf. 6161.1 - Selection and Evaluation of Instructional Materials)
(cf. 6161.11 - Supplementary Instructional Materials)
(cf. 6163.1 - Library Media Centers)

Perishable commodities, such as foodstuffs, needed in the operations of cafeterias may be purchased through bid or on the open market. (Education Code 38083)

(cf. 3551 - Food Service Operations/Cafeteria Fund)

Note: Pursuant to Public Contract Code 20113, a district may award contracts without competitive bidding in emergency situations, as specified below. In *Marshall v. Pasadena Unified School District*, a court held that the definition of "emergency" in Public Contract Code 1102 is applicable. Public Contract Code 1102 defines "emergency" as a "sudden, unexpected occurrence that poses a clear and imminent danger, requiring immediate action to prevent or mitigate the loss or impairment of life, health, property, or essential public services."

In an emergency when any repairs, alterations, work, or improvement to any school facility is necessary to permit the continuance of existing school classes or to avoid danger to life or property, the Board may, by unanimous vote and with the approval of the County Superintendent of Schools, contract for labor and materials or supplies without advertising for or inviting bids or may authorize the use of day labor or force account for the emergency purpose. (Public Contract Code 20113)

(cf. 3517 - Facilities Inspection)
(cf. 9323.2 - Actions by the Board)

Bids shall also not be required for day labor under circumstances specified in Public Contract Code 20114. Day labor shall include the use of maintenance personnel employed on a permanent or temporary basis. (Public Contract Code 20114)

Sole Sourcing

Note: "Sole sourcing" is the practice by which one brand name product is specified, although comparable, competitive products are available. Public Contract Code 3400 allows sole sourcing in limited circumstances and requires that the specification of the designated product be followed by the words "or equal," so that bidders for such a contract are able to base their bids on the use of other products of equal functionality that may result in cost savings for the district. The following section is optional.

In any contract for the construction, alteration, or repair of school facilities, the Superintendent or designee shall not draft the bid specification in a manner that, either directly or indirectly, limits bidding to any one specific concern or calls for a designated material, product, thing, or service by a specific brand or trade name, unless the specification designating the specific material, product, thing, or particular brand name is followed by the words "or equal" so that bidders may furnish any equal material, product, thing, or service. In such cases, the bid specification shall provide a time period, before and/or after the award of the contract, for the contractor to submit data substantiating the request for substituting the designated material, product, thing, or service. If no such time period is specified, the contractor may submit the data within 35 days after the award of the contract. (Public Contract Code 3400)

However, the Superintendent or designee may designate a specific concern, material, product, thing, or service by brand or trade name (sole sourcing), if the Board has made a finding, described in the invitation for bids or RFP, that a particular material, product, thing, or service is designated for any of the following purposes: (Public Contract Code 3400)

1. To conduct a field test or experiment to determine its suitability for future use
2. To match others in use on a particular public improvement that has been completed or is in the course of completion
3. To obtain a necessary item that is only available from one source
4. To respond to the Board's declaration of an emergency, as long as the declaration has been approved by four-fifths of the Board when issuing the invitation for bid or RFP

Prequalification Procedure

Note: The following optional section is for use by districts that wish to establish a prequalification procedure for any contract for which bids are legally required.
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For any contract for which bids are legally required, the Board may require that each prospective bidder complete and submit a standardized questionnaire and financial statement. For this purpose, the Superintendent or designee shall supply a form which requires a complete statement of the bidder's financial ability and experience in performing public works. The information shall be verified under oath in the manner in which civil law pleadings are verified. The questionnaires and financial statements shall not be public records and shall not be open to public inspection. (Public Contract Code 20111.5)

Prospective bidders shall submit the questionnaire and financial statement at least five days before the date fixed for public opening of sealed bids. (Public Contract Code 20111.5)

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a uniform system for rating bidders on the basis of completed questionnaires and financial statements in order to determine the size of contracts on which each bidder is qualified to bid. Bidders must be deemed prequalified by the district at least one day before the fixed bid-opening date. (Public Contract Code 20111.5)

The district may establish a procedure for prequalifying bidders on a quarterly basis and may authorize that prequalification be considered valid for up to one calendar year following the date of the initial prequalification. (Public Contract Code 20111.5)

Protests by Bidders

Note: The law does not specify a procedure for handling protests by bidders. The following optional section provides one such procedure and should be modified to reflect district practice.

A bidder may protest a bid award if he/she believes that the award is inconsistent with Board policy, the bid's specifications, or is not in compliance with law. A protest must be filed in writing with the Superintendent or designee within five working days after receipt of notification of the contract award. The bidder shall submit all documents supporting or justifying the protest. A bidder's failure to file the protest documents in a timely manner shall constitute a waiver of his/her right to protest the award of the contract.

The Superintendent or designee shall review the documents submitted with the bidder's claims and render a decision in writing within 30 working days. The Superintendent or designee may also convene a meeting with the bidder in order to attempt to resolve the problem.

The bidder may appeal the Superintendent or designee's decision to the Board. The Superintendent or designee shall provide reasonable notice to the bidder of the time for Board consideration of the protest. The Board's decision shall be final.

(3/06 7/08) 11/10

Adopted: April 18, 2007
Revised: March 13, 2013

Gravenstein Union School District
Sebastopol, California