



HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

VENDOR MANUAL

APRIL 29, 2019

(Non-binding nature of this manual – This publication is designed solely to provide general information to those wishing to do business with the MCSD. This manual does not have the force or effect of any law, rule, or regulation and should not be relied upon by bidders in determining their legal actions and conduct.)



Muscooee County School District Purchasing Department

Section 1 – Purpose of the Muscooee County School District (MCSD) Vendor Manual

Thank you for your interest in the Muscooee County School District. Our intent is to allow all vendors the opportunity to earn business with the MCSD. The purpose of the MCSD vendor manual is to provide a guide for how to do business with the Muscooee County School District. Through this manual, current and prospective MCSD vendors will be informed of the process to follow when selling goods and services to our school district. Vendors will gain a better understanding of the policies and procedures we follow which are mandated by the Muscooee County School District Board of Education and applicable Federal and State regulations.

It is our hope that this manual will enhance the transparency of the procurement process in order to enable our end-users to purchase the items needed to provide high-quality instruction to the children in our school district, and at the same time to afford open competition and accurate accounting that will engender public trust.

We believe that all procurement procedures should be conducted in a fair and impartial manner. We believe that we should seek competition to the maximum degree possible because, conducted properly, competitive procurement responds to user needs, results in public confidence in the integrity of public purchasing, and generally brings the most favorable prices. We strive for administrative efficiency in our efforts to obtain high quality goods and services at the best value.

We wish to partner with informed vendors that share these beliefs and want to work together with the MCSD to create a win-win situation for all involved parties.

This manual cannot, and does not, encompass every detail of all the laws, regulations, and procedures governing our purchasing function. Feel free to contact the MCSD Purchasing Department at 706-748-2350 with any questions pertaining to this manual or MCSD purchasing procedures. We appreciate your feedback.



Muscogee County School District Purchasing Department

Section 2 – MCSD Background

The Muscogee County School District is the public school system serving the Columbus, Georgia area. The School District is a political sub-division of the State of Georgia formed by a 1949 act of the Georgia Legislature. Ninety-three percent of school-age children in Columbus attend the MCSD public schools. Approximately 32,500 students attend our 57 schools and alternative programs.

- ❑ 32 Elementary Schools (PreK-5)
- ❑ 12 Middle Schools (6-8)
- ❑ 9 High Schools (9-12)
- ❑ 4 Alternative Programs
- ❑ Columbus Museum (Second Largest in Georgia)
- ❑ Chattahoochee Valley Libraries
(Eight libraries in four counties)

MCSD is the area's second largest employer—after neighboring Fort Benning—with over 6,200 employees. Nine community members serve on an elected Board of Education. The MCSD is accredited by The AdvancED Accreditation Process, a comprehensive program of evaluation and external review dedicated to helping schools, districts, and education providers continuously improve.

The school district provides support activities to the schools in the areas of Teaching and Learning, Student Services, Transportation, Plant Services, Construction Services, Financial Services, Human Resources, School Nutrition, Print and Mail, Records Management, Security, Warehouse Services, and Information Services. The district purchases a wide assortment of goods and services in support of the school district operations with an annual General fund operating budget of approximately \$270 million and a total budget in excess of \$330 million across all funds.

Information about the school system can be found on our website at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/> or by calling the MCSD main number 706-748-2000.



Muscokee County School District Purchasing Department

Section 3 – Purchasing Department Mission, Values, and Purpose

Mission Statement:

Establish and monitor a system-wide procurement and inventory process which is effective in obtaining high quality products and services, observing all applicable laws/rules/regulations, and ensuring transparent accountability in support of the school district's core mission of providing engaging and challenging instruction to all students

Values and Guiding Principles:

- Accountability
- Ethics
- Impartiality
- Professionalism
- Service
- Transparency

Purpose:

- Establish a procurement process for the school district which is effective in obtaining best-value high-quality products and services
- Lead the school district in proper purchasing procedures and best practices
- Authorize purchase orders, contracts, inventory orders and bids for the purpose of ensuring compliance with district, state and federal regulations, policies, and procedures
- Work with vendors for the purpose of determining their capability to perform specifications and for the purpose of affording open competition in all procurement actions
- Monitor purchase orders, contracts, bids, inventory orders, and budgetary expenditures to ensure transparent accountability that will support the district's mission and engender public trust

Services provided:

- Procurement policy and guidance
- Invitations to Bid and Requests for Proposals
- Purchase order processing
- Purchasing card management
- Vendor relations management
- Employee travel reimbursement request processing
- Warehouse inventory management and services



Muscogee County School District Purchasing Department

Section 4 – MCSD Purchasing Department Staff and Location:

Muscogee County Public Education Center

Physical Address: 2960 Macon Road, Columbus GA 31906

Purchasing Department – Room 3010 Mailing

Address: P.O. Box 2427, Columbus GA 31902 Main Number 706-748-2350

Monday thru Friday, 8am to 5pm Eastern time

Edwin Joseph, Director of Purchasing and Supply Management

706-748-2349 joseph.edwin@muscogee.k12.ga.us

Aileen Arrighi, Senior Buyer - Invitations to Bid and Requests for Proposal 706-

748-2352 arrighi.aileen@muscogee.k12.ga.us

Charla McGruder, Buyer - Purchasing Cards

706-748-2351 mcgruder.charlamenta@muscogee.k12.ga.us

Tolita Middlebrooks, Buyer – Vendor Management and Travel

706-748-3228 middlebrooks.tolita@muscogee.k12.ga.us

Jerry Rumph, Buyer - Purchase Requests

706-748-2330 rumph.jerrell.d@muscogee.k12.ga.us

Gary Webb, Property and Warehouse Administrative Specialist - Property

706-748-2350 webb.gary.k@muscogee.k12.ga.us

Muscogee County School District Warehouse and Fuel Pumps 5908

Whitesville Road, Columbus, GA 31904

Buildings 3 and 4 – Main Number 706-748-2888 Monday

thru Friday, 7am to 4pm Eastern time

Ken McPhaul, Warehouse Supervisor - Stores Inventory/Warehouse Services

706-748-2894 mcphaul.kenneth@muscogee.k12.ga.us



Muscogee County School District Purchasing Department

Section 5 – Types of Purchases Made By MCSD:

The MCSD has the need to purchase an extensive variety of materials and services to support the educational needs of our students. Some examples are:

- School Buses
- School Instructional Supplies, Teaching Aids, and Equipment
- Textbooks, Library Books and Periodicals
- Classroom Science and Art Equipment and Supplies
- Other curriculum equipment and supplies for K-12 schools
- Special Education Services, Supplies, and Equipment
- Janitorial Services and Products
- Landscaping Services
- HVAC/Plumbing/Electrical/General Maintenance Supplies and Equipment
- Computer Hardware/Software/Networking Equipment
- Office Supplies
- Furniture
- Audio Visual Equipment
- Building Construction, Architectural, and Design Services
- Telecommunications Services and Equipment
- Vehicle parts, tires, batteries, repair services
- Insurance and Insurance services
- Consulting services
- Food and Food Service Supplies and Equipment

Construction Purchases – All construction related purchases are made through the MCSD Construction Department. Vendors offering these types of products or services should contact the Construction Department directly at 706-748-3262. Procurement of construction related equipment and services do not follow all the processes outlined in this manual. Also, the Construction Department has additional requirements outside the information contained in this manual.

Activity Fund Purchases - Schools raise Activity Funds from fundraisers held for a specific purpose. All purchases made with Activity Funds are completed by each individual school. These purchase requests do NOT go through the MCSD Purchasing Department for approval. Vendors should contact each school if interested in purchases made with Activity Funds.



Muscofee County School District Purchasing Department

Section 6 – MCSD Board Policy and Purchasing Thresholds:

The MCSD Board policy manual can be found online at

https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SB_ePolicy/SB_PolicyOverview.aspx?S=4121.

Policies found in Section D (Fiscal Management) and in particular Policies DJE through DJG pertain to the MCSD purchasing process.

The **Code of Ethics** is to be followed by Board members and any MCSD employee responsible for making purchasing decisions. The Code states that all vendors are to be given fair and impartial consideration. Competition is encouraged. Employees cannot accept personal gifts from vendors. Employees cannot purchase items for personal use through the MCSD tax exemption and discounts. Items that will become the personal property of an individual may not be purchased with tax funds.

Purchasing Authority: All purchases are made by duly authorized written purchase orders or purchasing card transactions.

- Our school district uses two types of purchase orders – Regular Purchase Orders and Local Purchase Orders. Regular Purchase Orders encumber budgeted funds and are signed by the Director of Purchasing. Local Purchase Orders use school/department activity funds and are signed by the Principal or Department Head.
- The school district shall not be liable for orders for goods and services accepted by a vendor without a MCSD purchase order or purchasing card number given at the time the order is placed. Vendors who commence work before they have received a valid purchase order number or purchasing card number do so at their own risk.
- Any changes to purchase orders after they are received by the vendor must be approved by MCSD before the changes can be made and the items are shipped or the services performed.
- **VENDORS SHOULD NOT ACCEPT AN ORDER WITHOUT FIRST OBTAINING A PURCHASE ORDER NUMBER OR A PURCHASING CARD NUMBER.**



Muscogee County School District Purchasing Department

- Contracts \$15,000 and over must be signed by the Superintendent and/or the Chairman of the Board. Contracts under \$15,000 can be signed by the Division Head.

Purchasing Thresholds: (Orders cannot be split to circumvent the thresholds.)

- Purchases of products or services using tax-supported funds with a total transaction cost of \$15,000 or less may be made non-competitively and may be made without Board approval. (End-users are encouraged to get quotes.)
- Except as otherwise specified herein, purchases of products or services using tax-supported funds with a total transaction cost of more than \$15,000 must be purchased affording free competition through bids or proposals coordinated through the Purchasing Department and must be approved by the Board.
- Purchasing Card single transactions cannot exceed \$2,500.

"Free Competition" may be accomplished by "competitive bids" (including traditional paper based bids and "Electronic Bids"), "competitive proposals," and purchasing from properly competed governmental, educational, and/or consortium contracts.

Exceptions to Competition: A few types of purchases are exempt from the competitive process and may be purchased without competitive bids or competitive proposals. These types of purchases are:

- Emergency Purchases – delay will result in harm, economic loss, or substantial disruption of instruction
- Volatile Market Items - products exhibiting extreme market volatility where prices fluctuate constantly
- Sole Source - only one source of supply or a particular brand name or product is required
- Textbooks, films, slides, video tapes, newspapers, library books, reference materials, subscriptions, manipulatives, computer programs and other media from a publisher, distributor or agent
- Tests, test scoring sheets and test scoring services of a standardized examination from the publisher or licensed agent
- Agreements for maintenance service from the original vendor or authorized agent of the installed equipment or products if the same cannot be competitively bid and does not exceed five percent of the current cost



Muscooee County School District Purchasing Department

- A renewal or continuance of an existing purchase agreement, bid, proposal, contract, rent, lease or purchase order duly authorized by the Board or its agent when the specific number of continuances has been approved by the Board. In no case should any one such continuance or renewal extend the contract for a period of more than one year in duration, and no such renewable agreement shall cumulatively exceed five years in duration and no such renewable agreement shall exceed five percent of the current cost
- Additional purchases of like equipment, materials, supplies, services, rentals or leases previously approved may be made provided the additional order is at the same or less price within one year of the initial purchase, and if the total of such orders is in excess of \$15,000, Board approval shall be obtained
- Items from an existing contract or bid from a state or federal governmental agency, including consortia of states, although system personnel are encouraged to seek lower prices when possible
- Professional Services

Vendor Preference: Preference will be given to the local bidders/businesses in the event of equal bids or proposals. Bids or proposals are considered equal if the following factors are exactly the same: quality of product, suitability of product, price, conformance to specifications, and delivery time. General reputation of the business and past service to the school district are factors that will also be considered. If equal bids or proposals are submitted by two or more local businesses, the award will be decided by a coin toss. Such preference shall not sacrifice price or quality. Local Business for the purpose of this policy is defined as a business having a main office or an independently managed office located in Columbus, Georgia at a permanent fixed location.

Equal Opportunity Policy for Competitively Bid Contracts: The vendor/contractor will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, disability or national origin. The vendor/contractor shall take appropriate action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment without regard to their race, color, religion, sex, disability or national origin. Such action shall include, but not limited to the following; employment, upgrading, demotion, transfer, recruitment, layoff, termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation and training.



Muscofee County School District Purchasing Department

Section 7 –MCS D Methods of Procurement:

Purchasing Cards (PCards) –

- Purchasing cards are used to make payment at the point of sale. The transaction is paid for at the time of order. PCards are NOT used to order products and pay the invoice when the products are received at a later time.
- Only the cardholder may use the PCard and must supply the PCard number as authorization to purchase.
- The school district uses a VISA purchasing card through the State of Georgia contract with Bank of America.
- Each purchasing card transaction requires that an itemized receipt be given to the cardholder making the purchase. No tax should be charged.
- The PCard single transaction limit is \$2,500
- Cardholders cannot use the PCard to purchase products and services shown on the PCard Restricted Purchases List

Local Purchase Order (LPO) –

- Local purchase orders are used when purchasing with ACTIVITY FUNDS only
- The Principal at each school is the final approver of the local purchase orders. (LPOs for \$2,500 or more must be approved by the MCS D Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer).
- The local purchase order is sent to the vendor directly from the school. These orders are not processed through the Purchasing Department.

Purchase Order (PO) –

- Purchase orders are used when purchasing with BUDGETED FUNDS only
- The Director of Purchasing is the final approver of purchase orders
- The Purchasing Department is responsible for distributing the purchase order to the vendor. This distribution is usually completed automatically by fax or email through the electronic purchase order system.

Request for Quote – End-users are encouraged to always compare pricing when making any purchase. The best method to use for this comparison is documented quotes from at least three vendors.



Muscofee County School District Purchasing Department

Competitive Processes –

- Purchases over \$15,000 require a competitive process managed by the Purchasing Department.
- The competitive processes used by the MCSD are the Invitation to Bid (ITB) and the Request for Proposal (RFP).
- ITBs and RFPs are emailed to vendors that have expressed an interest in receiving invitations for certain products and services. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT VENDORS REGISTER WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT SO THAT THE VENDORS INTEREST IS KNOWN.
- Every attempt is made to find other possible vendors to increase the level of competition and find the best solution for the school district.
- ITBs and RFPs are advertised on the MCSD website <https://www.muscofee.k12.ga.us/Divisions/Finance/Vendors/Index>.
- Vendors are encouraged to periodically review the solicitations posted on the website.
- The laws of the State of Georgia shall prevail concerning all purchases and services made from these competitive processes. Venue shall be in the court of competent jurisdiction in Columbus, Muscofee County, Georgia. Several Georgia statutes proscribe jurisdiction and venue for different types of cases that involve state agencies. Any provision that requires legal action that would require travel by MCSD employees likely violates the Constitutional provisions.
- In responding to these competitive processes, the vendor agrees to abide by all Muscofee County School District Board policies to be found at https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SB_ePolicy/SB_PolicyOverview.aspx?S=4121
- Responses received after the due date and time as stated in the solicitation will not be accepted
- Communication about any active competitive process shall be made with only the Purchasing Department. Only written communication is considered official.
- Procedures for formal protests of bids are available at <https://www.muscofee.k12.ga.us/Divisions/Finance/Vendors/Index> under the Vendor Information tab.
- Open records requests of past solicitations and awards can be submitted to openrecords@muscofee.k12.ga.us. MCSD is subject to Georgia's Open Records



Muscogee County School District Purchasing Department

Act at OCGA s 50-18-70, et. seq. This law allows individuals to view MCSD records [whether maintained electronically or through paper] and / or make copies, unless the records are specifically exempted by the law. The law does contain specific language addressing valid trade secrets, but requires specific action from the vendor to ensure confidentiality.

- Any addenda will be posted to the Purchasing Department webpage at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/Divisions/Finance/Vendors/Index> , and vendors are responsible for checking the website to ensure that these official documents are incorporated in their response.
- In responding to these competitive processes, vendors will be required to certify that they are in compliance with laws regarding non-collusion, debarment, and Georgia Security and Immigration.
- The vendor is obligated to indicate whether any of the information submitted to MCSD constitutes a “trade secret”.
- The terms, conditions, and specifications of the solicitation document and the award document will be incorporated in any contract/purchase order with the MCSD. For this reason, when responding, the vendor must note in writing any exceptions they have to the information contained in the solicitation.
- In submitting a response, the vendor warrants that any goods or services supplied to the MCSD meet or exceed specifications set forth in the solicitation documents.
- Vendors who do not adhere to the terms and conditions stated in the solicitation and who do not fulfill the obligations from an awarded agreement shall be subject to removal from the MCSD bidder’s list for a minimum of one year.
- Vendor insurance requirements and bonding requirements will be stated in each individual solicitation. MCSD is a member of an interlocal risk management agency, the Georgia School Board Association (GSBA). GSBA Risk Management Services (RMS) offers protection through its group-self-insurance plans for workers’ compensation, property and liability risks. Provisions mandating the MCSD to purchase insurance, increase policy limits, or name the vendor or other third party as an additional insured party cannot be included in contracts with the MCSD.
- The MCSD cannot enter into an agreement whereby it agrees to indemnify or hold harmless a vendor or other third party. This language typically looks like “agrees to hold harmless from any liability, personal injury, or property



Muscogee County School District Purchasing Department

damage arising out of the performance...” There are three legal principles that come into play here.

- First, indemnification provisions have been held by Georgia courts to be an unauthorized attempt to waive the State’s sovereign immunity. An opinion of the Georgia Attorney General (AG) counsels that an unauthorized attempt to waive sovereign immunity through an indemnification agreement in a contract would be ultra vires and void. 1980 Op. Atty. Gen. 80-67. The Georgia Supreme Court has held that an indemnification clause is invalid where the governmental entity didn’t have express statutory authority to waive its sovereign immunity. *CSX Transp., Inc. v. City of Garden City*, 588 S.E.2d 688 (Ga. 2003).
- Second, an indemnification violates Georgia’s Constitutional ban on gratuities. The Georgia Constitution does not allow any donation or gratuity or the forgiving of any debt owed to the public. Ga. Const. Art. III, s VI, Para VI (a). The Georgia AG has issued an opinion expressly stating that indemnification provisions are gratuitous undertakings in violation of the gratuities clause. 1980 Op. Atty. Gen. 80-67.
- Third, the Georgia Constitution does not allow the credit of the state to be pledged or loaned to any individual, company, corporation, or association. Ga. Const. Art. VII s IV Para VIII. The AG has opined that the constitutional debt restriction does not allow any state agency from contractually agreeing to any indemnification or “hold harmless” clause. See 1980 Op., supra. An indemnification is open-ended in nature, because at the time of contracting, neither party knows if nor when it will be triggered. As such, it violates the debt restriction.
- The **Invitation to Bid (ITB)** is a method of procurement used to solicit competitive bid pricing for the supply of goods and/or services.
 - Specifications are clear and defined by the school district
 - Bid awards are made to the responsive and responsible bidder with the lowest price that meets the specifications. Cost is the primary basis of award.
 - ITBs are emailed to vendors and responses are emailed back from the vendor. Pre-bid conferences may be held depending on the circumstances of the ITB. Bid openings are done electronically.
 - Bid summary pricing will be shared with all participating vendors through a Notice of Recommendation.



Muscokee County School District Purchasing Department

- After Board approval, the Notice of Award will be sent to all participating vendors.
- A purchase order (and sometimes a contract) will be sent to the awarded vendor. A fully executed contract and an authorizing purchase order number are required before any work from the award can begin.
- ITBs are usually awarded for a one time purchase of goods or services to meet a particular need or for a fixed period agreement which is for 12 months and provides for the on-going purchase of goods or services for the specified contract period. These agreements are most often written with an option to renew annually if mutually agreeable to both parties.
- The **Request for Proposal (RFP)** is another method of procurement used to solicit competitive bid pricing for the supply of goods and/or services.
 - The RFP is used when the project does not lend itself to the creation of clear and accurate specifications.
 - Specifications are either not clearly defined or also include service related elements such as installation and/or support.
 - The RFP serves to promote fair and just competition while allowing the procuring entity the flexibility of evaluation through weighted criteria.
 - RFPs are emailed to vendors. RFP conferences may be held before the due date depending on the circumstances of the RFP. Proposers must deliver the hard copies of the proposal to the MCSD. There is no public opening and reading of prices because the RFP allows for a negotiation period.
 - The RFP describes in general terms the problems and needs of the school district and the desired outcome (what MCSD expects to achieve by implementing vendor's solution).
 - The non-cost (technical) portion of the vendor response is submitted separately from the cost (financial) proposal to ensure that price does not affect the technical proposal evaluation.
 - The Purchasing Department will form an evaluation committee of MCSD employees to review and "score" each proposal in order to determine best value and submit to the Board of Education for approval.
 - Responses are scored consistently against the specifications, requirements, and evaluation criteria published in the RFP document.



Muscofee County School District Purchasing Department

This step may include clarification of vendor information and may include interviews or demonstrations.

- The RFP process is longer than other types of solicitations because it involves an (often lengthy) evaluation process that may include vendor presentations, a question and answer period, and extensive negotiation.
- For purchases accomplished by RFP, the award will be made to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder who earns the highest score per the criteria published in the RFP and determined solely by MCSD; whose offer meets the specifications, terms and conditions set forth in the solicitation; and who is clearly capable of delivering the product or service as specified. The highest scoring proposal may not always be the lowest bid. Award of RFPs will always be made in the best interest of MCSD. The goal is to find the best value for the school district.
- RFPs are usually awarded for a one time purchase of goods or services to meet a particular need or for a fixed period agreement which is for 12 months and provides for the on-going purchase of goods or services for the specified contract period. These agreements are most often written with an option to renew annually if mutually agreeable to both parties.
- The RFP summary scoring will be shared with all participating vendors through a Notice of Recommendation.
- After Board approval, the Notice of Award will be sent to all participating vendors.
- A purchase order and contract will be sent to the awarded vendor. A fully executed contract and an authorizing purchase order number are required before any work from the award can begin.
- In compliance with State of Georgia law, O.C.G.A. 20-2-506, multi-year contracts shall terminate absolutely and without further obligation at the close of the calendar year. The contracts shall automatically renew, unless positive action is taken by the school system, and shall terminate at the end of the contract period.
 - Georgia law at OCGA s 20-2-506 contains very specific provisions regarding the limited authority of school boards to enter into contracts who terms could financially obligate future boards of education. Boilerplate or standard termination clauses therefore are often problematic for the MCSD.



Muscookee County School District Purchasing Department

- A board of education cannot unreasonably financially obligate a future board of education. The terms of the law will be summarized below, but a thorough discussion of the requirements is outside the scope of this letter.
- Under certain conditions, school systems may enter into multi-year lease, purchase or lease purchase contracts, and these contracts may be used to acquire construction project sites or buildings, or for other purposes. Each such contract must terminate at the end of the calendar year in which the contract was entered into, and at the end of each succeeding calendar year. The contract may provide that it shall be automatically renewed for each successive year unless the school system takes affirmative steps to terminate the contract. The contract must contain a clear statement of the school system's total financial obligation for the original and each succeeding calendar year.
- Except for guaranteed energy savings contracts, the total value of all such contracts for any calendar year may not exceed 7.5 percent of the total local revenue collected in the most recently completed fiscal year. Failure to comply with the specific requirements of the code section can make the contract void.
- State law requires that MCSD include a funding out clause for all contracts that overlap the end of the calendar year. The MCSD may, during the contract period, terminate or discontinue the purchase of goods, services or systems covered in this RFP at the end of the district's then current fiscal year and upon 30 days prior written notice to the contracted vendor. Such prior written notice will state that the lack of appropriated funds is the reason for termination, and MCSD agrees not to replace the items or services being terminated with items or services with functions similar to those performed by the items or services covered in this RFP from another vendor in the succeeding funding period.



Muscogee County School District Purchasing Department

Section 8 – Payments to Vendors:

The MCSD makes payments for authorized purchase orders and local purchase orders through an invoice process after the receipt, inspection, and acceptance of the product or service; and receipt of a properly itemized invoice.

All invoices must have an invoice number and show the MCSD purchase order number or local purchase order number. Invoices should be sent directly to the MCSD Accounts Payable Department at accountspayable@muscogee.k12.ga.us.

The MCSD has determined that issuing payment electronically is the preferred method of payment. The MCSD prefers to remit payments in an electronic manner in lieu of a paper check.

Payments for purchase orders are made once a week. The district is exempt from State sales tax. Invoices should exclude Federal or State taxes that can be eliminated in sales to public school systems in the State of Georgia.

The MCSD federal tax identification number and Georgia sales tax exemption number can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer (706-748-2354). The fiscal year for the school district is July 1 through June 30.

Partial shipments are accepted and partial payments will be made. Vendors should invoice for only what has been delivered. The MCSD will not pay any penalties for late payment of invoices. Payment terms are net 30 days unless discounts are allowed.

The MCSD maintains Taxpayer Identification Numbers or Social Security Numbers for all persons and firms to whom we make payments. This information can be captured on the IRS W-9 Form - Request for Taxpayers Identification Number and Certification.

MCSD cannot setup a vendor in the vendor management system or pay the vendor until the completed IRS Form W9 is received. Blank forms are available through the Purchasing Department, posted on MCSD website, and posted on the IRS website.



Muscofee County School District Purchasing Department

Payment of interest / late fees is prohibited by the gratuities clause of the Georgia constitution. Similarly, MCSD cannot enter into an agreement that requires it to pay attorney's fees or goods / services not priced in the contract, or authorizes the payment of unknown / unspecified cost increases that cannot be calculated.

Section 9 – Vendor Visits:

The Director of Purchasing is the point of contact for vendor relations in the school district. Vendor sales calls and demonstrations are welcomed for the purpose of maintaining good vendor relations and learning of products and services that might enhance student achievement. The Purchasing Department can share MCSD purchasing information with vendors.

The End-Users are the experts in the specifications of products and services needed in their area. Vendors may be best served by meeting with the department responsible for specifying a particular product or service. Vendors must never discuss any open bid or proposal process with any school district employee other than the Purchasing Department employees named in the bid or request for proposal document. These activities must not detract from the instructional process or obligate the school district in any way.

Vendors should call ahead and make appointments to meet with school district employees. For security purposes, vendors must always be escorted in MCSD buildings. Vendors visiting the Muscofee County Public Education Center must check in at the main reception desk and receive a security badge. Vendors are allowed only in the areas designated on the badge. The receptionist will call the area to be visited and announce that the vendor has arrived for the scheduled appointment.

Section 10 – Vendor Code of Ethics:

A vendor doing business with MCSD is asked to constantly strive for the highest standards of ethical behavior, trust, respect, fairness, confidentiality, integrity and credibility. The vendor should adhere to all applicable laws, regulations, and procedures. The vendor should avoid even the appearance of unethical business practices.



Muscogee County School District Purchasing Department

A vendor should not attempt to influence MCSD staff with the intent of impairing the objectivity of judgment in a purchasing transaction. The vendor should understand that MCSD employees should not accept gifts in exchange for favors to vendors. Vendors are asked to raise concerns and identify any conflicts of interest.

Section 11 – Vendor Registration:

The Purchasing Department maintains a bidder list (companies that want to do business with MCSD) and a vendor list (companies that have done business with MCSD). These lists shall be compiled from sources requesting to do business with the school district, vendors that have served the district in the past, and other reputable sources.

If a vendor is interested in doing business with the Muscogee County School District, they should complete:

- The MCSD vendor registration process on the MCSD website
- The IRS Form W-9 – Request for Taxpayers Identification Number
- The appropriate E-verify Affidavit(s)

Each tool is available at <https://www.muscogee.k12.ga.us/Divisions/Finance/Vendors/Index> and by calling the MCSD Purchasing Department at 706-748-2350. Provide the information online, and as information changes for your company, update the information online.

MCSD only recognizes the term “approved vendor” for those companies who have been awarded contracts through the competitive solicitation process.

Section 12 – Conclusion:

Hopefully you will find this manual to be helpful in your transactions with the Muscogee County School District. We look forward to working with you as we purchase the items needed to help the students of MCSD become lifelong learners, enter the work force with necessary skills, and achieve academic and personal potential.