

BEST PRACTICES IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT ESSAY

**PREPARED FOR
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**Purchasing Department
DeLand, FL**

Best Practices in Public Procurement Essay

Development of Principals Handbook for Opening a New School

Most school districts in Florida will be experiencing substantial growth in student enrollment during the next ten years. To meet the increase in student population many districts, such as Volusia, have passed sales tax referendums for new bond programs to finance the construction of new schools.

The Volusia County School Board Purchasing Department is responsible for the acquisition of furniture and equipment for new schools, which can run from \$1,000,000 per elementary school to over \$3,500,000 for a new high school. Each new school principal is assigned the task of opening their school with the staff, furniture and equipment required to be fully functional on opening day. To best communicate the full scope of the process, in regard to furnishing and equipping a new school, the Volusia County School Board Purchasing Department, with the help of other key departments, developed the Principal's Handbook for Opening a New School. This handbook gives the newly assigned principal a broad look at what to expect after the school is constructed and released to the district.

Section I Furniture and Equipment

- A. Each handbook begins with a school specific time line highlighting the dates when all major decisions must be made to ensure the school is ready for the scheduled opening date.
- B. With our district subject area specialist, such as Math, Art, Social Studies, Music and Physical Education, we have developed a core list of all equipment items needed to teach the curriculum in each area. This item list serves as a starting point for a principal to determine what items will be required for their particular school. The process to add to or deduct items from this core list is explained in detail in this section.
- C. To help guide principals through this process we also provide a copy of our district purchasing policy.

Section II Personnel

Here we describe the importance of a trained receiving clerk and the custodial support staff necessary to meet the challenges of receiving and accounting for all furniture and equipment delivered to the new school. As mentioned earlier the dollar value of equipping a new school is significant, so we stress the need to protect and account for all items that are delivered to the school site.

Section III Purchasing Department

This section defines our role in the process. We introduce our staff and describe their areas of responsibility, which can include suggesting what items to order through the prompt payment of all invoices. We include phone numbers of our staff so everyone knows whom to contact if a question or problem arises.

Section IV Paperwork

This is an important section for the person responsible for receiving all items delivered. The paperwork section includes copies of all receiving documents and a discussion of warranty information.

Section V Receiving

Receiving stresses the importance of security, accuracy, proper handling of all items and what to do if something comes in damaged. We also discuss common mistakes made in these areas to help the new principal and his staff avoid these pitfalls.

Section VI Special Areas

This section is devoted to MIS, Food Service and Inventory departments to share their requirements with the new school principal. We also cover how to acquire copiers, cell phones, vending machines, textbooks and media collections in this section.

The handbook was distributed to key staff members who were involved opening the previous three schools in the district. All agreed that one quick reference source of information would have saved them considerable time and money in replacing lost or damaged items, and in the ability to reallocate the responsibilities of their labor staff when they opened their new schools.

Although, school districts in the state provide furniture and equipment for new schools using different methods, the basics outlined in this handbook do not change from district to district. The information contained in this handbook will greatly benefit any district that does not have a similar document to help guide their personnel through the acquisition process of equipping and furnishing a new school.

If you have any questions regarding our Principal's Handbook For Opening A New School please contact Tom Sims, Director of Purchasing & Warehousing Services, at (386) 734-7190 Ext. 20579.