



from Business Services

Why Can't I Just Buy What I Want? – Cost vs. Value

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There are rare occasions when purchase requisitions are submitted and items are changed or disallowed. The requestor might be thinking why? It's my school's money and I want what I want and I can get it cheaper from Amazon or somewhere else? At first glance this might appear to be true, but is this really the case...?

When procuring goods and services the purchasing staff must take into consideration more than just cost. Some of these things include:

- **Quality of the goods and services** - are they up to certain state, local, and federal standards; will the product last or need to be replaced; does the product contain materials that are harmful or toxic and are they permissible per Board policy and do they meet standards for the entire District; are items appropriate for intended use
- **Warranties** - how long is the warranty and is there one; will the vendor take care of the product if it's defective; will they come and pick up the product at no charge and maybe even provide a replacement in the interim; does the product or service necessitate extended warranty, such as a computer or furniture
- **Shipping and delivery fees** - is there a cost for shipping; if not, is delivery included in set-up and will the vendor remove all the packaging material; if so, has the vendor completed a fingerprint certification form to ensure safety of our students; are there hidden handling setup fees
- **District standards** - certain types of products including classroom furniture, supplies, A/V

equipment, computers, warehouse stock items and other District items have been vetted through committees or staff within the District; certain laws must be followed to protect student data and other sensitive information for software and applications

- **Responsible vendors** - does the vendor provide what they say they can; are they reputable; is the vendor buying through a third party (such as Amazon) and what happens if there is a problem with the product and there is no vendor to handle, maybe they are even out of the country; are they a manufacturer's rep that is authorized to sell the product or service; is this a private party and are the goods possibly stolen or used; do they have a proper federal tax identification number
- **Bid requirements** - all requirements for purchases are combined for the entire District, not by the individual site, which could cause the necessity for a formal bid and is a legal requirement by Public Contract code; special contracts and bids are leveraged to aggregate purchasing power amongst other Districts and/or agencies to obtain best pricing while adhering to legal bid requirements; multiple quotes are required based on the dollar amount of the purchase

These are just a few of the things our purchasing professionals must consider prior to purchasing goods and services, which leads us to the conclusion that cost isn't the only factor taken into consideration when making a purchase.