

COOPERATIVE PURCHASING

The Board of Education is authorized to participate in cooperative purchasing with other school districts. Through volume purchasing on a cooperative basis, the Board can achieve savings as the result of lower prices, and shared efforts and expenses.

Pursuant to §119-o of the General Municipal Law, two or more school districts may enter into an agreement for the cooperative purchasing of goods or services (and other joint efforts). Any cooperative arrangement must be approved by the Board of each participating district.

The cooperative agreement should provide a method of equitably allocating costs of the venture, such as legal advertising, mailing, bid specification preparation, duplicating, etc., and carefully spell out any other procedural agreements. Each participating district also must be willing to abide by the decision of the majority on such matters as product quality standards and awarding of contracts.

A Board of Cooperative Educational Services is frequently the appropriate agency to coordinate joint purchasing efforts among its component school districts. However, any district may undertake that role or each participant might agree to carry out one specific function such as preparation of specifications or analysis of the bids.

The competitive bidding requirements of the General Municipal Law apply to cooperative purchasing ventures on the same dollar threshold basis as other purchase contracts. In addition, if voter approval is necessary for a purchase, as would be the case for the purchase of new school buses, it is still required in the cooperative purchasing situation. Each participating district would have to obtain authorization from its own voters before proceeding with the cooperative venture.

Ref: Education Law §1950
General Municipal Law §119-o

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