

APPENDIX E

Coding of Constraints

Responses to question 37, “Please list 3 major constraints, starting with the most critical, faced by your district in improving its procurement practices.”

Resources:

- Time
- Staff
- Money

Legal restrictions:

- Low bidding requirement
- System is cumbersome and state doesn't seem to be capable of changing that situation (they only make it worse)
- Not having the option to use GSA Contracts
- The law should allow the district to select from the two lowest bidders without any explanation
- Not able to use some OGS contracts that allow leasing
- Not being able to use multi-year contracts
- Not being able to use all OGS contracts
- SED timeframe for approval of projects
- SED regs are stricter than OGS and should be the same

District Management:

- Decision making process too decentralized
- Cooperation from staff
- Have difficult time getting staff in the building to understand the importance of purchasing from a bid
- Lack of support from administration and staff
- Turnover
- Communication among departments
- Insufficient top down support for violation of proper procedures
- Resistance from teachers to cooperate in estimating quantities
- Lack of planning by requisitioners (wait until last minute for POs!)
- Inability to centralize all purchases
- Getting the older teachers to stop doing their own special orders (has caused duplicate shipments)
- Lack of knowledge and cooperation with the Board of Education

Training:

- Return of properly done bid packets from schools
- Cultivating district staff (instructional) to follow proper purchasing procedures
- Passing knowledge on to department heads
- Individuals not able to specify what they need

- Educating and cooperation of staff district-wide
- Some requisitioners have trouble with electronic/automated system

Procurement Process:

- Too many PO's
- Too many people involved
- Development of standardized lists of supplies and equipment
- Cheaper doesn't mean best value
- Eliminating paper requests
- Processing immediate needs quickly
- Not knowing quality of goods purchased
- Lack of quick access to competitive and accurate pricing
- Access to state contracts is complex
- Processing to take trade/pricing discounts
- BOCES procurement calendar
- Schools do not like to bid entire year's requirements; they have too much of some things and not others
- Lack of tracking similar kind of purchases throughout year
- Items are selected by teachers to make up the budget. The approved items are sent to purchasing. By then it is too late to offer alternative goods or other sources.

Expertise:

- Lack of recognition of cost constraints
- Writing RFPs
- Difficulty using OGS
- Where to go to be effective and efficient
- Evaluating submissions
- Awareness of best practices
- Lack of comprehensive understanding of the law(i.e.: for specific application)
- Lack of negotiating skills and experience

Vendors:

- Inability to follow bid procedures
- Finding vendors with the majority of items requested
- Vendor loyalty
- Low bid quality
- Lack of competition
- Some vendors don't like cooperative bids
- Effective ratings of merchandise by competitive vendors
- Limited vendors in education products
- If vendors don't feel they will get the job they don't bid
- Finding a competitive bid base on items or services rarely used

IT capacity:

- Technical limitations
- Software enhancements to purchasing module
- Limitations of computerized procurement applications
- Warrant report (electronic payments)
- Finance manager software does not have a bid module
- Not being able to purchase on line and generate a purchase order as part of this process
- Inability to electronically submit (sign) purchase order
- Technical capabilities of users

Other:

- Late state budget
- Blending of services
- Wicks law
- More items need to be available on state/county contracts
- Security
- Being more efficient w/on-line purchasing and adopting procurement cards
- Going through budget process not knowing state aid
- Comparable products needs a better definition
- Public sentiment--administration vs. instruction