

Houston County Schools

Perry, Georgia

Three-Year Technology Plan

July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2011



**HOUSTON COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

HIGH-ACHIEVING STUDENTS

Superintendent

David Carpenter

Components for System-Level Technology Plan

I. Vision for Technology Use

The mission of the Houston County School System is to produce high-achieving students. The objective of this technology plan is to support that mission at all levels.

Component	
<p><i>a. District Mission/ Vision and Access</i></p>	<p>The mission of the Houston County School System is to produce high-achieving students. The vision of the Houston County School System is that our system will be world-class. The objective of this technology plan is to support that mission and vision at all levels. The goal of the plan is to provide staff with the resources to evaluate data, and to utilize results to develop effective instructional programs and assessment strategies in order to improve student achievement in all content areas.</p> <p>Houston County is committed to the belief that the effective use of technologies will enhance the quality of teaching and positively impact the learning process. We envision an educational environment that is rich with opportunities for all learners to be exposed to the benefits of the latest emerging technologies. This educational environment will allow our students to be high achievers, life-long learners, and successful in a changing society. The Houston County Technology Plan is to allocate instructional resources to ensure equity among all student subpopulations.</p> <p>System Performance Goals for Technology:</p> <p>Goal 1: Provide Support for Instructional Uses of Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance student achievement through the integration of available technology. • Provide instructional documents, assessment data, and professional learning for administrators and instructional personnel. <p>Goal 2: Provide Support for Administrative Uses of Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase administrative uses of technology. • Establish an ongoing process of assessing the use of technology by all stakeholders that will result in improved instructional planning. <p>Goal 3: Provide parents, the community, and other stakeholders with technology resources and support.</p> <p>Goal 4: Provide system support for technology-related professional learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize technology to support the professional growth of all staff which will result in maximum learning for all students

II. Current Reality

Component	
<p><i>a. Access to Technology/Data Sources</i></p>	<p>All thirty-seven Houston County schools are completely networked. Seven network drops are provided for each classroom, 35 drops to each computer lab, and 15-25 media center. In addition, each office, conference room, auditorium, lunchroom, and other usable space is connected to the school's local area network. The network connections are powered by 100 megabit Ethernet switches. All schools participate in a wide-area network (WAN), with elementary schools at 10 megabytes and the high schools at 20 megabytes. The WAN is partially funded by E-Rate and powered by Cox and Alltel MBS services. Connectivity to the Internet is provided by the system's Technology Service Center where the connections are centered at a speed of two DS-3s which are provided through Georgia K-12 Educational Network Consortium, which is also partially funded through E-Rate.</p> <p>According to the technology inventory survey, the Houston County School System presently has 6801 instructional computers. Of this number, 6310 are desktop computers and 491 are laptop computers. The Houston County School System has 1766 total classrooms, with a ratio of 3.81135:1 students per computer. Seven hundred fifty-seven computers in the system were identified as used for administrative</p>

functions. There are 74 Windows servers in the schools and 20 Windows file servers at the system's Technology Service Center for administrative purposes.

Houston County School System relies on generously donated computers from local businesses. All donated computers are required to have the following minimum standards:

Minimum Standards for Donated Computers

IBM Compatible Windows Based:

- Intel Pentium 4 Processor
- 512 Megabytes RAM
- 20.0 Gigabytes of Disk Storage
- Diskette Drive or Writable CD Drive

The Houston County School System supports several initiatives that assist in providing equitable use opportunity for technology-supported learning across the system, both at school and at home. One of those initiatives, Georgia Virtual School, is a year-round, tuition-based program offering online courses developed and taught by certified teachers. Virtual learning instruction involves teaching students course content via the Internet. As in a traditional, face-to-face classroom, teachers facilitate daily learning activities such as discussion, projects, labs, group work, and writing workshops. By providing feedback, remediation, and enrichment, virtual learning instructors guide students through GPS, content-approved courses.

Students can take classes during the regular school day for no cost to them under the state and local rules established to govern the Georgia Virtual School. Enrollment for the supplemental, tuition-based program will not be limited per school. Students can enroll in supplemental classes, beyond their school day schedule, during fall, spring, and summer semesters.

The Houston County School System provides resources to parents and community through the Internet. There are also opportunities for technology-supported learning beyond school for students, parents, and staff. A web page of online resources is available to the learning community. In addition to the web page, there are learning opportunities for students participating in after-school programs that provide for enrichment and remediation.

Classworks, a curriculum management system, allows teachers to customize learning paths and document student progress. This is available to all K-12 students, teachers, and administrators. Classworks supports standards-based education by aligning content with state standards. A similar curriculum managed system, KeyTrain, is available to all 6-12 students, teachers, and administrators.

Currently the system is compiling a list of curriculum software for all levels of instruction within the county. This will be published on the system's web page and used to ensure access of resources across the system. This will maximize professional learning opportunities for students and staff.

b. Technology Use

□ Instructional uses of technology

Houston County currently utilizes a wide variety of technology related tools to enhance the instructional process. Through the use of wide area network connecting all 37 campus locations and offices, Houston County is able to provide collaboration, communication, and instructional resources. Hardware resources at all schools include computer labs, student and teacher workstations, network printers and projection devices. Some schools also have interactive boards, handheld remotes, interactive assessment devices, mounted LCD projectors, and digital imaging devices. Software resources in all schools include MS Office Suite, Classworks (a curriculum management system), Surpass (school media services), Smartweb (online grade book and attendance), United Streaming (web-based media service), various online textbook resources, and the OAS (Online assessment system). Based on student population, curriculum and grade level, schools utilize GA Virtual High School (credit recovery and online instruction), NovaNet (web based self paced instruction), Key Train (preps for career path), Read 180 (Language arts managed learning system), Fast Forward (reading intervention), Rosetta Stone (ESOL), Renzuilli(enrichment purposes), Orchard(a curriculum management system), Renaissance Learning Suite (Language arts and math software) and Career Tech related applications (AutoCad, Adobe Creative Suite, Adobe Premier Pro, etc.)

During the 07-08 school year, Houston County launched Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (MOSS) to increase collaboration and communication in a secure environment. MOSS is an integrated suite of

server capabilities that will improve organizational effectiveness by providing comprehensive content management, accelerating shared educational processes, and facilitating information-sharing across boundaries for better instructional insight. MOSS supports all intranet, extranet, and Web applications across an enterprise within one integrated platform. Each county level department is in the process of developing a collaborative workspace. Similar efforts are being conducted at the school level to facilitate collaboration. Curriculum and resources will be housed within a site specific to each content area. In addition, real-time test data and other reports are available within the data warehouse.

Professional learning opportunities are made available on the county and school level to support instructional technology. The Instructional Technology Department works with the administrators, teachers, and Central Office personnel to redeliver professional learning as determined by system and school teaching and learning goals.

Use of Technology

Students:

- Have access to connected technologies to analyze, collaborate, process, and disseminate information in order to increase student achievement.
- Have access to connected technologies for instructional purposes including enrichment and/or remediation.
- Utilize global electronic mail, telecommunications systems, and real time web-based applications, through unique user IDs, in order to effectively communicate with administrators, teachers, parents, and fellow students.
- Reach age-appropriate technology literacy levels.
- Are enabled to meet the challenge of a changing society and economy through the use of technology resources.

Teachers:

- Utilize technology resources to enhance classroom instruction and improve student achievement.
- Endorse performance-based standards that define appropriate use of technologies of students at each grade level.
- Have access to connected technologies to analyze, collaborate, and disseminate information in a real-time environment.
- Utilize technology resources to actively engage students in their own learning process in a standards-based classroom.
- Utilize global electronic mail, telecommunications systems, and real time web-based applications, through unique user ID's in order to effectively communicate with specialists, parents, fellow teachers, and administrators.
- Utilize technology resources to electronically archive, retrieve, analyze, collaborate, and produce reports.
- Have accessibility via a secured network to essential organized data, which has been collected from a variety of sources, and organized and used in school improvement activities. The available data includes methods for disaggregation into appropriate subgroups.
- Are supported through appropriate professional learning opportunities.

Administrators:

- Utilize technology resources to enhance the school's instructional process and to improve student achievement.
- Utilize technology resources to improve the overall effectiveness of school management.
- Have access to connected technologies to analyze, collaborate, and disseminate information in a real-time environment.
- Utilize technology resources to support teachers and staff in classroom instruction.
- Utilize global electronic mail, telecommunications systems, hand held cellular devices partially funded by E-rate and real time web-based applications, through unique user ID's, in order to effectively communicate with students, specialists, parents, teachers, fellow administrators, and the community.
- Utilize technology resources to electronically archive, retrieve, analyze, collaborate, and

	<p>produce reports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have accessibility via a secured network to essential organized data, which has been collected from a variety of sources, and organized and used in school improvement activities. The available data includes methods for disaggregation into appropriate subgroups. • Are supported through appropriate professional learning opportunities. <p>Parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be provided access to grades, homework assignments, attendance, and other student information through a web-based system. <p>Application Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use technology resources to increase awareness of how technology can be used to motivate and encourage student learning in a standards-based classroom. • Use electronic assessments to evaluate the needs of students and assess their progress in meeting educational goals. • Use instructional software in several languages to assist Limited English Proficiency students. • Provide funding sufficient to provide access to instructional software from all classrooms, media centers, and labs. • Provide Internet connectivity with filtering and virus spyware. • Acquire software based on GPS correlation. • Provide technology resources and training to process data. <p>Technology Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a robust, stable, and secured network. • Standardize modern hardware. • Fund technology infrastructure. • Provide competent technology support. • Provide assistive technology for students with disabilities. • Provide support technology resources for students who are hospital homebound and students who are assigned to alternative school settings. • Provide interactive and presentation technology equipment as part of the classroom infrastructure. • Provide a convergence of video, voice, and data though network switching upgrade.
<p>c. Gap Analysis</p>	<p>After reviewing the System Technology Inventory and compiling data, it was ascertained that an acceptable inventory of hardware and peripheral devices as well as software was available. During the 07-08 school year, a secure teacher and administrator intranet portal was implemented, which provided both business intelligence reporting to all levels of educators as well as an instructional technology resource sharing platform.</p> <p>The Houston County Board of Education currently has 1766 classrooms and approximately 147 computer labs. Currently we have a total of 6801 modern computers in our classrooms and computer labs. This averages 2 computers per classroom and approximately 23 computers per lab. Of our 1679 classrooms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1465 regular classrooms have 2507 computers • 102 vocational educational classrooms have 1203 computers • 199 special education classrooms have 396 computers. <p>Our goal is to have 5 modern computers in each classroom – 4 for student use and 1 for teacher use- and 30 computers per computer lab. This goal requires a total of 11,770 instructional computers in the system.</p> <p>The Houston County Board of Education also provides system-wide remote access to on-line resources. These resources are posted on the website: www.hcbe.net. These on-line resources provide equitable access for students who have after school internet access.</p>

Houston County School System, as evidenced by the inventory surveys, has worked diligently to lower the computer to student ratio. The system has reached an acceptable student to computer ratio. There is a need, however, to begin phasing out computers that no longer meet system hardware specifications, and to increase the student to computer ratio to satisfy the stated goals. Technology purchases must align with the system's vision and technology goals. All products should be assessed for compatibility with existing software.

The greatest technology needs of the Houston County School System include:

- Using technology in the classroom to enhance the technology standards.
- Incorporating the GPS to increase communication with parents through the local hcbe website.
- Providing software instruction after the school day.
- Providing additional teacher training on effectively integrating technology.
- Provide assistance with the disaggregation of student data for administration and teachers.
- Establishing procedures and safe guards for future software purchases.

The system's mission statement is to produce high-achieving students. To continue on this pathway, the system must narrow the achievement gap between subgroups of students. Integrating technology into the instruction can assist with these students. The data reveals that many of these students attend the Title I schools in the system. With the donations of Robins Air Force Base, the computer to student ratio at Title 1 schools has been reduced to a lower ratio than the system average, providing additional educational opportunities for these students.

Special Education and ELL teachers were consulted to determine their hardware, software and resource needs. The Technology, Teaching and Learning, and Student Services departments have combined resources to provide the support needed for the teachers to meet the achievement goals established for their students. Houston County will focus on providing additional computers for the special needs students during the next three school years by supplying the special education classrooms with additional computers from the system allotment.

GOALS, BENCHMARKS, AND STRATEGIES

Instructional Uses of Technology

GOAL:	To enhance student achievement through the integration of available technology.			
Strategies	Benchmark	Evaluation Method	Funding Source/Amount	Person Responsible
All students will have equitable and easy access to the Internet and web based learning technologies to obtain information and resources from remote locations to collaborate, publish, and interact with peers, experts, and other audiences.	Access will be provided to all students in the system.	Student access and usage.	\$0 Local Funds	Director of Informational Technology
The system will provide technology resources for students participating in activities taking place outside of the regular school day that provide for enrichment and remediation.	Students will be afforded opportunities to participate within appropriate subject areas.	Participation in the events are monitored within the school.	Local/State/Federal Funds	Principals, APIs, Graduation Coaches, Instructional Technology Coordinators
Students will utilize global electronic mail, telecommunications systems, and real-time web based applications, through unique user IDs, in order to effectively communicate with administrators, teachers, parents, and fellow students.	All Internet use by students and teachers will be in accordance with the Houston County Schools Acceptable Use Policy. (AUP). High school students will be provided with new email through Microsoft Outlook.	Student utilization of resources.	\$0 Local Funds	Director of Informational Technology
Specific student technology competency goals as required by Georgia Technology Standards will be incorporated into the curriculum at all grade levels.	Students will reach age-appropriate technology-literacy levels by the end of third, fifth, eighth and twelfth grades. 8 th Grade Technology Assessment	Instructional Technology Coordinators and administrators will monitor the frequency and range of technology use across grade-levels and GPS areas.	\$0 Local/State Funds	Director of Instructional Technology

Instructional Uses of Technology

GOAL:	To enhance student achievement through the integration of available technology.			
Strategies	Benchmark	Evaluation Method	Funding Source/Amount	Person Responsible
Instructional Technology Coordinators will facilitate the development of technology integration into the standards-based classroom and provide proactive support and practical direction for innovative uses of technologies to advance content knowledge and technology skills in the curriculum.	Educational technology will be infused into the curriculum and instructional activities.	Instructional Technology Coordinators and administrators will monitor the frequency and range of technology use across grade-levels GPS areas.	\$0 Local/State Funds	System Technology Planning Committee Instructional Technology Coordinators
Instructional Technology Coordinators will model and implement technology integration into the standards-based classroom.	Instructional personnel will participate in professional learning workshops which provide skills needed to integrate and model technology skills	Instructional Technology Coordinators and administrators will monitor and survey the frequency of technology use across grade-levels curriculum areas.	\$0 Local/State Funds	Instructional Technology Coordinators
The system will maintain and improve a wide area network (WAN) linking all campus LANS and system offices. All nodes on the WAN will have high bandwidth access to the Internet. A firewall will be maintained at a central location to screen inappropriate sites and to insure that student access to the Internet will be safe and rewarding.	Successful student and faculty access to Internet resources.		\$305,617.92 E-Rate Funds \$171,910.08 Local Funds	Director of Information Technology
The system will maintain and support a voice-over-IP solution within the network infrastructure.	Successful telecommunications support through the district.		\$21,915.87 E-Rate \$12,327.69 Local Funds	Director of Informational Technology

Instructional Uses of Technology

GOAL:	To provide instructional documents, assessment data, and professional learning for administrators and instructional personnel.			
Strategies	Benchmark	Evaluation Method	Funding Source/Amount	Person Responsible
The system will provide a variety of instructional support resources to enhance classroom instruction and improve student achievement	System and school test scores along with local benchmark assessments will be examined to determine areas of strengths and weakness for the at-risk students. All students will have equitable and easy access to effective and engaging technology resources	Summative evaluations based on test scores. Benchmark assessment results. Reports within the software and managed learning systems. Ongoing	Local/State/Federal funds	Central Office Directors and Coordinators
Instructional and administrative personnel will endorse performance-based standards and materials that define appropriate use of technologies of students at each grade level.	The system will adopt instructional materials that implement technology standards at all grade levels.	For curriculum adoption, committee representatives from each school will review instructional materials to ensure that minimum technology standards are met.	\$0 Local/State Funds	Director of Informational Technology System Technology Planning Committee Instructional Technology Coordinators Central Office Directors and Coordinators
The system will continue to use technology resources to collect and analyze data, interpret results, and communicate findings to improve instructional practices in a real-time environment.	Provide support to the administrators and teachers in disaggregation of data and interpreting results. Training in utilizing the SharePoint data mart and the GADOE portal.	Ongoing	Local/State/Federal Funds	Director of Instructional Technology
The system will identify, catalog, and make available, technology resources for instruction using a secure intranet portal.	The system will evaluate current and future acquisitions of technology resources on the basis of how well it correlates with the GPS.	Access to intranet will be monitored and regularly reported to BOE.	\$0 Local/State Funds	Director of Informational Technology System Technology Planning Committee
The system will employ a variety of technologies and applications to meet the educational goals of identified students with special needs and Limited English Proficiency.	All students will have equitable and easy access to effective and engaging technology resources that meet access standards for students with disabilities. SharePoint portal will be used as a warehouse of resources.	IEPs and test participation plan will be used to assess student's needs for assistive technology resources.	\$0 Local/State Funds	Director of Instructional Technology Director of Informational Technology

Instructional Uses of Technology

GOAL:	To provide instructional documents, assessment data, and professional learning for administrators and instructional personnel.			
Strategies	Benchmark	Evaluation Method	Funding Source/Amount	Person Responsible
All curriculum guides and supporting materials will be available to teachers on SharePoint.	As curriculum guides for specific subjects are updated, the information will be uploaded to the SharePoint Portal. Teachers and staff will be trained on utilizing the curriculum resources.	Completion of uploads and availability to the teachers during the 2008-2009 school year. Ongoing.	\$0 Local/State Funds	Central Office coordinators and directors and assigned technology coordinators. Testing and Instructional Technology Department. Technology coordinators.
Teachers in each school will have full access to current electronic peripheral devices which provide interactive and presentation technologies.	All schools will maintain quality technology resources with adequate capacity and capability to support successful learning.	Annual GA DOE Hardware Survey and system hardware inventory will be analyzed to determine how schools meet benchmarks.	\$0 Local/State Funds	School Personnel
All instructional computer workstations will have access to media center resources through the school-wide local area network (LAN).	Access to media center catalog software will be on all workstations	Images will be updated with the access. Ongoing	\$0 Local Funds	Director of Information Technology, Technicians, School and Instructional Technology Coordinators
The system will continue to acquire instructional resources to support the integration of technology into the standards-based curriculum.	The system will review and acquire, as appropriate, software to support instruction in every curriculum area.	Annual software inventory and report conducted by the Director of Information Technology	\$0 Local/State Funds	Director of Instructional Technology
Provide professional learning opportunities to school system employees pertaining to current available technology.	Teachers utilizing curriculum documents and assessment data.	Participation in professional learning, observation	Local, State, and Federal	Director of Professional Learning, School level administrators, Technology Coordinators
High school teachers and students will collaborate using SharePoint and email.	Inservice teachers on various SharePoint components.	Usage reports	\$0	Technology Coordinators, teachers and students

Administrative Uses of Technology

GOAL:	To increase administrative uses of technology and establish an ongoing process of assessing the use of technology by all stakeholders that will result in improved instructional planning.			
Strategies	Benchmark	Evaluation Method	Funding Source/Amount	Person Responsible
Administrative personnel will support and participate in professional learning in the implementation and integration of the latest administrative and instructional technologies.	All educators will participate in high quality professional development activities and attain, at a minimum, intermediate proficiency levels in utilizing educational technology to enhance student achievement.	Evidence of utilization of current technologies.	\$150,000 Annually Local/State Funds	Coordinator of Professional Learning
The system will continue to provide training and support for board members to use new systems and technology.	Board members, superintendent and board attorney will use paperless system at meetings.		\$0 Annually Local Funds	Director of Informational Technology Coordinator of Professional Learning
Teachers will continue to be provided with a direct information management resource to maintain student attendance, assessment and performance data, discipline referrals, special accommodations, and other pertinent student-related classroom data.	Usage of Smartweb.	Successful record keeping documentation.	\$40,000 Local Funds	Director of Informational Technology
Administrative personnel will be provided hand held cellular-based personal digital devices for communications and data access.	Successful communications and data access for end user personnel while away from principal work spaces.		\$166,499.56 E-Rate \$93,656.00 Local Funds	Director of Information Technology

Parent, Community, and Business Uses of Technology

GOAL:	To utilize technology as a medium to create an interactive partnership between the Houston County School System and parents, community agencies, industry and business partners.			
Strategies	Benchmark	Evaluation Method	Funding Source/Amount	Person Responsible
Under the auspices of the career and technical education programs, community-based technology literacy and introductory program will be offered to citizens. These courses will be offered at various campuses throughout the communities in Houston County; in order to make them more readily accessible. They will be delivered in the early evening hours, and will be conducted by instructional staff from within the school system.	The information system will be made available to all parents of students in grades K-12 to access student data.	Review of usage logs by Director of Information Technology.	\$0 Local/State Funds	Director of Informational Technology
The system will continue to provide a web-based parent interface for the secure access of student attendance, assessment and performance, special accommodations, and other data regarding the student's performance and academic standing.	Parents will be informed of resoures available through Smartweb.	Useage reports	\$0 Local/State Funds	Director of Informational Technology
The system will continue to offer a nontraditional school setting and provide the necessary technology resources to support at-risk students.	Enrollment in NovaNet courses.	Increase in students completing courses.	\$95,000 Local Funds	Director of Informational Technology

Parent, Community, and Business Uses of Technology

GOAL:	To utilize technology as a medium to create an interactive partnership between the Houston County School System and parents, community agencies, industry and business partners.			
Strategies	Benchmark	Evaluation Method	Funding Source/Amount	Person Responsible
<p>The system will utilize the best method to collect opinions for the system and schools from employees, parents and the general public. The system will use Microsoft Office Sharepoint Services and HCBOE Intranet Portal to conduct surveys online and obtain input from those stakeholders who are not online. The system will organize the resulting data into meaningful information to include demographics and cross-tabs. This use of technology will help our school system create opinion benchmarks and progress as required by implementation of the Balanced Scorecard.</p>	<p>Employee, parent and community surveys will be conducted</p>	<p>Analysis of survey results.</p>	<p>\$0 Local Funds</p>	<p>Director of Information Technology</p>

III. Communication and Marketing

Component	
a. Communication/ Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple methods of dissemination, sharing progress, disseminating evaluation results and marketing are provided such as the monthly electronic Board of Education newsletter that is provided to stakeholders. HCBOE website and local school websites which contain updated information. School councils, phone messenger systems, press releases, SharePoint Portal and Smartweb are additional communication tools available to stakeholders.
b. Integration/ coordination with long-range planning initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The system technology committee consists of personnel from the technology department, system-level staff development, teaching and learning, school operations, finance, media services, Title I, student services, ESOL, school administrators and school level technology coordinators. All proposed initiatives are brought before the committee such as hardware specifications, software implementation, and technology related upgrades or purchases.

IV. Professional Development

Component	
a. Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development programs are clearly outlined and support the overall system and school performance goals. <input type="checkbox"/> Funding for professional development is provided by local, state, or federal allocations. <input type="checkbox"/> Professional learning in the school system is directly linked to established instructional practices to support student achievement. <input type="checkbox"/> Each school has established a professional learning community to further enhance and support the school performance goals. <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers new to the system are provided a technology overview. The training involves processes, programs and procedures to support the instructional setting. <input type="checkbox"/> System level staff are provided the opportunity to participate in technology related professional development through classes taught by technology coordinators. These opportunities are provided three separate times each year. Online class catalogs are posted during the fall, spring, and summer semesters for school system employees.

Appendices

a. Policies and Procedures	<p>BOARD POLICY Descriptor Code: IFBG</p> <p>INFORMATIONAL TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE Adopted: 7/8/03</p> <hr/> <p>The Houston County Board of Education recognizes the importance of making advanced technology and increased access to learning opportunities available to students and staff. As resources permit, informational technology services shall be made available in schools. The Board believes that this technology will help propel our schools into the information age by allowing students and staff to access and use informational sources from other computers, to communicate and share information with individuals or groups of other students and staff, and to significantly expand their knowledge base.</p> <p>The Board of Education realizes that the availability of computers and the ability to communicate with people all over the world brings access to material that may not be considered of educational value in the context of the school setting. Houston County School System personnel shall take all available precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. While recognizing that it is impossible to control all material which might inadvertently be discovered by users on a global network, the Houston County Board of Education firmly believes that the valuable information and interaction available on the worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the school</p>
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system.

Purpose

The purpose of informational technology is to facilitate communications in support of research and education by providing access to multiple resources. Use by any student or staff member must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of the Houston County School System.

Authorized User

An authorized user for the purpose of this policy will be defined as any employee or student of the Houston County School System who has been issued and assigned a log-in account.

Terms and Conditions

The use of informational technology is a privilege, not a right. Inappropriate use, including any violation of these conditions and policies, may result in cancellation of the privilege. Under this agreement, the Houston County School System is delegated the authority to determine appropriate use and may deny, revoke or suspend any user's access at any time based upon the determination of inappropriate use.

Transmission of any material in violation of United States Law or state regulations is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by patent.

Use for commercial activities, product advertisement, or political lobbying is prohibited.

The use of school and central office networks, Houston County School System Wide Area Network (WAN) and its connections internally shall be for the exchange of information in order to promote and support educational excellence in the school system.

The prerequisite for an employee to receive an instructional technology account is that the employee takes full responsibility for his or her own actions.

The sole purpose of informational technology wide area network is for the support of instructional and administrative purposes. Failure to abide by these regulations shall result in suspension of the individual's network account, pending administrative review, and may result in disciplinary action.

Encounter of Controversial Material

Users may encounter material which is controversial and which users, parents, teachers, or administrators may consider inappropriate or offensive. The Houston County School System has a right and will make every effort to control the content of data accessed through the Internet by the use of firewalls and filtering software and teacher monitoring. On a global network it is impossible to control every piece of data, and an industrious user may discover controversial material accidentally.

It is the user's responsibility not to initiate access to controversial material purposely. If such material is accessed accidentally, the student/teacher shall notify an adult teacher/supervisor immediately to ensure such an accident does not happen again.

Vandalism and Harassment

1. Vandalism and harassment will result in cancellation of user privileges.
2. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, modify, or destroy data of a system or another user. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses.
3. Harassment is defined as the persistent annoyance of another user or the interference in another user's work. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, the sending of unwanted E-mail.

GUIDELINES

Network Guidelines

1. Users will not post, publish, send or intentionally receive offensive messages or pictures from any source, including but not limited to any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, sexist or illegal material.
2. Users will not transmit or download information or software in violation of copyright laws.
3. Only resources for which the author has given expressed consent for on-line distribution can be used.
4. Posting messages and attributing them to another user is prohibited.
5. Downloading of non-instructional materials from the Internet is unacceptable.
6. Disclaimer:

The Houston County Board of Education makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for services through the Internet. The school system shall not be responsible for any damages a user suffers, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruption. Use of information obtained via the Internet is at the user's own risk. The Houston County Board of Education specifically denies responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through Internet services. All users should consider the source of any information they obtain as well as the validity of that information.

E-Mail Guidelines

1. Identify yourself and your purpose.
2. Messages should be short, coherent, and to the point. Be professional at all times in regard to tone control, humor, and correct usage of grammar and spelling.
3. Global e-mails must be approved by the building principal or central office supervisor.
4. Sending or facilitating mass e-mails to school users or outside parties for school or non-school purposes without permission of the School Technology Coordinator (STC) or System Director is prohibited.
5. E-mail should not be sent to other internal users that would not be conveyed directly by telephone.
6. Opening and forwarding any e-mail attachments from unknown sources and/or that may contain viruses is prohibited.

Software Copyright Procedures

It is the intent of Houston County School System to adhere to the provisions of copyright laws as they relate to informational technology. It is also the intent of the district to comply with the license agreements and/or policy statements contained in the software packages used in the district. In circumstances where the interpretation of the copyright law is ambiguous, the district shall look to the applicable license agreement to determine appropriate use of the software.

Software Procedures

1. The Director of Instructional Technology or Director of Information Technology must contact software publishers to obtain written permission and procedures for making multiple copies, other than a single archival back-up.

2. The Director of Instructional Technology or Director of Information Technology must contact software publishers to obtain written permission and procedures for changing the format from one platform to another.
3. The Director of Instructional Technology or Director of Information Technology must obtain written permission from the software publisher to download or network programs to other computers. No software will be loaded onto a network without a legal network copy of the software.
4. The schools may not load a stand-alone single copy of a software product to multiple computer systems without explicit permission from the publisher. As a general rule, even though one can physically do so, placing software on multiple machines with one legal copy of a software product is ILLEGAL.
5. School computers may not be used to duplicate copyrighted software, except for a single archival copy not to be used simultaneously with the original
6. Duplication of copyrighted software materials is prohibited, except for a single archival copy not to be used simultaneously with the original. ONLY the legal copy may be used for educational purposes. The archival disk MUST be stored, to be used again ONLY to recopy the program if the legal copy becomes defective, *except* when permission is given to do otherwise by the publisher.
7. The principal of each school is responsible for establishing practices which will enforce this policy on the local school level.
8. A copyright policy should be posted in any room where a computer is located.
9. Users are not allowed to purchase, download or load software without written permission from the STC or System Director.

Social Networking:

For the purpose of this policy, social networking shall be defined as any web-based facility where students and faculty may engage in a conversational exchange of information. These facilities shall include, but not be limited to, chat rooms, blogs, and wikis.

Social networking shall only be permitted to be accessed from within the Houston County Educational Network (hcbe.net) when these facilities are hosted on a password protected secure and encrypted server environment, whose encryption key is authenticated and certified by a nationally recognized certification organization, such as Verisign.

Any posting by students to any such social networking facility must be authorized and approved by a faculty sponsor. The Executive Director of Information Technology has the authority to approve or deny the use of any social networking facility for use within the Houston County School System.

Network Security Procedures

Employee and Student Violations property, false information and refusal to carry out instructions: In order to maintain the integrity of the files and the security of data housed on the Local Area Network (LAN) server(s) in a school site, the following procedures must be adhered to:

1. Only those persons designated as System Operator (SYSOP) or Administrator by the Network Manager will be given permission to perform network system and/or network administrator duties.
2. Anyone using the LAN or school-wide network must receive proper network orientation prior to use.
3. The STC will instruct all school personnel on the proper use of the network and its hardware components.
4. The STC will perform a backup of the LAN server(s) daily.
5. The STC will check the LAN servers(s) once a week for any viruses prior to a tape backup. If any viruses are detected, the Network Manager will contact the Director of Information Technology.

6. The STC will install and configures all workstations and will train teachers in scanning computers for viruses.
7. Data diskettes will be scanned for viruses.
8. Teachers may access the network via their teacher user ID or a student User ID. *Teachers will endanger the integrity of their data and others' data if they share their ID or password.*
9. Computer workstations connected to a school LAN or school-wide network may not be relocated at anytime, or checked out for teacher use by the school year.
10. LAN components are not to be removed without the knowledge and written consent of the STC.
11. Software, including Public Domain and Shareware, may not be installed on a HCBOE computer without approval in accordance with the Hardware/Software Guidelines.
12. No one is allowed to use illegal copies of software on any computer workstation or any computer in the LAN or WAN.

Terms and Responsibilities

Administrative Responsibilities

1. Provide and maintain informational technology access to schools, district offices, and centers via the Wide Area Network.
2. Provide and update as necessary the appropriate policies for acceptable use of informational technology.
3. Train all employees in the appropriate use of informational technology.
4. Investigate cost effective ways to limit access to informational sources that are inappropriate for educational use.
5. Ensure that any information posted on the Houston County web server(s) is consistent with the Freedom of Information Act.
6. Monitor all activity on the Houston County School System Wide Area Network.
7. Ensure that network security is implemented at the highest level by employing an adequate network firewall and server security measures as to ensure against the unauthorized use or disclosure of personal information regarding students and faculty.
8. Employ Internet filtering technology and network security devices, which will restrict access by minors to inappropriate materials on the Internet and harmful matters including, but not limited to, Internet mail, chat rooms, and other forms of communication.
9. Implement and use appropriate tracking methods to ensure that minors do not participate in unauthorized or illegal activities while online.

School Responsibilities

1. Ensure that all faculty, staff and students are aware of the rights and responsibilities of acceptable informational technology use.
2. Provide access to informational technology to all faculty, staff and students as outlined by the Houston County School System and the Information Systems Strategic Technology Plan.
3. Ensure that network security is a high priority. Security violations must be reported to a network system administrator. Ensure that any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with

other systems will be monitored or denied access.

4. Ensure that any attempt to harm, modify, destroy data, equipment, or software will result in cancellation of technology privileges.
5. Handle the abuse of technology privileges in a manner consistent with the Houston County School System Policy.
6. Ensure that User IDs and Passwords are not compromised. The sharing of any user's ID and Password is not permitted.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees are to utilize the Houston County School System's computers, networks, and informational technology services for school system-related purposes and performance of job duties. Incidental personal use of school system computers is permitted as long as such use does not interfere with the employee's job duties and performance, with system operations, or other system users. "Incidental personal use" is defined as use by an individual employee for occasional personal communications. Personal use must comply with this policy and all other applicable policies, procedures, and rules.

1. Employees will observe the standard of courtesy and behavior consistent with the practices and policies of the Houston County Board of Education when sending or publishing messages or transmitting data or other information on the Internet.
2. Employees will not share their user IDs, passwords, or user log-on accounts with others and must make all efforts to safeguard any information from unauthorized users.
3. Employees may not attempt to access information for which they are not authorized.
4. Employees will not use informational technology for any purpose if in violation of the law.
5. Employees will use informational technology for instructional or administrative purposes only as it applies to their job responsibilities.
6. Employees are required to maintain hardware and software and report issues to the (STC) in a timely manner.
7. Employees will not allow students to use a computer that has been designated as a certified or non-certified employee workstation. In special circumstances written permission may be obtained for a waiver from the Director of Instructional Technology or Director of Information Technology.
8. Employees are not allowed to purchase, download or load software without permission from the STC or System Director.
9. Employees sharing data between school and home computers should always check their media for viruses before using on the LAN or school wide network.
10. Employees are not allowed to alter programs on the network file server or any computer system in the school.
11. Employee and system access codes shall not be given to students, other teachers or other administrators.

Student Responsibilities

1. Students will observe the standard of courtesy and behavior consistent with the practices and policies of the Houston County Board of Education when sending or publishing messages or transmitting data or other information on the Internet.
2. Students will not share their user IDs, passwords, user log-on accounts with others and must make all efforts to safeguard any information from unauthorized users.
3. Students may not attempt to access information for which they are not authorized.

4. Students will not use the system for any purpose if in violation of the law.
5. Students will use informational technology for instructional purposes only as it relates to classroom and co-curricular assignments and activities.
6. Student must receive permission from a teacher or designated personnel prior to accessing the Internet or any other specific file or application.
7. Student must sign in legibly on an appropriate log when using informational technology beyond teacher-led instructional activities.
8. Any student who identifies a security problem must notify an adult teacher/supervisor or administrator immediately.
9. Students are not allowed to purchase, download or load software without written permission from the STC or System Director.
10. Students may not have access to an employee's workstation under an employee ID and will be subject to disciplinary action.
11. Students are violating network security if they enter the system under a user ID other than one that is assigned to them and will be subject to disciplinary action.
12. Students disconnecting network components are guilty of harming network integrity and/or security, and will be subject to disciplinary action.
13. Students are violating network security if they alter programs or data on any network file server or any system's hard disk, and will be subject to disciplinary action.
14. Students are violating network security and software copyright laws if they knowingly use illegal copies of software on any school computer, and will be subject to disciplinary action.
15. Students are violating network security if they use game diskettes or participate in non-instructional web based games on HCBOE computers, and will be subject to disciplinary action.
16. Students purposely infecting any HCBOE computer with a virus will be subject to disciplinary action.
17. Students may only have access to Internet sites that have been provided by a teacher or designated personnel.

ADOPTED: 2/13/96

REVISED: 5/28/02; 7/8/03

ADOPTED: 2/13/96

REVISED: 5/28/02; 7/8/03

BOARD POLICY

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

**Descriptor Code: IFBGB/
KBB**

CREATING AND PLACING WEB PAGES

Adopted: 2/10/98

The availability of Internet access in Houston County schools provides an opportunity for students and staff to contribute to the school system's presence on the World Wide Web. The system's Web sites provide information to the world about school curriculum, instruction, school-authorized activities, and other general

information relating to Houston County schools and the system's mission. Internet access for the creation of Web pages is provided by system administrators and each building principal or the professional staff member designated by the principal. Creators of Web pages should familiarize themselves with and adhere to the system policies and procedures. Failure to follow these policies or procedures may result in the loss of authoring privileges or other more stringent disciplinary measures.

Other

Given the rapid change in technology, some of the technical standards outlined in this policy and the accompanying procedure may require change throughout the year. Such changes will be made by the system's network specialist with approval of the Superintendent. This Web Page Policy will be updated on an annual basis, or more frequently if required.

ADOPTED: 2/10/98

BOARD POLICY

Descriptor Code: IFBGE

**INTERNET SAFETY POLICY
CHILDREN'S INTERNET PROTECTION ACT OF 2000**

Adopted: 11/08/05

The Houston County Board of Education endorses and fully supports the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000, and instructs the Houston County School System's Technology Services Department to implement and maintain the following standards:

1. The Houston County School System shall employ Internet filtering technology, which will restrict access by minors to inappropriate materials on the Internet. The filtering solution is firmware based, employing the Sonic Wall Internet firewall, and using Cyber Patrol's "not list."
2. The Houston County School System will use appropriate measures, including Internet filtering solutions and network security devices, which will insure the safety of minors when using Internet mail, chat rooms, and other forms of communications.
3. The Houston County School System will use appropriate tracking methods to insure that minors do not participate in unauthorized or illegal measures while online.
4. The Houston County School System will employ adequate network firewall and server security measures as to insure against the unauthorized use or disclosure of personal information regarding students and faculty.
5. The Houston County School System shall employ Internet filtering and network firewall facilities, which will restrict access by minors to harmful matters.
6. The Houston County Board of Education conducted a public hearing located at the Middle Georgia Technical College in October, 2001. The purpose of this hearing was to allow public input specific to how the school system will comply with requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act of 2000.
7. Policies of the Houston county Board of Education dealing with technology and student use must sit on the table and have community members assist with the writing and language of such policies.
8. After our Internet safety policy is approved we will update our technology plan and notify the DOE.

ADOPTED: 11/8/05

REVISED:

BOARD POLICY

Descriptor Code: DJE

PURCHASING

Adopted: 5/9/06

The Director of Purchasing, hereinafter the "Director," shall direct and manage the purchasing, warehousing, supply distribution, and contracting activities of the District. The Director of Facilities shall conduct bids/requests for proposals and contracting activities for building construction, renovation and other facility operations.

The Director shall develop and submit for approval all system administrative regulations, rules and procedures for purchasing based on policy, law and standards of procurement.

This policy series applies to all employees, consultants, appointees and agents engaged in procurement activities for the District. All purchases, regardless of funding, for which the Houston County Board of Education or any of its schools is expected to make payment must comply with the rules, regulations and guidelines contained in the purchasing policy series.

Purchases from elected Board members or companies in which the Board member or member of the immediate family has a controlling interest are prohibited.

Purchases, except through sealed bid, from employees or companies in which the employee or a member of the immediate family has a controlling interest are prohibited. If the sealed bid of an employee is to be considered for a purchase, the employee must have no involvement in developing the specifications for the bid nor any involvement in the evaluation of the bid.

NOTE: For the purposes of this policy series, immediate family is defined as spouse, child, (natural or adopted), stepchild, mother, father, brother, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law.

CROSS REF.: DJEA – Purchasing Authority

ADOPTED: 9/8/81

REVISED: 11/1/86; 10/11/94; 1/11/05; 5/9/06

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

BOARD POLICY

Descriptor Code: DJEA

PURCHASING AUTHORITY

Adopted: 5/9/06

The Director of Purchasing shall be the chief purchasing agent and chief procurement officer of the Board. Under the approval process contained herein, the Director shall have the authority to purchase or contract to purchase and/or lease materials, supplies, equipment, services and all other items necessary to support the school District and educational programs. All purchases and/or contracts shall be awarded contingent upon an appropriation having been made, and upon the availability of funds. All purchases or contracts not provided for in one of the funds and all purchases or contracts that extend beyond a current fiscal year, or beyond the current calendar year, or involve the possibility of a penalty for cancellation or any other contingent expenditure in excess of the current appropriation will require prior approval of the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Operations or the Superintendent.

The Superintendent shall designate school based and department administrator level personnel who may approve purchases for their respective school, department and/or funds.

All purchases in excess of \$7,500.00 require approval of the appropriate Assistant Superintendent.

Employees may be reimbursed for small purchases made in good faith.

Purchases Requiring Board Approval

The following type purchases must be approved by the Board in an official meeting:

1. All purchases of capital equipment totaling in excess of \$100,000.00 regardless of budget approval/appropriation. Purchases must not be divided into smaller units in order to circumvent this policy.
2. All purchases of cars, trucks, buses, tractors and large industrial type equipment.
3. All services contracts greater than \$25,000.00 and a series of services contracts to the same vendor when the aggregate exceeds \$25,000.00 per fiscal year.
4. All contracts obligating the District beyond current fiscal and/or current calendar years.

Administrative Leeway

The Superintendent may waive the above-stated requirements when in his/her opinion, time is of the essence and delay would adversely impact the educational system. The Superintendent shall advise the Board when such waivers are made.

ADOPTED: 9/8/81

REVISED: 11/1/86; 10/11/94; 1/11/05; 5/9/06

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

BOARD POLICY

Descriptor Code: DJEB

**PURCHASING
QUALITY CONTROL**

Adopted: 5/9/06

In the event goods or services furnished by the bidder under contract or purchase order should for any reason not conform to the specifications or to the sample submitted by the bidder with his/her bid, the Director of Purchasing may reject the goods or services. The Director shall issue specific instructions to the bidder to remove the goods without expense to the Board and to replace all rejected goods with goods conforming to the specifications and/or samples.

The Director shall investigate all claims of substandard goods and/or services. If validated, the Director, in conjunction with the principal/department administrator, may reject the same.

When the cost exceeds \$1,000.00, the director shall report all cases of rejected goods and or services to the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Operations.

Specifications

The Director shall develop and/or approve departmental generated specifications as needed to purchase goods and services.

For common items, commercially available brands and model numbers may be cited in lieu of or in conjunction with specifications.

Purchasing Guides and Vendor Lists

The Director will publish and maintain a "Purchasing Policy and Procedure Manual" as necessary which will be an addendum to this policy series. The manual will be approved by the Board attorney, the

Superintendent, and the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Operations.

The Director will establish procedures for new vendors to be added to an approved vendor list.

Trial Tests and Field Checks

The Director is authorized to require chemical and physical tests of samples submitted with bids and samples of deliveries which are necessary to determine their conformance with specifications. In performance of tests, the Director may use any appropriate laboratory. All expenses for tests and inspections will be paid by the Board.

Although certain products may meet specifications, they may not offer the best value. In such cases, the Director may field test products by having a school or department use those products in the normal course of daily activity where and when the product would be used.

Products rated inferior by Board employees may be identified on the request for quotation, not considered, or rejected during current and/or future bids.

Inspections

A strong inspection program at the time of delivery is necessary to ensure the conformity, quality, quantity and timeliness standards of goods and services.

The Director will set standards and procedures and will exercise general supervision over the inspection of deliveries of all goods and services to determine their conformance to the specifications set forth in the bid/contract or purchase order.

ADOPTED: 10/11/94; 1/11/05; 5/9/06

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

BOARD POLICY

Descriptor Code: DJEC

**PURCHASING
COST CONTROL**

Adopted: 5/9/06

Each employee must make every effort to control costs while maintaining a quality level of goods and services suitable for the needs of the District. Cost control can be achieved through standardization of goods and services, quantity or bulk purchasing and cooperative purchasing.

Schools and departments must not purchase an item from a vendor when the same or like item is stocked in the central warehouse.

Quantity Purchasing

Cost control can be achieved through bulk purchasing. The Director of Purchasing will purchase and stock common and routinely used school and office products when such are consumed in large quantities or are needed at regular intervals.

Cooperative Purchasing

In keeping with a policy of cost containment, the Board will allow cooperative purchasing when it is in the best interest of the school District, and when allowing other agencies to purchase off a Board initiated purchase/contract does not increase the cost to the Board.

The Director may negotiate an agreement with any other government agency for the cooperative use of supplies, equipment or services under the terms agreed upon between or among the parties. All such agreements must be evidenced by a written agreement and approved by the Board.

The Director may use existing State and Federal contracts to make purchases when such contracts allow local participation and to do so is in the best interest of the Board and provides a cost savings to the system.

ADOPTED: 10/11/94; 1/11/05; 5/9/06

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

BOARD POLICY

Descriptor Code: DJECA

PURCHASING STANDARDIZATION

Adopted: 5/9/06

Equipment, Furniture and Vehicles

When feasible, items requiring recurring maintenance, supplies or follow-up service contracts shall be standardized. The items listed below shall be centrally procured by or under the direction of the Director of Purchasing in order to contain cost and standardize products.

1. All copy machines, duplicating equipment, multi-function machines and printers
2. All telephone systems and telephone equipment
3. All furniture of all types
4. All office equipment to include but not to be limited to typewriters, calculators, time-keeping equipment, etc.
5. All cars, trucks, buses, tractors, forklifts and industrial equipment.
6. All audio/visual equipment, to include projectors (overhead, LCD, other), VCRs, DVD recorders/players, etc.
7. physical education equipment
8. All desktop and laptop/notebook computer equipment

Computer Hardware

All purchases of computer hardware shall meet or exceed the Minimum Technology Standards and Specifications for Computer Hardware developed by the System Technology Committee. Hardware purchased that does not meet or exceed these Standards and Specifications will not be maintained by District personnel or with District funds. All hardware purchases, regardless of funding source, must be approved by the Director of Information Technology.

Desktop/Laptop/Notebook Computer Software

All purchases of desktop/laptop/notebook computer software to be used for administrative purposes shall meet the standards set forth by the System Technology Committee. Desktop computer software which does not meet these standards will not be supported by District personnel or District funds. All desktop computer software to be used for administrative purposes must be approved by the Director of Information Technology.

ADOPTED: 9/8/81

REVISED: 10/11/94; 1/13/98; 5/12/98; 9/8/98; 5/9/06

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

BOARD POLICY

Descriptor Code: DJED

**PURCHASING
BIDS AND QUOTATIONS**

Adopted: 5/9/06

1. Purchases of all equipment, materials, supplies, services, rents and leases shall be based on sound business practices. Written bids, request for proposals (RFP), oral phone quotations, facsimile quotations, email bids and quotes, State of Georgia contracts, General Services Administration Contracts, Georgia Department of Education Regional Educational Service Agency cooperative purchasing contracts, applicable bids by local Government Agencies, and other government cooperative purchasing programs on a local, State or Nationwide contract, shall be used to purchase goods and services as specified below. Requests for proposals may be used when the use of competitive sealed bidding is either not practicable or not advantageous to the school system. Generally, a Request for Proposal will only be used when the school system lacks expertise in formulating detailed specifications for the goods or service needed or when the service needed or the service being purchased does not lend itself to a set of specifications.

2. Term contracts for goods and services will be established when deemed necessary and practicable by the Director of Purchasing. When such contracts are not available and other federal, state, local government or agency contracts are not available or are not in the best interest of the Board, the following shall be used to determine bid requirements. (See Houston County Board of Education Policy GAG, Conflict of Interest.)
 - a. Purchase of goods and services with a list price cost of \$1,000.00 or less may be made non-competitively.
 - b. Purchases of goods and services with a list price cost of more than \$1,000.00 but less than \$7,500.00 require a verbal, facsimile, email or written quotation from two or more vendors.
 - c. Purchases of goods and services with a list price cost of \$7,500.00 but less than \$75,000.00 require a facsimile, email or written quotation from three or more vendors.
 - d. Purchases of goods and services with a list price cost of more than \$75,000.00 require sealed bids or sealed proposals. Such purchases shall be given sufficient advertisement to encourage broad participation from competitive sources. Verbal, facsimile, and email bids or proposals may not be used.
 - e. All RFP's shall be written regardless of dollar value, RFP's in excess of \$10,000.00 shall be sealed proposals.
 - f. Sole source products and services are exempt from bid and RFP requirements. See item #7.

3. The following items, regardless of amount, may be purchased without competitive bids (See Houston County Board of Education Policy GAG, Conflict of Interest):
 - a. Textbooks, films, slides, video tapes, newspapers, library books, reference materials, or other instructional media from the publisher, distributor or agent.
 - b. Tests and test scoring services from the publisher or licensed agent.
 - c. Agreements and renewal agreements for maintenance service from the original vendor or authorized agent of the installed equipment or products. When a renewal agreement cost increase

exceeds five (5) percent of the current cost and the service can be competitively bid, the renewal must be bid.

- d. Continuance of an existing purchase agreement, rent, lease or purchase order when such continuance is in the best interest of the District.
- e. Additional purchases of the same or like equipment, material, supplies, services, rentals or leases previously bid may be made provided the additional order is at the same or lower price or does not exceed a 5% increase.
- f. Personal services of professional technicians and consultants.

4. Soliciting bids and quotations.

- a. All bidders shall be provided with the same information concerning the goods or services to be procured to include changes to the original solicitation. Each solicitation will include the Board terms and conditions of the purchase.
- b. All solicitations in excess of \$50,000.00 will be advertised on the Houston County Board of Education Website.
- c. All bidders shall be given the same deadline for response to solicitations. Bids submitted after the closing date and time will not be considered. Such bids shall be marked with the date and time received and filed with the bid folder.

5. Selecting and awarding bids and RFP's.

- a. Bids will be awarded to the lowest responsible and responsive bidder. The term responsible means that the bidder has the capacity and capability to provide the goods and services requested. The term responsive means that the bidder has indicated in the bid that he/she will provide the goods or services as specified or alternate goods or services that will meet or exceed the bid requirements. In determining the lowest responsible and responsive bidder, the solicitor shall consider the following factors:

- 1. The ability, capacity and skill of the bidder to perform the contract or provide the services required.
- 2. The capability of the bidder to perform the contract or provide the service promptly, or within the time specified, without delay or interference.
- 3. The character, integrity, reputation, judgment, experience and efficiency of the bidder.
- 4. The quality of performance of previous contract or services.
- 5. The previous and existing compliance by the bidder with laws, policies, terms and conditions relating to the contract or services.
- 6. The sufficiency of the financial resources and ability of the bidder to perform the contract or provide the service.
- 7. The quality, availability and adaptability of the supplies or services required by the solicitation.
- 8. The number and scope of conditions attached to the bid by the bidder, if any.
- 9. The life cycle cost when the solicitation is for equipment with a life expectancy of three or more years.

- a. Competitive proposals (RFP's) shall be selected using the following procedures:

1. The contents of all proposals shall not be disclosed to other than Board employees and/or authorized consultants involved in selecting the best proposal until after the contract is awarded.
2. A register of all vendors submitting proposals shall be made available for public inspection.
3. After the opening of proposals, discussions and negotiations may be conducted with the responsible and responsive offerors who submitted proposals determined to be susceptible of being selected for award. These discussions are for the purpose of clarification to assure full understanding of, and responsiveness to the RFP requirements and to negotiate the best possible position for the school system. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion and revision of proposals. Such revisions may be permitted after original submissions and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining best and final offers. In conducting discussions, there shall be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.
4. Award shall be made to the responsible offeror whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the Board taking into consideration price and the evaluation factors set forth in the RFP. The contract file shall contain the basis on which the award is made.
 - a. Tie bids shall be determined by drawing lots or by coin toss in public with vendors present or disinterested personnel witnessing the drawing/coin toss.
6. If after a bid is opened, the low bidder claims he/she has made an appreciable error in the preparation of the bid, and can support such claim with evidence satisfactory to the Director, the bidder shall be permitted to withdraw the bid. The bidder shall be disqualified from again bidding on the same goods or services should additional bids be required.
7. Sole source products and services are those which are available from only one vendor. Such products and services are exempt from bid and RFP requirements. The purchase of sole source products and services must be justified. A letter of justification must be attached to the purchase order/requisition when forwarded to the Purchasing Department. In situations where "sole source" classification is debatable, the Director of Purchasing shall make the final determination.
8. Emergency purchases are those purchases which if not performed immediately would result in health/safety hazards to students and/or employees, and/or would result in additional damage, and/or would cause interruption of the instructional program or essential business operations of the school system. To avoid emergency purchases, principals and department heads shall ensure their staffs plans and execute purchase requirements in a timely manner. Emergency purchases are exempt from bid and RFP requirements.

ADOPTED: 9/8/81
REVISED: 11/1/86; 10/11/94; 5/9/06

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

BOARD POLICY

Descriptor Code: DJEG

**PURCHASING
PURCHASE ORDERS AND CONTRACTS**

Adopted: 2/12/08

Purchase Orders

1. Except as provided under emergency purchases, no purchase shall be made without a valid purchase order or an authorization for a Procurement Card purchase. Orders for goods and services shall not be placed with the vendor prior to a purchase order being issued by the Purchasing Department or the purchaser having authority to make a Procurement card purchase. The Director of Purchasing shall report unauthorized purchases to the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Operations. The Purchasing Department shall forward all purchase orders to the vendor by mail, facsimile, or other electronic means.
2. The Director will prescribe the form and procedures for processing purchase orders.
3. When an emergency exists and the Purchasing Department is closed or not available, an emergency purchase order may be issued by the highest level of supervision available within the requesting department. The supervisor issuing the emergency purchase order shall provide the Purchasing Department with all information concerning the purchase no later than the next regular work day.
4. Procurement cards may be used to expedite the receipt of goods and services and reduce the administrative cost of procurement. The issuance and use of procurement cards shall be controlled by a card administrator. The Superintendent or appropriate Assistant Superintendent must authorize the card administrator to issue cards. Each card and card holder shall have spending and usage limits for their card. Card holders shall sign an agreement with the School District that they are responsible for proper use of the procurement card. The Principal or Department Head shall sign for and control any cards issued in the name of the school or department. The Superintendent may authorize other credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, etc.) as necessary to manage the business operations of the District.
5. Misuse of procurement cards and other credit cards shall be reported to the Superintendent. Upon confirmation of misuse of a Procurement Card, the Superintendent shall revoke all purchasing authority from the card holder to include use of purchase orders. The Superintendent shall take administrative action up to and including termination of any employee misusing a procurement or credit card.
6. The Director will prescribe the procedures for procurement card use, and publish a manual for card users. The Procurement Card Manual shall be presented to the Board for approval as policy.

Encumbrance of Funds

Except for emergency purchases, prior to approving the purchase, the department approval authority shall ensure that a sufficient unencumbered balance in excess of all unpaid obligations remains in the account to be charged.

Contracts

1. The Superintendent may approve a contract for goods and services. Such contracts may require review by legal counsel, the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Operations and Director of Purchasing.
2. Cost plus a percentage of cost and cost reimbursement contracts are not authorized.
3. Multi-year purchase, multi-year lease-purchase, and other types of contracts for goods and services that are in the best interest of the Board may be used by Departments and Principals. Such contracts shall be in accordance with and contain the requirements of O.C.G.A 20-2-506. Such contracts shall be forwarded to the Director of Purchasing as in CONTRACTS, paragraph 1 above.
 - a. The contract shall terminate absolutely and without further obligation on the part of the Board at the close of the

- calendar year in which it was executed, or year for which it may be renewed.
- b. The contract may provide for automatic renewal at the end of each calendar year.
 - c. The contract shall terminate absolutely at such time as appropriation for such contract is no longer available to satisfy the obligation of the Board. Determination of such appropriation shall be made by the Board.
 - d. The Contractor shall certify its compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), D.L. 99-603 and the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act OCGA 13-10-90 et seq.

4. The Director shall prescribe the form and procedures for goods and services contract. Contracts for goods and services shall be filed in the Purchasing Department or user department. The department head from the using department shall appoint a contract monitor for each contract. The contract monitor shall be certified, professional/technical or supervisory personnel.

5. All contracts for goods and services are to be in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia.

6. The Superintendent and/or Chairman of the Board of Education shall be signatory to all contracts obligating the District for more than one fiscal or calendar year. In the absence of the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent for School Operations may act as signatory. No other employee may obligate the District for multiple fiscal or calendar years, regardless of funding source.

Change Orders

Changes to purchase orders shall be processed in the same manner as purchase orders. The Director shall prescribe the form and procedures for change orders.

ADOPTED: 10/11/94; 1/11/05; 5/9/06; 2/12/08

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

BOARD POLICY

Descriptor Code: DJEI

**PURCHASING
VENDOR RELATIONS**

Adopted: 5/9/06

The Director of Purchasing will prepare a vendor bulletin informing vendors of the policies and procedures for becoming a registered vendor and for conducting business with the Board. This publication will be posted on the Houston County Board of Education website.

The Director will establish and maintain a list of approved vendors for use by system personnel.

The Board encourages the Director and system administrators to make frequent contact with vendors to develop good business relationships and keep abreast of new products and services.

All employees involved in the purchasing of goods and services shall promote competition and equal opportunity in all procurement activities. Favoritism shall not be extended to any vendor except as provided for within this policy series. Board personnel must avoid any impropriety or appearance of any impropriety in conducting procurement activities.

No employee shall make personal gain from conducting business with a vendor. No employee shall directly or indirectly solicit any gift or accept or receive any gifts, whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise, or any other form, under circumstances and of such value that it could reasonably be inferred that the gift was intended to influence such employee in the performance of official duties.

Gifts and/or offers which violate this policy or which the employee reasonably suspects may violate this

policy must be reported to the Director, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations or Superintendent. The acceptance of a gift, gain or gratuity which violates this policy shall be subject to administrative action up to and including termination.

Sales Calls and Demonstrations

The Board encourages the Director and administrators to entertain sales calls from and demonstrations by established vendors for the purpose of maintaining good vendor relations and testing products in the operational environment. Such sales calls and demonstrations should not interfere with nor detract from the instructional process, nor should they imply any obligation to purchase.

ADOPTED: 9/8/81

REVISED: 11/1/86; 10/11/94; 5/9/06

BOARD POLICY

**HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
Descriptor Code: DJEJ**

**PURCHASING
PAYMENT PROCEDURES**

Adopted: 1/11/05

Bill Payment Authorization

The Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Operations will prescribe procedures for payment of invoices and will authorize payment for goods and services when:

1. Purchased in accordance with Board purchasing policies, regulations and procedures; and
2. Certified by the receiving agent as having been conformed to the purchase order as to quantity and quality.

Invoices

Invoices submitted for payment must be originals. When original invoices are not available, a written explanation for the facsimile must be attached.

Payment will not be made from vendor statements.

ADOPTED: 9/8/81

REVISED: 11/1/86; 10/11/94; 1/11/05

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM