

# Procurement Guide

## For Zero-Emission School Buses and Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment



### Introduction

California school districts can procure zero-emission school buses and electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) through many avenues. Ultimately, though, the method a district uses will depend on its procurement requirements, how many buses and chargers it plans to purchase, the type of ownership, and any desired add-ons such as fleet management software and charge management. The main procurement options are summarized in the following sections.

Each school district must ensure that its selected procurement method complies with its own local purchasing policies, board requirements, and applicable procurement laws. Cal Fleet Advisor does not endorse or recommend any specific vendor, cooperative, or procurement method.

### Request for Proposals

A request for proposals (RFP) allows a school district to solicit and evaluate detailed proposals from vendors based on both cost and qualifications. An RFP typically provides information about the project scope, zero-emission school bus specifications, charging infrastructure, and services requested.

#### Use an RFP when:

- You want to procure multiple zero-emission school buses, chargers, or a full electrification package;
- You are seeking design, build, or operations support in addition to equipment; or
- You want the flexibility to select the vendor based on your specifications.

### Quote/Purchase Order

Districts can directly contact a manufacturer, dealer, or vendor to request a quote for specific bus or charger models and issue a purchase order if the total cost is below the formal bid threshold.

#### Use a purchase order when:

- You are procuring zero-emission school buses or chargers with a total cost below the district's formal bid threshold.

Refer to the **California State Superintendent of Public Instruction** and the **Public Contract Code** for the latest bid thresholds.

## California DGS State Contracts

School districts can use [California's Department of General Services \(DGS\) EVSE and zero-emission school bus contracts](#). Statewide zero-emission school bus contracts are available and provide access to pre-approved zero-emission school buses at competitive pricing. The DGS EVSE contracts can be used to procure chargers and their associated accessories and services.

### Use a state contract when:

- You need to move quickly without issuing a new RFP;
- You want pre-negotiated pricing and terms vetted by the state through competitively bid contracts; or
- You want a more streamlined procurement process.

## Cal Fleet Advisor Zero-Emission School Bus Forum

Hear from experts at **DGS** and **Sourcewell** as they share insights, resources, and best practices discussed during our **procurement forum** on advancing zero-emission school bus adoption.

### Watch now:



## Cooperative Purchasing

With cooperative purchasing, multiple school districts can work together to purchase buses under a single contract. Several California education and county agencies operate joint powers authorities or purchasing cooperatives that aggregate buying power for participating districts. School districts can also use pre-competed contracts established by multistate or national cooperatives that public agencies in California can use to purchase goods and services without conducting their own solicitation. These contracts cover a wide range of zero-emission school buses, charging infrastructure (EVSE), and related services.

### Use a cooperative purchasing contract when:

- You want to share procurement administration and gain better pricing through volume;
- You want to access a large catalog of prequalified zero-emission school buses and EVSE vendors through cooperative organizations; or
- You are collaborating regionally on zero-emission school bus or charger deployments.



## Piggybacking on Another Agency's Contract

Under California's Public Contract Code §20118, a school district may "piggyback" onto another public agency's competitively bid contract for the same goods or services if that contract includes a piggyback clause. The district's board, however, must determine if it is in the best interests of the district to piggyback and then approve the use of that contract. For example, if one school district procures a zero-emission school bus through a dealer under a contract that allows other agencies to piggyback, then another school district can use that same contract and pricing without issuing a new RFP.

### Use a piggybacking contract when:

- Another district or county office has already competitively procured the same buses or chargers; or
- You want to simplify purchasing by using an existing public contract.



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