Purchasing Specialist

Reports To: Executive Director or Designee
Department: Business Services
Employment Status: Full-Time, Hourly, Non-Exempt
Work Calendar: 215-day work calendar
Location: Palm Springs area. Regular local availability is required to retrieve and route company mail. The overall work arrangement will be based on operational needs and supervisor direction.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Purchasing Specialist supports BEST Academy's purchasing and procurement activities by processing purchase requests, communicating with vendors, comparing pricing and service options, maintaining purchasing records, tracking orders, and assisting with the development of consistent purchasing procedures. The position helps ensure purchasing activity is accurate, timely, properly documented, and completed in accordance with established requirements, Board policies, approved budgets, contractual obligations, and internal controls.

Working under the direction of the Executive Director or designee, the Purchasing Specialist learns and applies BEST Academy's purchasing procedures, researches available options, identifies discrepancies or concerns, and prepares recommendations for review. Significant exceptions, commitments, contract terms, disputed matters, and purchases outside assigned authority are referred to the appropriate administrator.

The Purchasing Specialist works closely with leadership, Business Services, Operations, Enrollment, academic teams, vendors, and other employees to support organizational purchasing needs. As BEST Academy's purchasing processes develop, the position may help document procedures, improve workflows, and provide employees with routine guidance on purchasing requirements.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Purchasing Support and Order Processing

- Receive and review purchase requests for completeness, required approvals, supporting documentation, and stated business or educational purpose.
- Obtain quotes, research products and vendors, compare pricing and service options, and prepare information for review and approval.

- Process approved purchase orders and purchases in accordance with established procedures and assigned authority.
- Track orders, expected delivery dates, backorders, substitutions, returns, credits, and outstanding items.
- Communicate with requesting employees regarding order status, missing documentation, delivery concerns, and required follow-up.
- Identify unusual, higher-risk, nonstandard, or out-of-policy requests and refer them to the appropriate administrator.
- Assist with documenting purchasing procedures and recommend practical improvements to forms, workflows, and tracking methods.

Vendor and Contract Support

- Communicate with vendors regarding quotes, product availability, pricing, delivery, invoices, returns, credits, and routine service concerns.
- Assist with vendor solicitation, onboarding, monitoring, renewal, compliance documentation, and discontinuation processes.
- Collect and organize vendor documents, which may include insurance, licenses, agreements, background requirements, and other compliance records.
- Compare vendor qualifications, pricing, capacity, service, and documentation and prepare recommendations for review.
- Coordinate with the employee responsible for vendor contracts and refer contractual language, disputed terms, and material business commitments for appropriate review.
- Document vendor-performance concerns and recommend follow-up or escalation when appropriate.
- Maintain purchasing and vendor records that support audits, financial reporting, and organizational accountability.

Fiscal Records and Compliance Support

- Confirm that purchase requests include required approvals, funding information, documentation, and business or educational justification before processing.
- Maintain accurate records of purchases, approvals, receipts, returns, credits, purchasing cards, and supporting documentation.
- Coordinate with Business Services to research purchasing commitments, invoices, credits, returns, discrepancies, and outstanding orders.
- Prepare routine purchasing reports, summaries, transaction documentation, and supporting information for leadership review.
- Assist with annual audits, document requests, reconciliations, and corrective-action follow-up related to purchasing.
- Follow applicable requirements, Board policies, charter-school procedures, and established internal controls.

- Protect confidential student, employee, vendor, financial, payment-card, and organizational information.

School Materials and Operational Purchasing

- Support purchasing for instructional materials, technology, curriculum, supplies, professional services, and approved student-support expenditures.
- Help distinguish consumable supplies from non-consumable school property and route items for appropriate inventory or records processing.
- Coordinate with employees responsible for receiving, inventory, distribution, storage, and records management.
- Research purchasing discrepancies, delayed orders, incomplete shipments, returns, credits, or missing documentation and coordinate appropriate follow-up.
- Assist with recurring purchasing needs and communicate anticipated delays, shortages, or unresolved issues to the appropriate employees and administrators.

Employee and Cross Functional Support

- Serve as a point of contact for routine purchasing questions and provide employees with guidance regarding required forms, documentation, approvals, and order status.
- Coordinate with Operations regarding materials, inventory, receiving, distribution, storage, and purchasing needs.
- Coordinate with Enrollment and academic teams when purchasing activity affects student services, instructional access, or program implementation.
- Provide limited operational, enrollment, or accounts-payable backup support as assigned, and support special projects involving purchasing systems, vendor records, internal controls, or operational workflows, provided these responsibilities remain secondary to the position's purchasing duties.
- Routinely retrieve mail from BEST Academy’s Palm Springs mailbox according to an established schedule; safeguard, organize, and promptly route financial documents, checks, contracts, confidential correspondence, and other materials to the appropriate employee or department.

Additional Responsibilities

- Participate in meetings, professional development, and training necessary to learn assigned systems, purchasing practices, and applicable requirements.
- Attend occasional meetings, trainings, audits, or school events at other locations as required.

- Maintain reliable records, promptly communicate material delays, risks, exceptions, or unresolved issues to the supervisor, and perform other related duties consistent with the purpose and level of responsibility of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Education and Experience

- High school diploma or equivalent.
- Experience performing administrative, clerical, financial, customer-service, operational, or other detail-oriented work.
- Demonstrated ability to maintain accurate records, organize competing priorities, meet deadlines, and follow assignments through completion.
- Experience handling confidential financial, vendor, employee, student, or organizational information.
- Ability to learn purchasing processes, financial systems, organizational procedures, and applicable documentation requirements.
- An equivalent combination of education, training, and experience that provides the required knowledge and abilities may be considered.

Preferred Qualifications

- Education or training in purchasing, business administration, finance, public administration, or a related area.
- Experience involving purchasing, procurement, vendor coordination, finance, contracts, accounts payable, inventory, or school operations.
- Experience supporting a TK-12 school, charter school, public agency, nonprofit organization, or other regulated environment.
- Experience comparing quotes, coordinating vendors, maintaining purchasing records, or supporting audit requirements.
- Experience documenting procedures, improving workflows, or learning new administrative systems.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

The successful candidate must be able to:

- Review purchasing requests, compare products and vendors, identify missing information or concerns, and prepare reasonable recommendations.

- Apply established procedures consistently and recognize matters that require supervisor review or escalation.
- Maintain accurate and organized records while handling confidential financial and organizational information.
- Communicate clearly and professionally with employees, vendors, leadership, and external partners.
- Research routine purchasing concerns and follow through on orders, returns, credits, discrepancies, and vendor communications.
- Prepare clear correspondence, summaries, tracking records, reports, and procedure documentation.
- Organize competing priorities, meet deadlines, and complete assignments with appropriate attention to detail.
- Build collaborative relationships across academic, operational, financial, and administrative teams.
- Use standard office technology and learn the purchasing, financial, student-information, and document-management systems used by BEST Academy.
- Work independently on assigned tasks while seeking guidance on exceptions, contractual matters, significant commitments, and non-routine concerns.

WORKING CONDITIONS AND PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

This position primarily performs office and computer-based work and requires regular use of a computer, telephone, and other standard office equipment. The employee must be able to communicate effectively through in-person, electronic, telephone, and video methods and work collaboratively with employees across departments.

The position may require the employee to receive, review, organize, move, or distribute office materials and supplies. The employee may be required to remain stationary for extended periods and occasionally move or position materials and supplies weighing up to 25 pounds, with or without reasonable accommodation.

The position requires routine local travel within the Palm Springs area to retrieve company mail and may occasionally require travel to other BEST Academy locations, meetings, trainings, audits, or school events. The work arrangement will be based on operational needs and supervisor direction. Regular and reliable attendance during assigned workdays is an essential function of the position.

Reliable transportation and the ability to travel locally during the workday are required. When use of a personal vehicle is authorized, mileage will be reimbursed in accordance with BEST Academy policy and applicable law.

Reasonable accommodations may be provided to enable qualified individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the position.

ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

Employment may be contingent upon completion of requirements applicable to the position, including background clearance, tuberculosis risk assessment or clearance, mandated-reporter training, and verification of authorization to work in the United States.

This job description describes the general nature and level of work expected of the position. It is not an exhaustive list of every duty, responsibility, or qualification. Duties may be modified based on organizational needs, applicable requirements, and the employee's qualifications.

BEST Academy is an equal opportunity employer and provides equal employment opportunities without regard to any characteristic protected by applicable law.