



# **Certificate in Purchasing/Procurement**

## **Participant's Handbook**

Revised August 2022

## **What is the Certificate in Purchasing/Procurement?**

- The Certificate is designed to develop your professional knowledge, understanding, and competence to a level where you will be able to contribute effectively to key areas of school purchasing and procurement.
- The program aims to provide you with a framework for developing and improving your own professional administrative practices within the organization where you work.
- The program encourages you to think about what you do and how you do it within your job.
- The program promotes best practices within educational administration.

## **What are the objectives of the program?**

The specific objectives of this program are to provide opportunities to:

- To promote the highest professional and ethical standards of school business management practices for Alabama's schools.
- To provide recognized standards of professional competence for school business officials.
- To provide professional growth opportunities in order to carry out most effectively the responsibilities of the purchasing and procurement officer.
- To capitalize on the experiences and training of current school business officials to enhance the functions of all school business officials.
- To develop skills to link fiscal operations to school district goals.
- To build confidence in school business officials in their ability to effectively manage school finances.
- To analyze the duties and responsibilities of a school business official and identify minimum skills needed.

## **Who is the program for?**

- The program is designed for Purchasing Managers, Supervisors, practitioners or assistants who have responsibility in purchasing and procurement. It is also available to anyone in school business management or K-12 education.

## **How will I be supported while undertaking the program?**

- The program will also provide you with opportunities to meet and discuss issues with colleagues. We believe that '**networking**' can be one of the most valuable aspects of the program and we hope you will take full advantage of the opportunities available.
- The program courses will provide a great deal of information in a short period of time. The courses are intended to cover major points about their respective topics, offer opportunity for questions and discussion, and provide resource

information for future use.

- Throughout the program you will be supported by instructors who will meet you at the face-to-face sessions, be in contact with you when you are working through the modules and will assist you as you prepare for assessment.
- AASBO's professional development opportunities are geared toward helping you complete the program and maintain your certificate with continuing professional education.

### **How will I be encouraged to learn while working through the program?**

You will be given the opportunity to take part in a number of different learning activities as you journey through the program.

- You will have opportunities to work on your own studying the materials.
- There will be times when you may meet with other participants to take part in learning activities.
- You will be able to learn from a range of sources through real time experience.
- You will have discussions with your instructors in order to stimulate your learning.

### **What if I have difficulties during the program?**

We know that you are embarking upon a long journey through the program. There may be times when you experience some difficulties. Wherever possible we want to help and support you throughout your learning journey. If your issue is technical or administrative, the point of contact is the program leader who can be contacted through the AASBO by email at [www.aasbo.com](http://www.aasbo.com).

## **What does the program contain?**

The program will contain 8 courses (30 classroom hours).

### **School Business Operations I & II**

It is important that the school business official understands school business operations. This two-part session will provide an overview in key areas of school business, finance and management including a foundation of laws, policies and regulations that affect the day-to-day operations of a school business office.

#### **Course Content:**

- School Board and Administrative Functions
- General functions of school business
- Code of Alabama/Administrative Code
- Capital Plan
- Connecting Purchasing to the classroom
- Relationship between business office and operations (transportation, child nutrition, facility planning and property management)
- Finance 101 (School funding, accounting process and coding, budgeting, reporting and audits)
- Public records
- Purpose and need for internal control (Knowledge of internal control components, and understanding of internal controls)
- The relationship between Accounts Payable and Purchasing
- Independent Contractor/Employee Determination
- Team building and leadership

### **Effective Business Communications**

Effective Communication is an essential component of organizational success whether it is at the departmental or organizational level. Being able to communicate effectively and in a professional manner is a necessary and vital part for every school business official. This course is designed to improve your communication as it addresses basic communication skills, effective oral communication, public speaking, utilization of email and technology as a communication tool and more. Learn techniques and strategies to send clear messages, create credibility and develop strategic communications.

#### **Course Content:**

- Basic elements of the communication process
- Communication Strategies, Preferences and Adaptability
- Active Listening
- Clarifying Feedback

- Tips for Presentations
- E-mail/Social Media Communications
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### **Purchasing and Procurement Overview**

When procuring and contracting for goods and services, school districts must follow various state laws and federal regulations that govern procurement, contracting, and bidding in the public sector. This session will cover the legal aspects and basics of performing the purchasing and procurement functions and general accepted practices and procedures in the purchasing process.

#### **Course Content:**

- Understanding governmental procurement
- Roles and Responsibility of Purchasing Officer/Director
- Legal Requirements
  - Alabama Procurement Laws
  - Federal Procurement Requirements
- Centralized vs. Decentralized Purchasing
- Best Practices in Procurement

### **Ethics and Vendor Supply Relationships and Management**

When procuring and contracting for goods and services, school districts must follow various state laws and federal regulations that govern procurement, contracting, and bidding in the public sector. This course will focus on vendor/contractor relationships and the code of ethics for the school district combining educational and business ethics. Topics will include a definition of business ethics, sources of ethical values, ethical standards in procurement, Alabama Ethics Law, ethical guidelines for decision makings, and how to cope with unethical situations.

#### **Course Content:**

- Alabama Code of Ethics
- Vendor/Contractor Relationships
- Ethics in purchasing
- Ethical Decision Making
- Conflicts of Interest
- Procurement Fraud

## **RFP / Contract Development and Management I & II**

This two-part course will focus on developing, processing and management of bids and procurement contracts. Part I will focus on how bids/RFP should be written and processed to minimize mistakes and bidder protest. It will include the competitive bid process solicitation methods, writing the solicitation document, advertising, evaluating, and awarding/negotiating the bid. Part II will cover various information on contract law and management. It will include information on different types of contracts, elements of a contract, writing and interpreting contracts and contract administration.

### **Course Content:**

- Planning the project
- RFP Vs. Sealed Bids
- Developing, Managing and Evaluating bids/RFP
- Project and Performance Management
- Writing Effective Statements of Work
- Bonding/Insurance Requirements
- Construction Payment Process
- Professional Service Contracts
- Elements of a Contract
- Vendor Contracts, School District Contracts and Contract Administration
- Write and interpret contracts (components of a contract, essential contents of a contract)
- Red flags/What to look for in contracts
- Procurement Risk Management and Conflict Resolution

## **Financial Management Strategies and Data Driven Decision Making**

Financial management is essential for all areas of school business including those with or without an accounting background. Now more than ever, school business officials must synchronize the actions of business units and the goals of the school district so that the educational resources are expended in the most efficient manner possible, especially in the classroom. This session will address financial management techniques for developing long range plans and making management decisions based on school district data, plans and goals.

### **Course Content:**

- Organization Alignment with District and Program Plans/Goals
- Forecasting, planning, and asset replacement schedules
- Combating and Eliminating Waste in School Spending
- Strategic Sourcing and Financing Options
- Financial analysis of life cycle costs and quality control
- Effective Cost Estimating for Decision Making

- Sustainability in K-12 Procurement

### **Public Works Contracts**

This session will provide an overview of the Public Works Law and the requirements and procedures for contract administration for public works projects for school districts.

#### **Course Content:**

- What is a Public Works Project?
- Public Works Procedures and Requirements
- Division of Construction Management
- Contract Administration

#### I. Elective

- Topics will include best practices and/or updates relative to purchasing/procurement.

### **How will the program work?**

AASBO contracts with the University of Alabama to administer the certificate program. There will be three training sessions per year consisting of two days per session. The 8 courses will consist of 30 hours of classroom instruction with each course consisting of 3 hours of classroom instruction.

Participants enrolling in the program will be expected to complete the program requirements within a two-year time frame. Participants are required to attend each session in its entirety.

### **Continuing Professional Education (CPE)**

Upon completion of the certificate program each certificate holder is required to obtain a minimum of twelve (12) hours of continuing professional education each fiscal year (October–September)

The CPE requirements take effect the fiscal year following the completion year of the certificate. (Certificate is completed in FY 2021-2022; CPE requirements take effect in FY 2022-2023.)

AASBO will accept CPE credits through the following organizations: AASBO, SASBO, International ASBO, AASOP, GFOA, ASCPA, or any organization recognized as CPE by the Alabama State Board of Public Accountancy. One-half of the required hours must be through the AASBO professional development program.

Any certificate holder who does not maintain their CPE requirements is classified as **inactive status**. In order to return to active status, he or she must provide proof of the required annual CPE for that certificate for each year of inactive

status. Certificate holders who are on inactive status for three or more years are required to go back through the program.

AASBO recognizes there are unforeseen circumstances where an individual may not be able to complete their annual CPE requirements. In these instances, the certificate holder must apply for an extension of time through the AASBO organization stating the reason for the request. If granted, the certificate holder will have six months from the end of the fiscal year to complete the needed hours.

Upon starting the program, the participant will have five (fiscal) years to complete the program. Participants will not receive credit for courses that were taken in excess of the five-year period years of their appointment.