

Highlights of N.J.S.A.18A:18A (Public School Contracts Law) (the following section is not applicable to renaissance school projects)

N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq. (Public School Contracts Law) and links to the associated rules can be found at: http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/programs/ps_contracts.html

N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-2 contains definitions for terms used throughout *N.J.S.A.* 18A:18A-1 et seq. It includes as subsection (p) the term ‘competitive contracting,’ which is defined as “the method described in *N.J.S.A.* 18A:18A-4.1 through 18A:18A-4.5 and in rules promulgated by DCA at *N.J.A.C.* 5:34-4 of contracting for specialized goods and services in which formal proposals are solicited from vendors; formal proposals are evaluated by the purchasing agent or counsel or school business administrator; and the board of education/charter school board of trustees awards a contract to a vendor or vendors from among the formal proposals received.” Also, subsection (aa) defines the term ‘concession’ to exclude vending machines.

N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3(a) sets forth the bid threshold and requires award by board resolution. There is a higher threshold when there is a “Qualified Purchasing Agent” (QPA) in the district/charter school as defined at *N.J.A.C.* 5:34-1.1 and certified upon approval of an application submitted to DCA. Pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:18A-3(b), the bid threshold may be adjusted by the Governor, in consultation with the Department of Treasury, every five years.

Effective July 1, 2015 the bid threshold for districts/charter schools without a QPA was \$29,000.

For districts/charter schools that have a QPA, the bid threshold is \$40,000 as of July 1, 2015.

N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3(b) – provides for the base contract period.

“Any contract made pursuant to this section may be awarded for a period of 24 consecutive months, except that contracts for professional services pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of *N.J.S.A.* 18A:18A-5 may be awarded for a period not exceeding 12 consecutive months.”

N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4 sets forth the requirement for advertising to address the disqualification of a vendor. This statute permits a board of education/charter school to disqualify a low bidder if any board of education/charter school board of trustees or, in the case of a contract for a school facilities project, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority has had a “prior negative experience” with the bidder.

“Every contract for the provision or performance of any goods or services, the cost of which in the aggregate exceeds the bid threshold, shall be awarded only by resolution of the board of education to the lowest responsible bidder after public advertising for bids and bidding therefore, except as is provided otherwise in this chapter or specifically by any other law.

The board of education may, by resolution approved by a majority of the board of education and subject to subsections (b) and (c) of this section, disqualify a bidder who would otherwise be determined to be the lowest responsible bidder, if the board of education finds that any board or, in the case of a contract for a school facilities project, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, has had prior negative experience with the bidder within the past 10 years, as reported in a contractor evaluation submitted pursuant to *N.J.S.A.* 18A:18A-15 or in a school facilities project performance evaluation submitted pursuant to regulations of the Department of the Treasury or section 62 of P.L. 2000, c. 72 (C.18A:7G-36), as appropriate.”

N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4.1 provides boards of education/charter school board of trustees the ability to use competitive contracting in lieu of public bidding for the procurement of specialized goods and services above the bid threshold for the following purposes: