



Emergency Purchasing During Pandemic: Update

To: Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee

Date: 14 October, 2020

Report No.: 10-20-3958

Strategic Directions

- Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs

Recommendation

It is recommended that this report be received.

Context

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on pandemic-related emergency purchases, and the reasons behind why these purchases were made outside of the Board's regular procurement process. A detailed timeline of events are outlined below.

January to February 2020

As news that the spread of the coronavirus was beginning to impact more and more countries particularly in Asia and then Europe, ripple effects were being felt in supply chains in North America, particularly for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and related cleaning/disinfecting supplies. Initially, prior to the March lockdowns, TDSB was still able to get most of their PPE needs through their established contracted sources, though pricing was edging up, and lead times for deliveries were getting longer.

March to June 2020

Once the March lockdown hit, supply of key PPE items, most notably disposable face masks, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, disinfectant wipes, and face shields in addition to many other products, quickly became very difficult to obtain. Often, and understandably so, front-line health care facilities and providers were given first priority for these products. At that point in time, the TDSB Purchasing and Distribution teams had to start looking for alternative sources for these materials to ensure adequate supply for the

TDSB system if our contracted vendors were experiencing difficulty obtaining product or would not be able to deliver in an acceptable timeframe.

An additional challenge at that time was that the lockdown was extended by just weeks at a time. Supply planning had to be based on the possibility that students and staff could be returning to school and work within weeks. In order to be prepared for students and staff to return at any time, often the Purchasing and Distribution teams needed to be able to commit to orders within hours of receiving a quote and delivery timeline. Hesitation would almost certainly result in the loss of opportunity to secure the product, as there were many others competing for the same products. Often staff had to take what they could get whenever they could get it. This ongoing preparation continued right through the remainder of the school year.

June 2020

In mid-to-late June, the Ministry first issued their approach to reopening schools, with some additional guidance with respect to what PPE and cleaning protocols might look like. Efforts were being made to secure even larger amounts of product in the hope of establishing a reliable, uninterrupted supply of goods to ensure enough products would be available on a continuous basis to keep students and staff safe in our schools when they reopen. The Ministry PPE requirements were adjusted mid-summer creating additional challenges, for example stipulating use of medical/surgical grade disposable face masks only for staff and visitors (requiring a pivot from reusable or non-medical disposable).

July 2020

In mid-July, the Ministry of Education informed school boards that the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS) would be taking responsibility for the provision of PPE and related supplies to all Ontario school boards. Currently MGCS is not invoicing school boards for the PPE products they are providing.

This was welcome news, but also a very large undertaking for the MGCS team. From the beginning TDSB's Purchasing and Distribution teams have worked very closely with the MGCS team to ensure the needs of TDSB were met leading up to, and into, the new school year.

August 2020

Starting in mid-August, large shipments from MGCS began to flow into the TDSB's Distribution Centre, and from there the goods are redistributed out to schools with the support of the Mailroom, Courier & Logistics team. This process is ongoing and it appears that it will continue into the foreseeable future. The support of MGCS has been greatly appreciated. However, there have been some challenges that have necessitated TDSB to source alternative products on its own for various reasons (e.g. unacceptable

product packaging, unacceptable product, products not available when needed, some products required are not provided by MGCS, etc.). Contracted vendors were used where possible, but where product availability was a challenge, alternative sources were used. TDSB continues to work closely with MGCS to minimize the need to purchase products outside those provided through MGCS to avoid costs.

Overview of Emergency Purchases

Supplies available from MGCS

Appendix A lists the various PPE and related supplies purchases made since March 2020 up to October 7, 2020. It is divided into 2 parts, the first from March 1, 2020 to July 15, 2020 when MGCS was introduced into the process, and July 16, 2020 to October 7, 2020. Out-of-contract purchases from March 1 to July 15, 2020 total \$897K from seven external vendors, and \$5.07M from thirteen external vendors from July 16, 2020 to October 7, 2020.

Supplies not available from MGCS

In addition to the extensive PPE and related supplies purchases there are other products that were required quickly in response to the return to school and work that MGCS is not providing, and is not purchased/delivered through the Distribution Centre such as bulk paper towel deliveries, field painting, decals/signage to encourage physical distancing, etc. Appendix B lists these types of purchases made for items that had no established contract in place and are not provided by MGCS or through the Distribution Centre. Total commitments total approximately \$1.46M.

Technology purchases

Along with all the PPE and related supplies purchasing, large amounts of technology was also required to support student remote learning. Much of this was required very quickly at the beginning of the lockdown to support the pivot from on-site school and work to remote. Appendix C shows IT related purchases made from March to October 2020. Total commitments total approximately \$15M.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Not applicable.

Resource Implications

A portion of these emergency expenditures will be funded by 2020-21 federal and provincial funding relating to school reopening.

Communications Considerations

Not applicable.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

PO17: Purchasing Policy

Appendices

- Appendix A: PPE and Related Supplies Emergency Purchases – Distribution Centre
- Appendix B: Pandemic Related Emergency Purchases for Products not Provided by MGCS or Distribution Centre
- Appendix C: IT Pandemic Related Purchases

From

Craig Snider, Interim Associate Director – Business Operations and Service Excellence, at craig.snider@tdsb.on.ca or at 416-397-3188.

Marisa Chiu, Interim Executive Officer – Finance, at marisa.chiu@tdsb.on.ca or at 416-95-3563.

Chris Ferris, Senior Manager, Administrative Services, at chris.ferris@tdsb.on.ca or at 416-395-8036.