



Competitive State Procurement for Digital Educational Resources

Frequently Asked Questions | 2024

What is the role of state procurement in the context of digital educational resources?

The state education agency collaborates with relevant offices, like procurement and IT, to develop requests for information (RFIs) or requests for proposals (RFPs) from vendors that provide education technology products or services. The agencies vet the products based on a rubric and identify the products that meet the requirements. The state then establishes a master contract agreement that includes the price of the product for any district that wants to purchase it.

What types of resources could states procure through a competitive process?

States can run a procurement process and establish master contract agreements for instructional tools, like learning management systems, online courses, digital textbooks, and other learning software. They can also run this process for infrastructure needs, like 1:1 computing devices or school-level broadband connectivity.



State Spotlight on Utah

Utah has [three tiers of procurement](#) options for digital educational resources and collaborates with school districts to identify newly in-demand resources. The state has developed statewide agreements on products and services ranging from school broadband to learning management systems to commonly used [instructional software](#).

What are the benefits of conducting a state procurement as opposed to letting districts lead their own processes?

There are quite a few: cost savings, streamlined processes for districts, quality assurance, and enhanced cybersecurity, to name a few. ExcelinEd's [policy brief](#) on this topic delves into specifics on each of these benefits.



State Spotlight on North Carolina

North Carolina implemented statewide contract agreements for products and services that support the statewide digital teaching and learning plan. The single negotiated price means that small, rural districts benefit from the same economies of scale that large, urban districts can typically command, which increases equity of access to necessary technological tools.

Do school districts have to use the resources the state procures?

This is up to the state, but most make it optional for districts to purchase products off the master contract agreements. That allows districts to decide which services and products are best suited for their students' needs.

Can public charter schools or non-public schools purchase off the state's master contract agreement?

This varies by state. States could consider writing their RFIs/RFPs and master contract agreements in ways that facilitate this option.

Where can I go for more resources?

ExcelinEd's Competitive State Procurement for Digital Educational Resources Act [model policy](#) and [policy brief](#) provide further details. An ExcelinEd [webinar](#) from September 2023 featured a conversation with leaders from Nevada, North Carolina, and Utah on their states' implementation of statewide contract agreements. SETDA, the State Education Technology Directors Association, offers [additional resources](#).

Contact

Adriana Harrington

Managing Director, Policy

adriana@excelined.org

