



Educational Service Districts (ESDs) in the state of Washington are political subdivisions of the state that are organized and operate in accordance with state statutes. ESDs provide a range of services to or on behalf of school districts and educational organizations.

ESD enabling legislation is codified in chapter 28A.310 of the Revised Code of Washington. Among other things, Chapter 28A.310 authorizes ESDs to enter into contracts and to provide informational and cooperative services and programs. ESDs, in cooperation with school districts, have explicit authority to establish joint purchasing programs. RCW 28A.310.180(3) and RCW 28A.320.080(3).

Puget Sound ESD established the Washington Learning Source (WLS) cooperative purchasing program in July 2006. WLS procures competitive bids for technology software and equipment in accordance with Washington laws and makes its competitive bid available to school districts and other educational or public agencies who want to purchase technology software and equipment for the price and terms set forth in the WLS contract.

WLS provides the opportunity for a school district to avoid the costs associated with procuring its own competitive bid if the district signs an interlocal agreement with an ESD. This is reflected in the Interlocal Cooperation Act, codified in RCW 39.34. According to RCW 39.34.030(5)(b), a school district that has entered into an interlocal agreement with an ESD (or another public agency) is not obligated to comply with the notice requirements in RCW 28A.335.190 for bid solicitations, as long as the ESD (or public agency it signed an interlocal agreement with) complied with the statutory requirements for procuring a competitive bid and posted the bid solicitation on a web site established and maintained by a public agency or purchasing cooperative. Similar provisions are found in other state's intergovernmental cooperation statutes.

School districts, educational organizations and public agencies are encouraged to review their own state laws, board policies and regulations to ensure they are acting within their own legal authority when they purchase from the WLS contract.

WLS Process:

- WLS issues an RFP for technology software or equipment based on recommendations from the WLS advisory committee
- RFP is advertised for no less than two (2) weeks on Washington's Electronic Business Solution (WEBS) portal page at <http://www.ga.wa.gov/webs/>
- All sealed responses are recorded and publically opened
- Responses are tabulated and vendors evaluated
- Contract is awarded to vendor(s)