

Nutrition Support Services

Food Service Procurement Waiver Request



Food Service Procurement Waiver Request Overview

Nutrition Support Services (NSS) is requesting that the Board approve the renewal application for a waiver of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/34-21.3) for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2021 and ending June 30, 2026.

- Existing waiver was approved for a 5-year term between July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2021.

Section 34-21.3 of the Illinois School Code only allows for a competitive sealed bid for food service management companies. A waiver of this section of the school code will allow the Board to solicit services via a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Bids are less efficient for the district because:

- Require the district to draft specifications for each individual food item, service and consumable needed to run the food service operations.
- Require the district to award the bid to the lowest responsible bidder with no ability for post-award negotiations of pricing, services or product specifications.
- Do not allow flexibility to alter services as needed by the Board.



Justification for Waiver

Issuing an RFP allows the district to be more effective and efficient by:

- **Reducing administrative time** using one RFP vs. multiple BIDS
- **Enhancing flexibility** to adopt Industry trends and innovations (wellness, new menu items, and program delivery methods) as RFPs can be encouraged to accommodate this
- **Negotiating services** to receive the highest quality products at a competitive price for a range of services without locking the district into those products identified in a traditional BID (i.e., paper supplies and packaging, menu items that are gluten free, plant based, etc.)



