



Effective Surplus Disposal Eases SJUSD's Burden

Patrick Day, then the Director of Purchasing and Contract Management of San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD), faced a familiar problem for education institutions – surplus disposal. His district was paying too much money to have its surplus items taken to a local dump. For the remaining surplus equipment that did have value, such as pianos, food service equipment and swimming pool pumps, the district had no effective model to capture the remaining value in these items. As a result, surplus items were piling up in his warehouse. Moreover, Day knew that with a number of school closings pending, the surplus pile – and its associated problems – would soon be growing.

In March 2004, Day attended a presentation by InterSchola at the Santa Clara County Office of Education. InterSchola offered a full-service solution to help school districts dispose of surplus assets, using eBay – the world’s largest auction marketplace – as its primary sales channel. InterSchola understood that most school districts have neither the time nor the proper resources to effectively manage surplus asset sales. Moreover, InterSchola demonstrated how existing venues for surplus disposal did not maximize the value of school districts’ excess property. To Day InterSchola seemed the perfect fit for SJUSD’s surplus needs.

An InterSchola representative visits the SJUSD’s warehouse to perform a complete inventory of surplus items, at the district’s request. InterSchola evaluates assets for feasibility of sale, tests equipment, takes digital photographs and gathers item-specific details. After sending documentation to ensure that SJUSD posts necessary public notice in accordance with California Education Code, InterSchola lists the items for public bid on eBay. Upon auction close, InterSchola collects payment from buyers and returns to the district to package and ship sold items or meet buyers for local pickup.

InterSchola’s services have become an essential part of SJUSD’s warehouse operations. In any given month, InterSchola may work with items from the district’s Transportation Department, Food Service Department, and/or the Buildings and Ground Department. A sample of items sold through InterSchola include 34 upright pianos, multiple pallets of salt (formerly used as water softener in the district), and a large quantity of kitchen equipment declared surplus when the district centralized its food service operations. “Our work with InterSchola started out as a new venture,” says Kelly Cefalu, SJUSD Supervisor of Operations and Warehouse, “and now it is a well-oiled machine.”

In two years, InterSchola has sold over \$100,000 worth of surplus items on behalf of SJUSD. “InterSchola’s services have freed up my district staff to focus on more pressing items”, says Day, now SJUSD’s Director of Maintenance/Operations/Purchasing/Contract Management. “We don’t want to be experts at selling stuff. We want to be experts at educating kids, and InterSchola allows us to focus on the bigger picture.”