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Finding The Best Way To Get Supplies Has Been A Learning Curve


(NAPSA)—Schools are getting a better grade on purchasing the supplies they need, thanks to an efficient new prepaid debit card system designed specially for them.

The need for a more efficient method was long overdue. In the past, teachers and administrators had to use valuable time to cope with such tediously time-consuming and costly obstacles as purchase orders, paper checks and out-of-pocket expenses just to obtain valuable and necessary school supplies.

Fortunately, teachers now have more time to devote to teaching. The special debit card features a designated budget that can be used to purchase anything that's needed—and so far, it's getting an A+ from teachers.

“Our teachers have been thrilled with the new Bank of America Visa Supply Shelf Card,” said Bart J. Reed, director of business operations for the Pocatello School District No. 25 in Pocatello, Idaho. “It came time to try something new that would not only help us speed up the process of obtaining school supplies, but would also allow for teachers to purchase classroom supplies when it was most convenient.”

Last April, the bank introduced the prepaid debit card, which is loaded with a specific allotment of

Getting school supplies to students is now as easy as A-B-C with a new debit card that teachers and school administrators can use to purchase supplies. 

cash funded by school district administrators and then provided to the district's respective teachers. Participating educational institutions manage card issuance to teachers and can load cards with a monetary value between \$25 and \$750.

Because out-of-pocket expenses are eliminated and because the funds can be more easily tracked by both teachers and administrators alike, the card eliminates the risk and hassle typically associated with the distribution of cash or checks for teacher supplies.

Once loaded with cash, the cards can be used by teachers to purchase supplies at school-supply merchants designated by administrators.

For safety measures, the card cannot be used to withdraw cash from ATMs or to obtain cash back at the point of sale. Administering the program is far simpler for both teachers and administrators than the current typical processes involving purchase orders and the execution of paper checks.

Administrators also benefit from improved visibility of avail-

able balances and the receipt of daily and monthly reports, which detail each transaction. This transparency is key to retaining cash that is usually lost when teachers pay for expenses out of their own pockets.

The card was initially introduced in 2007 and since then the bank has issued more than 22,000 cards loaded with more than \$4.7 million to several school districts in four states.

Based on the overwhelmingly positive response from teachers and administrators alike, the bank has experienced a 100 percent retention rate of all school districts that were initially involved in the program.

Through the month of October 2008, administrators had issued an additional 5,000 cards to teachers in three states and the bank is actively working with school districts nationwide to expand the program across state lines.

“The teachers enjoy the flexibility of being able to purchase when they need supplies,” said Reed. “They would love to use this system all the time,” in lieu of the traditional purchase order system.

For more information on the program, you can call (866) 709-8014, Ext. 200, or visit www.bankofamerica.com/supplyshelf.