

Here is some information on three different ways to secure an instrument for this year (as well as some other information to consider). Having an instrument to play on at home is going to be critical for success this year! If you are planning on playing the Baritone or Tuba, the school will provide the instrument (unless you just want to rent an instrument).

- 1) You can rent an instrument. I have attached some basic information to our local Music and Arts affiliate which can be found in River Ridge. Some reasons I like the rental program are that you know you are getting a good quality instrument, it is covered by rental insurance (because middle school kids are rough on things), and you can switch instruments easily if your child decides to play something else. If you begin by renting, you can always decide to purchase the instrument outright once you are pretty sure your child is going to stick with it. You also know that an instrument that you are renting will come with everything it needs to remain playable (valve oil, slide oil, reeds, cleaning swab, etc.). If you secure your instrument a different way, it will most likely require purchasing these items separately.
- 2) You can use an instrument that you already have available to you. Does someone you know already own a good quality instrument? By all means, feel free to use it to get started, but consider the following: The longer the instrument has been sitting around without being played, the more likely it is going to need some maintenance to make it usable. On brass instruments, this is likely to mean that parts of the instrument that should move are frozen in place (tuning slides, valves, etc.). For woodwinds, this is most likely to mean that pads or corks have deteriorated. If you aren't sure whether the instrument is in good shape, I encourage you to contact one of our local repair shops to have it checked out. They will usually do an inspection free of charge. The closest repair shop to us is at Music in Arts in River Ridge. Their phone number is (828)-299-3000. They are very busy over the summer, so I suggest getting any repairs in as soon as possible. Another place you could consider for repairs is Stone Cottage. They may be able to get the repair done more quickly, but it would require a trip to Waynesville. Their number is (828)-456-4880. As far as rentals go, they are both owned by Music and Arts, so the rates should be the same.
- 3) You can purchase an instrument. If you choose this option, you will want to make sure that you get a good quality instrument that will last and that can be repaired. Here are a couple of things you should consider if you choose this option. It is likely that you will find an instrument that looks like a good deal that requires extra repair work to make it playable. You have to consider that the person who buys instruments for the pawn shop probably doesn't know much about band instruments. This can turn into a large expenditure that you aren't expecting. The other concern with buying an instrument outright is that your child may change her mind about what she wants to play. If you purchase a flute and your child struggles to play it, having purchased the instrument may lock your child in to that instrument and make success more difficult.

- 4) I have a limited number of instruments that I can loan out through the school. I DO NOT have any saxophones or percussion equipment to loan out. If you want to play these instruments, you will need to secure them yourselves. I do not know instruments I have available at this time, but will be looking at needs as I receive requests. I can't guarantee that I can provide your child with his/her first choice instrument, but if they want to play I will definitely get an instrument to them.

Regardless of how you choose to get an instrument, please look at the list of reputable instrument brands that I have provided. Securing a quality instrument is the best thing you can do to ensure your child's success in band. A band director friend of mine put this list together and it is very thorough and gives you many options. If you have any questions about other brands, feel free to e-mail me. I WOULD STRONGLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO AVOID ANY INSTRUMENT THAT YOU CAN BUY IN A DEPARTMENT STORE!

Finally, I would like to encourage you to not let your child "teach himself" or experiment with the instrument too much without proper guidance. If you would like your child to get a head start, I would be glad to recommend some local teachers who would be glad to help your child learn solid fundamentals on his instrument. There has been an explosion over the last couple of years of students who "teach themselves" using You Tube and come in with bad habits that must be corrected.

I am sure this isn't everything you need to know, so feel free to contact me if you have further questions!