

Buying an Instrument

Buying an instrument is a big step and can be confusing. However, the fact is that leasing an instrument for more than a year will end up costing MUCH more in the long run. If your child has come this far, the time to purchase is here.

The student instrument your child has started on will be sufficient throughout their school music experience. I will never suggest that you must buy a new instrument (vs. a used one) or that you must purchase an intermediate (or step-up) instrument. With that in mind, I will make the following qualifications:

Student line instrument / Beginner instrument: most music stores lease less expensive models. These instruments are made to be relatively inexpensive and relatively durable. They are not necessarily made to play with the best tone quality or to stand up to many years of intense playing. Simply put, they sometimes “wear out” or musicians “grow out” of them as they gain more experience.

Step up instrument / Intermediate instrument: These instruments are made with better quality materials and better quality control. In some cases (woodwinds), these instruments have more keys or have a bigger bore (brass--to help get a bigger sound), or are made of more expensive metals (including gold on some flutes). Some of these options are cosmetic, and some are truly beneficial. Generally, if your child is serious about band and really enjoys playing their instrument this can be an excellent option.

If you are considering purchasing an instrument I recommend the following:

Shop around! Get as much information as you can, get the best value you can!

Some choices in this area are:

West Music/Kepharts Music in Dubuque and Coralville. Contact Rod Pierson at 800-373-2000 or go to www.westmusic.com

Please, talk with me or one of the other Southwestern band directors before you make a final decision!