

Securing an Instrument for Beginning Band/Orchestra Students

This information is provided to help parents/guardians of prospective instrumental music students. The school is not recommending that parents/guardians deal with a particular music dealer. Parents have the right to secure an instrument from any dealer of their choice. It is against Board of Education regulations for either the school or any of its agents, including music teachers, to receive commissions or gifts from music dealers.

Quality of Instruments

It is important for students to begin instrumental music instruction on a good quality instrument which is maintained in proper playing condition. The instruments that appear on the attached “Recommended Brands” sheet have been evaluated by committees of music teachers, appear on Board of Education bid lists, and are recommended for student use. Music dealers have an opportunity each year to submit additional brands and models for evaluation.

Instrument Prices

When shopping for an instrument, parents/guardians may want to ask for the following price information:

- Manufacturer’s latest published list price.
- Rental price of instrument from dealer.
- Price of instrument, if purchased within ninety days.
- Price of instrument, if purchased through a rent-to-own plan.

Also, be sure to determine if prices quoted are for new instruments or for used instruments. Good buys may be available in high quality used instruments, but be certain of warranty and service arrangements.

Rent-to-own plans

Many dealers offer plans whereby instruments can be rented for fees ranging from \$20 - \$60 per month and the rental may apply to later purchase. This provides a period of time for evaluating the student’s interest and progress in instrumental music and relieves the parent from a large single payment for an instrument.

When evaluating rent-to-own plans, determine:

- How much of the monthly payment can be applied to eventual purchase.
- The amount of the finance charge.
- Whether or not the dealer maintains the instrument during the rental period.

- If the rental period can be continuous until the instrument is paid off or if a decision to buy must be made after a specific number of months.
- What arrangements are made to insure the instrument against theft, loss, or damage.

Service

Whether an instrument is rented or purchased, it is very important that the student have access to quick and reliable service. Inquire about warranty coverage of new or used instruments and whether the dealer can assure that efficient repair service will be available. The student is disadvantaged if the instrument is not properly maintained or if the instrument is in the repair shop for long periods of time. Some dealers will lend students an instrument while their own is being repaired.