Frequently Asked Questions

**What instrument should my child play?**

Sometimes the instrument we recommend is not the instrument you envisioned your child would play. Keep in mind that each child’s physical features play an important role in our recommendations. To choose the flute simply because your child desires to play one or because their friends have chosen the flute, does not necessarily mean your child will experience success in producing a good sound on one.

We also strive to maintain good balanced instrumentation throughout our school district. Just as a baseball team couldn’t function with six catchers and no outfielders, a good band depends on all instrument sections being filled and not overloaded. We certainly do not want your child to play an instrument they don’t like, but we appreciate your cooperation and support of our recommendations whenever possible.

If your child is interested in percussion, we will test their rhythm. Due to the limited amount of percussion parts and instruments, we are only able to take a limited number of percussion students.

If you are struggling with your decision on which instrument your child should play, please feel free to contact your band teacher at the contact listings at the end of this website.

**How soon do we need an instrument?**

Band will begin soon after the first day of school. Everyone should plan to have an instrument, supplies and lesson book by the first day of September.

**Should we rent or buy an instrument?**

We always suggest renting for a few months to see how well your child likes the instrument and how well they progress. Yet sometimes renting can be cost prohibitive. You may be able to find a used instrument on our preferred brand list for a cost equivalent to four or five months instrument rent.

**Where can we rent or purchase an instrument & supplies?**

Most music stores offer instrument payment plans of some kind.

When searching for a woodwind or brass instrument, you will want to search for “Beginner level” or “Student Level” instruments. Intermediate level instruments will serve the student longer, however they are not necessary for the first few years.

Due to extreme pitch problems, lack of durability and repair policies of our local music store concerning generic/off-brand instruments, please see our recommended list of [instrument brands](http://blogs.waukeeschools.org/5thgradeband/preferred-instrument-brands/) before searching for an instrument.

**Can I use an old family-owned instrument?**

Often times it is an advantage to use an old family-owned instrument for the initial year(s) of band experience. We prefer that these instruments are one of our recommended brands and we suggest that you take the instrument to a local music store to make sure it is in good working condition. There is nothing more frustrating for a beginner than trying to progress on an instrument that does not work properly.

**Can I buy and instrument from a newspaper ad, garage sale or online auction?**

Sometimes you can find good buys from these sources. However, we urge you to use great caution in these kinds of purchases. Many “off-brand” or “problematic” instruments are sold this way.

Nothing is more frustrating for your child than trying to learn how to play an instrument that doesn’t work properly or play in tune. Please refer to our list of preferred instrument brands. All brands listed can be serviced by our local music store. Be sure have the instrument checked over and put into good playing condition before the first day of school.

**What if my child changes their mind and wants to try a different instrument?**

We generally discourage switching instruments during the first year, as it takes much time and effort to master the technical challenges of playing an instrument. However, we understand that there are exceptions. If your child has been unable to progress or has become extremely frustrated, please consult with your band teacher. They may have some additional ideas that could help your child improve or thoughts on another instrument which might fit your child better. Switching instruments is allowed only with teacher approval.

**Other questions?**

Contact Mrs. Franzen at 283-3015 or mfranzen@oelwein.k12.ia.us