Choosing and Obtaining an Instrument

- **What Instrument will my child play?** – On August 8th from 6-8pm, in the band/orchestra room, your child will have the opportunity to try out some band and orchestra instruments to see which instruments they like the best, and which one would suit them the best. My goal is that every child will be able to play their instrument of choice; however, it is also important that every child be successful on their instrument. Often times we have to limit our numbers in certain sections of the band. Just like a football team cannot consist entirely of quarterbacks and kickers, a band cannot consist entirely of percussionists and saxophones, and an orchestra cannot consist entirely of violins. It is suggested that you and your child do your own research on instruments, on their sound, on how they are played, and their role in the band/orchestra. Youtube is a wonderful resource!

- **Purchasing An Instrument** - The music stores in town offer very affordable payment options when purchasing instruments. Most instruments “rent-to-own” for $25 - $45 a month. Please be aware, the past several years, a few popular online stores have been selling brands of instrument that are of very low quality. While the price may initially seem appealing, the instruments are poorly made and no reputable repair person will guarantee the repairs on these instruments. Ultimately, the instrument would have to be replaced.

- **Purchasing A Used Instrument** - Every child can be successful when playing an instrument, but only if that instrument is in good condition. Too many times children get frustrated and quit band or orchestra because their instrument is not in playable condition. If you are planning on purchasing a used instrument, I strongly encourage you to have the instrument examined by an experienced repair person. Make sure that you look for brand names that have a favorable reputation (Yamaha, Selmer, Conn, Gemeinhardt, King, Bach, Holton, Buffet, Vito, Jupiter, Accent, Armstrong, Artley, Cannonball, Besson, Knilling, Stentor, etc.)

- **Renting a School Instrument** - The school district also has instruments that students may rent. 6th grade students may rent the following instruments for one year only (due to the low supply of instruments): Flute, Clarinet, Trumpet, and Trombone. After their first year of playing, students will need to be able to purchase an instrument of their own. The French Horn, Baritone, and Tuba may be rented from the school district until the student graduates high school. Saxophones and Percussion Instruments are not available to rent. The cost for a rental instrument for one year is $50 or less for qualifying students.

- **Playing Percussion** - Being a percussionist is MUCH MORE than being a drummer! In 6th grade, percussion students will focus on learning the bells (mallets) and snare drum. Throughout middle school they will be introduced to all the other percussion instruments: timpani, bass drum, marimba, xylophone, crash cymbals, suspended cymbal, triangle, bongos, congas, shaker, cow bell, claves, etc. (the list could go on forever). Students will also get an opportunity to learn the drum set. Every student who is interested in percussion will need to complete a percussion audition, which will test their rhythm, melody, harmony, pitch reference, reading music skills, and piano skills. Due to all the different instruments that percussionists are required to play, the students that receive the highest score on the test will be given the opportunity to be a percussionist if they choose. **Students wanting to play percussion will have to buy a stick bag and a collection of sticks and mallets.** They will add mallets and sticks to their collection each year. Percussionists also pay a Percussion User Fee.

Please let us know if you are concerned about the cost of your child’s participation in band. We believe that every child can be successful when learning to play a musical instrument and we will do our best to help you make that happen.