**Important information BEFORE you purchase an instrument**

Instrumental music students are required to obtain their own instrument for school/home use, whether by renting or by purchase, to participate in our school music program. (Disclaimer: students on certain instruments may be able to rent instruments from WMS by paying an annual fee.) Renting/purchasing an instrument can be a little overwhelming if you’ve never done it, so I have put together this helpful guide.

Buying instruments online or in a big box stores can be result in problems, headaches, and big price tags when the instrument needs repair.

Imagine you see an ad in the newspaper for a brand new car.

**Brand new car!**

**Only $1000**

Under 100 miles!

No previous owners!

No accidents!

*Includes* Comes in Purple, Pink, Neon Green, and many

4 NEW extra tires more colors!

And driving gloves

*Seem too good to be true?* You could always take it to an auto mechanic to see if you should buy it.

What if the mechanic tells you the metal is soft and you risk bending the doors with normal use? Not only that, no one makes spare parts for this brand of cars! When something needs to be fixed it will have to be custom made and could cost more than the car. To top everything off, very few mechanics will even work on these cars because they don’t have the resources to custom make parts and cannot guarantee their work.

*Still sound like an amazing deal?* Probably not.

The process of buying and renting instruments is much like purchasing a new car. If you get a good one, it will last you for years. Get a poorly made one, and it will be nothing but aggravation, inconvenience, and expense for you! There are plenty of instrument brands out there that are of good quality and can be maintained and repaired by your local instrument repair shop.

***I recommend renting an instrument to start.*** Some reasons why this is a good idea include:

* Students who are not large enough for a full sized instrument (***applies to string students only***)
* Students who decide to move to another instrument
* Students that may decide to not continue to play an instrument in the future

The cost of renting an instrument depends on the instrument vendor and the type of instrument you are renting (certain instruments such as saxophone and cello are more expensive). You can expect to pay approximately $25-$50 a month to rent an instrument. The vendor hosting our virtual Instrument Rental

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Night will provide you with a good quality instrument at a reasonable cost. You will also need to make sure you obtain the correct book for class, as well as any other accessories that are important to playing the instrument (reeds, valve oil, rosin, etc.- check the handbook you will receive for details).

Most instrument vendors offer a significant discount on the total cost of the instrument should you choose to pay it off before the end of the rental period. This is a great option for students who plan to continue playing and do not plan to change to another instrument.

***So you still think you would rather purchase than rent an instrument?***

Most instrument vendors have an inventory of previously rented/owned instruments that you can purchase at a reduced cost. You will have the assurance of knowing that it is a good quality instrument that has been thoroughly examined prior to sale, and therefore will be in good working order for your student. Some vendors even offer some type of warranty with these instruments (much as you would get with a certified pre-owned vehicle purchase).

Perhaps you have the opportunity to purchase an instrument owned by a family member or friend. If you decide to pursue this route to purchase, please make sure that you take it to a ***qualified*** musical instrument repair technician to make sure that it is in good working order and ready for your child to use (ask me if you need recommendations on where to go for this). It is very frustrating for a student to try to learn with an instrument that is not working correctly because it is in need of repairs after a prolonged period of not being used.

We’ve already discussed this at the beginning of this document, but it bears repeating. Yes, while it is possible to find some good deals from some non-traditional sources, you should proceed with ***great caution***.

Two important rules to remember here:

* ***Do not purchase an instrument from a store/online vendor where you also purchase your groceries and other household goods*** (paper towels, cleaning supplies, etc.)- you will ***not*** find a good quality instrument there. It is important that students have a good quality instrument to work with.
* Colored instruments are generally ***not*** good quality instruments- steer clear of these. *Please* trust me on this.

As always, I am here to help in whatever way I can as you navigate through this process. If you have any questions not addressed in this document, please feel free to contact me at hross@wcpss.net.