

CHOOSING & FINDING AN INSTRUMENT

(Questions not answered in this document? Please reach out!
elizabeth.martinez@k12.sd.us)

Once your son/daughter has decided to join band, the next step is to choose an instrument! Helping students find an instrument that interests them is very important to us, but we also want to consider which one will be the best fit. Sometimes there are physical attributes that should be considered. Combining interest with a well-matched instrument will help students be successful. If you were unable to attend the instrument open house in May, please talk to Mrs. Martinez about options for helping aid in this process.

If your family already has an instrument your child is interested in playing, please make sure it is in good working condition by having it checked at a reputable music store.

If you do not already have access to an instrument, we recommend you rent from a music store. The stores we recommend are easy to work with for payments and repairs, especially for beginners. Recommended local stores are listed on the next page of this document. Please do not buy online, and do not complete any purchase transactions until having the instrument looked over by someone who can tell you if it is in proper playing condition. Please also reference the “Off-Brand Musical Instrument Alert” published by the South Dakota Bandmasters Association at the bottom of this document.

Beginning band instruments include: Flute, Clarinet, Alto Sax, Trumpet, French Horn, Trombone, Baritone, Tuba, and Percussion.

At Harrisburg, we have a limited number of French Horns, Baritones, and Tubas available for student rental. These are issued on a limited basis. The rental fee is \$50 per school year, paid to the Harrisburg School District.

Percussion: If your son/daughter is interested in playing percussion, they will be most successful (and have the most fun!) in the short-term and long-term if they have prior knowledge and can demonstrate proficiency on keyboard/piano. For this reason, at least one year of piano lessons is required.

While percussion students in the Harrisburg district will eventually play all instruments in the percussion section (xylophone, marimba, keyboard bells, snare drum, bass drum, timpani, cymbals, other auxiliary percussion, etc.) throughout middle/high school, we focus primarily on mallet percussion the entire first semester. At the Open House, a music educator will be available to provide a series of short mallet percussion playing assessments to help your son/daughter determine if percussion is the right fit for them.

Percussion students will need a starting percussion kit which includes a xylophone-bell set, mallets, practice pad, and drumsticks.

Recommended Instrument Rental & Supply Stores

Popplers Music, Sioux Falls (formerly K&M Music), (605) 336-6332
www.popplersmusic.com

Schmitt Music, Sioux Falls, (605) 339-6030
<https://www.schmittmusic.com/stores/sioux-falls/>

Taylor Music, Aberdeen, 1-800-872-2263
www.1800usaband.com

The information below is an open letter to all band parents and educators in SD from the South Dakota Bandmasters Association:

OFF-BRAND MUSICAL INSTRUMENT ALERT

Due to the increased production and distribution of instruments manufactured overseas (primarily in China or India) the South Dakota Bandmasters found the need to inform and educate beginning band students and their parents of the sub-par construction and performance of inexpensive, off-brand and/or private label band instruments. Hopefully, with the aid of this letter, band directors can prevent parents from making an unwise investment for their beginning band student.

Quality Horns

The SD Bandmasters organization strongly encourages the purchase of student-line instruments at reputable or local music stores. Reputable music stores continue to deal quality instruments and will stand behind their products with warranties. Repairs on quality instruments are done easily at local or reputable music stores and many times fall under the warranty provided when a new instrument is bought.

Off-Brand Instruments

The “off-brand” instruments are most commonly found at “box” or discount stores, various internet websites or internet auctions. In some instances, the instruments have a faulty design or are constructed with sub-standard materials. These instruments many times come with little or no warranty and frequently can’t be returned because the company or party that the instrument was bought from no longer exists. Repairs on some imported instruments can’t (and won’t) be done because of the faulty design or sub-standard materials that they are made from and replacement parts for these instruments don’t exist.

The SD Bandmasters want to make playing a musical instrument a positive experience for students and a sound investment for parent/guardians. There are two key ingredients to making this happen. First, parents need to consult with their local band director before the purchase of an instrument and second, instrument purchases should be made at local or reputable music stores. Hopefully by doing so, the experience will turn into an enjoyable activity that will last a lifetime.