

North Scott  
Community Schools



Beginning Band  
Information Packet

# Selecting the Right Instrument for Your Child

*excerpted from "The Great Beginning...A parent's guide  
to Instrumental Music" by the Yamaha Corporation*

No musical instrument is easier to play than another - they all have differing challenges. There are many considerations in choosing an instrument, from musical aptitude to physical characteristics to the desire of the child. Here are a few things to consider...

## **Desire**

Be honest with your child. Playing an instrument is fun and rewarding, but it will take time, effort, and patience. Make sure you have talked with your child about the entire program.

## **Choice**

Many students want to play the instrument of their dreams. Their interest plays an important part in the instrument selection process and in later motivation. But parents have a responsibility to help their child realize that certain factors can work against a student being successful on some instruments. Spend time talking about what instrument your child is interested in playing and why. Your child's director will help you determine the best choice, one based on good reasons. After all, a band is made up of many different instruments, and not everyone can play the same thing.

## **Physical requirements**

Playing an instrument is a physical experience. The shape of the lips, hands and fingers, formation of the teeth and jaw, and use of braces all contribute to the initial success on any given instrument. Students who possess certain characteristics may find it easier to play one instrument over another, based on how their individual body is formed.

## **Process**

In March, a band promotional DVD was presented to your child, with 15 musical 'checkpoints'. These 'checkpoints' help the music directors determine a student's musical aptitude. On the day of 6<sup>th</sup> grade orientation, students were given the opportunity to try out the various band instruments, and a recommended instrument was agreed upon with your son or daughter at that time. This was based on aptitude, physical characteristics and student's interest.

## Obtaining an Instrument

While musical instruments are readily available in many places (on the internet, garage sales, pawn shops, etc.), it is highly recommended that you seek the help of a reputable music dealer when obtaining an instrument for your child. They can offer services and advice you can't get anywhere else. Some options are outlined below. Instruments should be obtained just prior to the start of band lessons.

### **Purchase/rental of a new instrument**

This is the preferred and most popular method of obtaining a band instrument for your child. Most dealers can supply you with the basic accessories your child will need, as well as perform minor maintenance as required. These rental plans tend to be flexible, affordable, and provide for the return or exchange of the instrument should the child choose not to continue or switch instruments. A list of instrument manufacturers and models to look for is included on the following page.

### **Purchase/rental of a used instrument**

This may prove to be a more economical method of obtaining an instrument than renting a new one. *However, be sure that you obtain an instrument that is in good repair, and has been checked by a certified repair technician.* Oftentimes, the money saved by buying a used instrument is offset by the costly repairs needed to bring it into proper working condition. These instruments seem to require maintenance more frequently as well, adding to their cost. There is nothing more frustrating for a student than having difficulty playing on an instrument that does not work properly. Some things to watch for are listed on the following pages.

### **Use of a school-owned instrument**

There are a small number of school-owned instruments available for student use. These instruments include: **oboe, bassoon, French horn, baritone, and tuba.** A \$40-per-year fee will be charged for the use of a school-owned instrument. This also applies to **percussionists.** Please talk to your child's director if you wish more information on using one of these instruments.

# **Guidelines for Selecting a Used Instrument**

## **Flute**

Body:	No major dents; all parts fit together easily (but not loosely)
Keys:	Work smoothly; none bent or broken
Pads:	Clean in appearance; do not stick when pressed down
Case:	Secure latches; holds instrument securely

## **Clarinet/Saxophone**

Body:	No cracks, chips, or major dents; corks on ends of joint(s) are intact
Keys:	Work smoothly; none bent or broken
Pads:	Clean in appearance; do not stick when pressed down
Mouthpiece:	No chips or cracks; smooth edges; ligature and mouthpiece cap included
Case:	Secure latches; holds instrument securely
[Sax only:	Neck fits easily into body of instrument; plug for end of instrument is present]

## **Trumpet/Trombone**

Body:	No major dents or cracks; mouthpiece fits easily into receiver
Valves/Slide:	Work smoothly; do not stick, grind, or click when moved
Tuning slides:	Work smoothly; are not stuck or frozen in place
Mouthpiece:	Completely silver with no brass showing through; shank is round, not crimped or bent
Case:	Secure latches; holds instrument securely

## **Accessories List**

All beginners will need the method book Standard of Excellence - Book One by Bruce Pearson. North Scott School District will provide your student a book at his or her first lesson. A folding music stand for home practice is recommended to facilitate correct posture and horn position. A metronome is recommended for use when practicing, as well, and can be purchased at the music store. The following accessories are suggested to ensure proper care of the instrument, and can be purchased at the music store. Note: Care kits sold by music stores often contain more supplies than are necessary for a beginner. The purchase of a care kit is not generally recommended.

### **All Instruments**

Folding music stand

### **Flute**

Cleaning cloth or handkerchief

### **Clarinet**

4 or 5 Bb clarinet reeds (Rico #2 ½)

Cleaning swab

Cork grease

### **Saxophone**

4 or 5 Eb alto saxophone reeds (Rico #2)

Cleaning swab (one for the body, one for the neck)

Cork grease

Neckstrap

### **Trumpet/Trombone**

Slide oil/valve oil (Note: Do not purchase or use trombone slide cream!!)

Tuning slide grease

Mouthpiece brush

Snake (For cleaning the inside of the instrument)

\*After initial accessories are secured, and the school year has started, supplies such as reeds and valve oil may be purchased at the junior high band office. If supplies are needed over the weekends or long breaks, local music stores will be able to help. This is also true for repairs.

## **Some Hints For Success**

*excerpted from "The Great Beginning...A parent's guide to Instrumental Music" by the Yamaha Corporation*

### **Be patient**

Early sounds are often not very musical. It will take time to hear recognizable melodies. You must understand that and help your child understand that also. Doing anything well takes time, practice, and perseverance, from art to sports to music.

### **Be supportive**

Results in anything come gradually. As our increased technological society helps us achieve results faster and faster, students must learn that some things still take time. Show them early versions of their handwriting and drawing, or watch a video of them learning to ride a bike. This will help you become an ally in the musical learning process. Let them know when you hear improvement in their daily practice. Having someone who can empathize with and reward them is an important part of the student/parent teamwork needed in either music or sports. Attend school concerts your child participates in, and be sure to seek out the music teacher during parent/teacher conferences.

### **Help them practice**

Practice is like the homework students bring home in other subjects. It's the way in which they gain increasing skills and abilities. Although you may not know what or how they should practice, you can still play an important role. Practice should be in a private place, away from other family members or distractions, radio, television or stereo, and friends (although occasional practicing with friends is encouraged!). A bedroom seems to work the best. A proper music stand, straight-backed chair, and good lighting are also important. Students should plan 30 minutes into their schedule. That's their investment. You need to guarantee your investment by helping them make that **daily** commitment.

### **Show resolve**

When you hear frustration in such phrases as "I want to quit" or "I sound awful," discuss why those feelings occur. Don't take the path of least resistance and let your child quit too early in the experience. Six weeks, two months - even six months is not enough time to make that kind of decision. Help them establish realistic goals.

## Calendar of Events

Please refer to the All-School Calendar that is released near the beginning of the school year, in the North Scott Press. A North Scott Junior High Band Calendar is sent home each August. **Parents are asked to sign and return the lower portion and save the upper portion for our required concert dates.**

## Ensembles

7<sup>th</sup> Grade Beginning Band – meets everyday, as a class for 40 minutes during the school day. They perform 2 concerts with the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band, as well as their own concert for all 6<sup>th</sup> graders. They are also required to play a solo with piano accompaniment at the NSJH Solo Festival.

At the end of 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students will advance to 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Band as well as have the opportunity to audition for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Jazz Band.

Lesson Attendance – Lessons are provided in small groups during the school day, on a rotating basis. Lessons are essential to develop each student as an individual player.

## Summer Band Lessons

Students will be provided the opportunity for four (4) beginning band lessons prior to the start of the school year. It is important for students to attend these lessons to be able to have full band rehearsal the first day of school.

The dates of summer lessons are as follows:

Students now attending **Ed White, Armstrong and Shepard** will have lessons at the **Junior High on Monday, July 26, Wednesday, July 28, Monday, August 2 and Wednesday, August 4, 2010.**

Students now attending **Glenn or Grissom** will have lessons at those schools on **Tuesday, July 27, Thursday, July 29, Tuesday, August 3 and Thursday, August 5, 2010.**

Each lesson will be in a group of same instruments and will last 30 minutes.

The band signup form will provide us with needed information to form a schedule, which will be mailed to you in mid-July.

## **North Scott Music Boosters**

North Scott has an active Music Booster organization. As a band parent, you may consider yourself a Music Booster!

Music Boosters support our music programs through fundraising activities and primarily help the junior high school band, choir and orchestra students through scholarships to summer music camps. They meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month during the school year, at 7:00 P.M. in the HS band or choir room. Participation can include: attending meetings; attending music performances; volunteering to help with concessions for HS volleyball, basketball or wrestling (4-10 people needed per event); donating to the Patron Program; or helping with a specific committee within the organization.

## **Questions?**

Please feel free to contact one of the band directors with any questions or concerns!

Jennie McKenna and Tara Daurer NSJH Band office: 563-285-3407

[jennie.mckenna@north-scott.k12.ia.us](mailto:jennie.mckenna@north-scott.k12.ia.us)

[tara.daurer@north-scott.k12.ia.us](mailto:tara.daurer@north-scott.k12.ia.us)

**Please complete the information below and return it to us tonight!**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Elementary School \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ We intend to start our child on a band instrument! He/she  
will play the \_\_\_\_\_.