

Band Instrument Follow-Up Information

Thank you for your interest in participating in the McGraw Elementary Band!

Here is some follow-up information on options for renting instruments and common questions about purchasing instruments. We are still in the process of collecting band applications and requests to borrow an instrument. As was stated, the best way to ensure your child is playing their first choice of instrument is to provide one through rental or ownership. Please use the following information to consider if rental or purchase is ideal for your family.

If you do decide to rent or purchase an instrument, please let me know. This is especially important if you rent an instrument to be delivered to the school, as it will help me make sure your instrument goes to the correct student.

How can I rent an instrument?

Most music stores offer rental options for band instruments. These are student-level instruments that are designed to be sturdy and reliable and have been maintained in good working order. Prices, payment options, and terms of rental vary by instrument type, instrument quality, and store.

You are free to rent your instrument at any store you wish. *McGraw Schools does not specifically endorse any one music store.* The two music stores nearest McGraw are Harrington Bros Music in Cortland and Hickey's Music in Ithaca. Both offer instrument rental and sales of accessories. Both stores can make deliveries to McGraw Elementary.

Harrington Bros Music
www.harringtonbrosmusic.com
14 Central Ave
Cortland, NY 13045
(607) 756-5461

Hickey's Music
www.hickeys.com
104 Adams Street
Ithaca, NY 14850
607-272-8262 or 1-800-HICKEYS

Again, you are free to rent an instrument from any store you wish. There are other options in the Binghamton and Syracuse area, though they may not deliver to McGraw Elementary directly.

Should I purchase an instrument?

Annual rental for a beginning wind instrument is noticeably less expensive than purchasing the same quality instrument new. If a student is succeeding and enjoying band for two or more years, however, it is worthwhile to consider purchasing a high-quality instrument that could last through high school.

Between local retailers, online retailers, and used instrument/auction sites, there are a lot of options for beginning student instruments and a wide range of prices. Unfortunately, there is also a very wide range of quality with these instruments. The saying “you get what you pay for” applies to musical instruments. *The lowest-price of musical instruments can be of such low quality that it may not last as long as a school year.* Additionally, please do not purchase plastic or colored instruments. These do not have good records for quality and are not durable for the needs of a beginning instrumentalist.

A good quality student instrument, though more expensive than a budget model, can last for years. In fact, the instruments available for rental from local music stores are often high-quality student instruments that have been maintained annually and used regularly for years. If in doubt of a recommended model, you may want to ask one of the local retailers what models of instruments they use for rentals.

If you are interested in buying a new instrument online, it is highly suggested that you look at music retail sites rather than online department stores. Large music retailers have more specialized staff on call to answer questions about instruments and will be more able to help you find a student level model.

Here is a partial list of reliable instrument brands. Please note that many of these brands also have professional level models which can cost well into the thousands of dollars and have features that are not needed for a beginner.

Woodwinds: Gemeinhardt (flute), Yamaha, Armstrong, Jupiter, Selmer/Selmer Bundy, Leblanc, Buffet (clarinet)

Brass: Bach, Yamaha, Holton, King, Conn/Conn Selmer, Olds, Jupiter, Getzen

Percussion: Pearl, Ludwig, CB (note that the cost of purchasing a percussion/bell kit can be comparable to annual rental)

When considering a used instrument, it is always best to have someone (a teacher or advanced student) play test the instrument. Even the most reliable instruments usually need some level of repair if they have not been played for some time, and an experienced player can help determine if the instrument is in good working order.

What do I need other than an instrument?

All students are required to have a lesson book. The book is Essential Elements for Band, book 1, for the specific instrument. It is highly recommended that students have a folding music stand in order to practice at home with good posture and position. These range in price from \$10-20.

Additional Needs by Instrument

Flute	Cleaning rod (if not included with instrument), Handkerchief for cleaning
B-flat Clarinet	At least 3 beginner reeds (size 2, Rico or similar budget brand is fine); cleaning swab if not included with instrument
E-flat Alto Saxophone	At least 3 beginner reeds (size 2, Rico or similar budget brand is fine); cleaning swab if not included with instrument
B-flat Trumpet	Valve Oil Handkerchief or old t-shirt for cleaning
Trombone	Slide Oil (can be spray bottle) Handkerchief or old t-shirt for cleaning
Percussion	Size 2B or 5B snare drum sticks

Thank you again for your interest and support of the music program at McGraw Elementary. If you have any questions about selecting an instrument, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you decide to rent an instrument, please return the attached form, especially if you are asking the store to deliver to the school. Once your child has an instrument, I can begin scheduling your child for music lessons.

Sincerely,
Joe Ford
jford@mcgrawschools.org

Student Name:

Parent signature:

We have decided to rent the following instrument _____ from the following store _____.

Check one of the following:

We have requested to have it delivered to the school. _____

We will be picking it up ourselves and will let you know when it arrives. _____