

Instrumental Music Notes

Upcoming Email topics:

- Instrument Choices
- Getting an Instrument
- Helpful Websites or Apps
- General Instrumental Music Schedule
- Recruitment
- Books & Accessories
- Parents Roles
- Schedule & First Lesson Prep
- Practice Charts & Incentive Plan

Mrs. Carol Hutton
Sparks Elementary Elementary
Musicalsparks.weebly.com

Ensuring Success Topic 1: Making the Best Instrument Choices

~First in a series of newsletters with helpful information as we head in to an exciting new year~

Last year in exploratory music class, we introduced the four families of musical instruments. We spent time learning about each instrument, how they work, what they sound like, and how they are played. In May we began to discuss individual instrument preferences. All of this preparation has, hopefully, has given students their best chance at success on their chosen instrument. Ultimately, instrument choice should be based on several factors.

- **Student interest**—Students will almost always be more motivated to play an instrument they like rather than one that is picked for them.
- **Sound**—Does the student prefer high, medium, or low sounding instruments? This is important because the instrument will actually vibrate or resonate through the player. If the sound makes the student feel off or uncomfortable, they will not enjoy playing it.
- **Size**—While size is not one of the most important factors, it should be taken into consideration. Does the student prefer small, medium, or large instruments? Can they handle the size? Will they be able or willing to bring the instrument to school on their scheduled practice days, and back home again after? Will they willingly practice the instrument?
 - *String instruments do come in different sizes and should be fit to the student. There are size recommendations available online or local music stores can measure students as well.*
- **Home environment**—Some instruments are simply louder than others, especially in the beginning stages of learning. Can your home environment handle a louder instrument being practiced on a regular basis?
- **Cost**—Musical instruments are expensive; some significantly more than others. For beginners, used instruments, in good working condition, offer a considerable savings. An older instrument of a reputable brand would be preferable! BCPS is often able to supply the largest and most expensive instruments, tubas and basses, to students and I am usually able to secure some others as needed. Some instruments are simply too large to be transported on the buses, so I will do what I can to supply a second instrument for school use so that students do not have to carry the instrument back and forth from home. I do this with tubas, basses, cellos, and euphoniums when supply allows. For any other financial roadblocks, instruments that I have not listed here, please contact me and I will work with you to try to find a solution. I don't ever want any child to lose out on this experience simply because of the cost of an instrument!
- **Characteristics specific to instrument**—I have attached the instrument information chart that was sent home last spring to this email as well. Please revisit this as instrument choices are being finalized.

Please note, instruments do not need to be rented or purchased until the middle of September. Lessons will begin during either third or last week of September. All students will need to have made arrangements to have an instrument by then.

My next email will discuss in more detail the many different ways you might obtain an instrument for your child!

*Musically Yours,
Mrs. Carol Hutton*