

Union Grove Middle School

Sam Lowder, Orchestra Director

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

I would like to thank you in advance for supporting the UGMS Orchestra. I am excited at all the possibilities and opportunities for your child as he/she grows mentally and musically by playing the VIOLIN, the VIOLA, the CELLO, or the BASS! I assure you that the choice you and your child have made will serve to be a very worthwhile investment for the future!

Many of you have requested information on renting or purchasing a string instrument. The recommended vendors in our area have a large selection of quality instruments available for rent, to purchase, or rent-to-own.

This is what you should know before renting or buying an instrument*:

- 1) What instrument will/does your child play – the VIOLIN, the VIOLA, the CELLO, or the BASS?
- 2) What size instrument does your child need? Mr. Lowder or the music store employees can tell you.
- 3) These are some specifications of a *QUALITY* string instrument:
 - Should be made of solid wood with a maple scroll, neck, back, and ribs and a spruce top.
 - AVOID instruments that have parts made of plywood, boxwood, composite wood, or plastic.
 - Should have genuine ebony fittings: pegs, nut, fingerboard, tailpiece, and saddle.
 - AVOID instruments which say any of the parts are “ebony colored” or “blacked”.
 - Are varnished and produce a nice tone – AVOID colored or painted instruments.
 - Should have “true” inlaid purfling and not purfling which is simply painted on.
 - Should have strings and a properly fitted bridge – AVOID blank bridges that are not pre-installed.
 - Should have a case, a horsehair bow, rosin**, and a cleaning cloth (usually included anyway).
 - Violins, Violas, and Cellos must have 4 fine tuners.
- 4) Violin & Viola players also need a shoulder rest (I recommend the “Everest”, “Kun”, or similar styles).
- 5) Cello & Bass players also need a rock stop or an endpin anchor.

*BUYER BEWARE! Please make sure that you are paying for quality and not a “great deal!”

If you plan to purchase online, remember to check on the instrument’s specifications (see #3 above.)

**Bass rosin is soft and usually comes in a hard case (it is NOT the same as Violin, Viola, or Cello rosin.)

Optional Supplies: A wire music stand will aid in home practice.

Extra strings for emergencies: Violins-E and A, Violas-A and D, and Cellos-A, sized for your instrument.

You will NOT need to purchase a method book or music.

For Cello and Bass students, I will need to help tune your child’s instrument and add finger tapes to it.

Please email me to schedule a time to do this. Cellos and Basses (and rock stops) may be kept at home.

Violin and Viola students should start bringing their instrument, shoulder rest, rosin, cleaning cloth, and a pencil to class each day.

If I may be of any assistance, please contact me.

Musically,

Sam Lowder

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