

# Band Instruments

Here are some general guidelines we use in making the best selection for a student musician. A few of them are listed below to help you in your selection. Remember, there is no such thing as a “Girls” or “Boys” instrument!

CLICK ON THE NAME for a YouTube Video of the Instrument

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## **FLUTE** (Woodwind Family)



The flute plays the highest notes in the woodwind family and is the only instrument played by blowing across a hole. The earliest flutes were hollow bones used by cavemen. Today's flute is made of silver alloy. The best flute players have a rather flat upper lip with no “tear drop” in the center. Must be rented or purchased from a music company.

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## **OBOE** (Woodwind Family)



The oboe has two thin flat pieces of wood sewn together (double reed) that goes into the instrument. This “double reed instruments” is made of either plastic or wood. It has a unique sound and is a more challenging instrument in the band. Must have a good “ear” for music & an outstanding academic record.. These instruments are not used in high school marching bands, so double reed players can switch to saxophone or perform in the sideline percussion section in high school. Due to the unique nature of these instruments, students playing these instruments are strongly suggested to take weekly private lessons. It is nearly impossible to be successful on this instrument without private lessons.

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## **CLARINET (Woodwind Family)**



The clarinet has a single, flat piece of wood (reed) clamped onto a hollow mouthpiece. The instrument itself is made of wood. It has a remarkable range from low to high sounds and from loud to soft. Must be rented or purchased from a music company. Good for those students who did well with the recorder in elementary music. Note: Students who are double jointed are not good candidates for the clarinet.

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## **TRUMPET (Brass Family)**



The trumpet, with its high-pitched brilliant tone, is the leader of the brass family. A trumpet player can produce all the notes of the scale by pressing the valves and changing the lip vibration speed. The best trumpet players tend to have smaller sized lips, but this is not a rule. The trumpet is an important member of the jazz band. Must be rented/purchased.

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## **FRENCH HORN** (Brass Family)



The French Horn is made from 12-16 feet of brass tubing circled around and around. The tone is very mellow. In addition to using the lips and valves to change the pitch, the player places a hand in the bell to sometimes give a “muted” effect. Instruments are provided by the school, but very limited availability. Must have a good “ear” for music & an outstanding academic record. Piano experience is helpful. Due to the unique nature of these instruments, students playing this instrument are strongly suggested to take weekly private lessons. It is nearly impossible to be successful on this instrument without private lessons.

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## **TROMBONE** (Brass Family)



This instrument sounds very brassy like the trumpet, but it makes a lower sound. The player changes tones by sliding one tube in and out of the other, rather than by pressing valves. The trombone is an important member of the jazz band. Must be rented or purchased from a music company.

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## **EUPHONIUM** (Brass Family)



Like a mini-tuba, the Euphonium plays the same notes as the trombone, but has a rounder, more mellow sound. Due to its valves, it can play faster passages of music with more smoothness and ease. Instruments are provided by the school, but very limited availability.

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## **TUBA (Brass Family)**



The tuba is the largest and the lowest of the band instruments. Its bass voice gives the deep, low tones that are the foundation of the band. When unwound, a tuba is 16 feet long. Instruments are provided by the school, but very limited availability. We have several females in the Gunter Band that play tuba! You do not have to “hold it”, it sits on the seat of the chair. We have smaller tubas for beginners as well as some tubas to leave at home for home practice.

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## **PERCUSSION**



The percussion section of the band keeps the beat, builds excitement and adds color to the band. A percussionist does not just play drums; they play bells, xylophone, timpani, cymbals, triangle, and many other instruments (all school owned). Each member of the percussion section must work to create the aural illusion of one giant percussion instrument. A 6th grade Percussion Kit (figure 1) must be rented or purchased from a music company. It consists of a Practice Pad, practice bells set, stand for both, and sticks and mallets.. Due to the unique nature of these instruments, students playing this instrument are strongly suggested to take weekly private lessons. It is nearly impossible to be successful on this instrument without private lessons.