

# Make Me a Match

## Getting Students on the Right Instruments from the Beginning

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### Tips for Recruitment

- **#1 – SELL YOUR PROGRAM!** This is the time of year when you have to put on your salesman hat and make your program something that everyone wants to be a part of!
- **Visit your future band students at the elementary schools.** Bring students to perform for them– jazz band, flute choir, brass ensemble, percussion ensemble, etc... Talk to the students before the performance begins. I like to walk around and talk to the students individually and in small groups. Introduce yourself and be enthusiastic! I also address the whole group before the performance. I introduce myself as well as the ensemble that is performing. I like to tell them that the students performing started at the same age as they are right now and can already play so beautifully. This will let the students know that they can do this too! At the end of the concert, talk to them about when and how they can go about signing up for band and trying the various instruments. I also have the students and myself stay around afterwards to talk to the students. It is great to have your students sell the program to the younger ones.
- **Spring Recruitment Concert.** I also do a spring recruitment concert. The elementary schools have a visitation day when they come over to our school. I have our advanced band perform popular songs from the radio that the students will recognize and get them excited about joining the band! Talk to the students after the concert about how to go about joining the band. Tell them about the Instrument Selection Nights. Talk your program up! Tell them about all the exciting things they will get to be a part of – concerts, field trips, combined concerts with the high school band, etc..

- **Send a letter home in the spring to the elementary school parents about Joining the Band.** Include in the letter all of the band accolades, field trip plans, enrollment numbers, concerts, community and/or conference performances, etc.. I also include a paragraph as to how being a part of a music program can also positively affect academic success as well as self-discipline. Parents always like those statistics. Include the directors' bios. Let the parents know your background, qualifications, and successes. Parents want to know that their children will be learning from the best! Put in the letter all of the information about your spring sign up and instrument testing night and time.
- **Speak at all Rising 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Meetings.** Inform the parents about their child's opportunities for trying the instruments and getting signed up for band. At this point, they should have received the letter you sent home, so now you are just reviewing that information to ensure everyone knows when the spring instrument testing night will be taking place. You still want to sell your program every time you get the opportunity to speak to the parents. So, say all of those great things again!
- **"Early Bird" Spring Instrument Selection Night** - Consider doing a spring sign up. I have an instrument selection night from 7-9pm. I schedule it the same night as the parent meeting my principal has with the rising 6<sup>th</sup> grade students and parents. After the meeting the students and parents come to the band room to try the instruments and get signed up early. I get a chance to meet with every student and parent that comes to the band room that night!
- **Have a plan for the students that were not able to sign up in the spring.** I also sign up students the first 2 weeks of school if they were unable to come to the spring selection night. I basically do the exact same process I do in the spring, the first 2 weeks of school. We have an instrument demonstration in the theater the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of school. See below for the info on the instrument demonstration.
- **At the start of the school year, be visible in the hallways when the class changes happen.** Talk with students, ask them if they are joining band. RECRUIT! Students will gravitate towards what they know and who they are comfortable with.

- **Hang “Join the Band” posters throughout the school.** Music stores often times have free posters they will give you. Consider making your own posters as well.

I have used different images from the internet (muppets playing instruments, famous musicians, etc..) and added JOIN THE BAND underneath and hung them all over the school. You are marketing your band program. You want to saturate the students with your program name and logo. They are like campaign posters. The more the students see and identify that, the more they will remember and want to be a part of it. Students these days have so many options for activities. You have to be competitive! Make it COOL to be a part of the band!

- **Beg, Borrow, and Steal!** – Talk to other directors about how they recruit. Share ideas. Many of the recruitment ideas I have gotten over the years were borrowed from other fabulous directors!

### **Instrument Demonstration**

- Have a time when all of the students meet in one place. I do our demonstration in the theater at our school.
- I use band directors, professional local musicians, and even advanced high school and college students to demonstrate the sounds of the instruments.
- Perform songs that will sell the instrument – play songs the students may recognize or sound “cool” on that particular instrument. Ex. Jaws on tuba, the pink panther on flute, lasso trombone, rhapsody in blue on clarinet, etc...
- This demonstration will allow for the students to hear what every instrument sounds like and which ones they are attracted to the most.
- Tell the students that there is not such thing as a girl or boy instrument.
- **SELL YOUR PROGRAM!** – Talk it up. Tell them about all the reasons they should join your program – ex. Field trips, performance opportunities, etc...
- Encourage all students to at least come to the band room and try the instruments. Some students may not even know they are interested in band until they actually come and try the different instruments.

## **Instrument Selection/Testing**

- Select an instrument testing night in the Spring, one the week before school starts, and then more days the first 2 weeks of school if possible.
- I ask other band directors in the county to help with the instrument testing stations. In our district we help each out with one another's instrument selection nights. . If you are not able to pay people to come in and do the instrument testing, work out a trade with other band directors. Agree to do their night if they can do yours. Also consider asking local college students or advanced high school players to do it for free. Just make sure you have them come in early so you have a chance to train them exactly how you would like to have the testing on that specific instrument to be done.
- I also ask high school band students to come to help out that night. Some students are assistants to the band directors running the different stations and some are greeters and handout forms to students and parents.
- We all wear our band t-shirts that night to promote the band! Everyone working the instrument testing night also wears name tags.
- I have videos of the band performances playing, so when the students and parents walk in, they see and hear the band and what they are about to be a part of. They also see for themselves the students in the band having a great time performing!
- The parents are greeted by the high school student leaders that are serving as the instrument testing night "greeters". I select high school students that are drum majors or section leaders and are comfortable speaking to adults and are articulate, mature students.
- The greeters provide a form the students fill out as soon as they walk in the door to try instruments. The students will fill out this form indicating their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choices of instruments. The form includes directions on how to fill the form out, the process for the instrument testing, as well as the instrumentation breakdown.
- Students will then go to the different stations to try their instrument choices. Every station is clearly marked with a large sign for that particular instrument. Each table has a band director or professional musician doing the actual testing and demonstrating of the instrument, with a high school student serving as their assistant. The assistant helps with cleaning the mouthpieces and preparing them for each student. The person conducting the instrument test will then mark on the form how she or he did on that particular instrument. (We use a scale of 1-5).

5 – Student got a great sound – natural fit

4 – Student was able to produce a good sound after some coaching

3 – Student was okay, but it took some time and a great deal of coaching

2 and below – Would not recommend student for this instrument due to various factors – physical limitations, not a good sense of timing for percussion, etc..

\*I do not suggest giving a student below a 2, however. You don't want to have him/her so discouraged and upset that he/she doesn't want to try anything after that.

- After the student has tried all of his/her instrument choices, he/she will bring the form and sit with the head band director. The director can then inform the student and parents the instrument that is best suited for their child.
- It is important that the director choose an instrument for the student that he/she did well on, but is also excited about playing!
- Talk to the student and parent about the results of their instrument selection test and why it is you are suggesting a specific instrument.
- Having the parent there for this process makes things easier when it comes to suggesting an instrument on which the student was most successful. The parent was actually there to see it!
- Motivation is key. Barring any type of physical issue, if the student is motivated to play a particular instrument he/she will be excited about playing, will practice and be successful!
- At this time I fill out the band permit/instrument assignment and supply list and go over it with the student and parents.
- Include music store brochures
- If the student is signing up in the spring, give them a form about taking summer lessons and precautions to take over the summer if getting an instrument early. This will help prevent students developing bad habits and instruments getting broken before school starts. Stress to the parent how beneficial summer lessons could be for their child.
- Go over with the parents the importance of renting or purchasing good quality instruments. Tell them they should steer away from purchasing an instrument at the same store they can buy peanut butter and tires.
- If you are allowed to invite reputable music stores into your school, ask them to set up tables with instruments ready to be rented the evening of your instrument selection night. The student can get tested on the instruments, get selected for one, and then go to the different music store tables and rent the instrument all in one night.
- If the parent is concerned about cost, explain the school owned instrument options that you have available in your program.
- I am constantly monitoring my instrumentation as I go to make sure we are staying close to our target numbers.
- If numbers are low on some school owned instruments – horn, baritone, and tuba, don't panic. There will be time in the first few weeks to move students to those instruments if they are unable to rent or buy an instrument. That usually tends to work itself out.

## Instrument Testing Tips for Each Instrument

- ❖ *Use mint flavored alcohol in a spray bottle and paper towels for the cleaning of the mouthpieces*

**Flute** – you are looking for medium to thin lips and straight teeth. Check lips to make sure there is no cupid's bow or teardrop. Test students on a high and low sound on the head joint. Before having the student set the head joint on their lips, have them watch you as to how to correctly form the embouchure/aperture and correctly blow the air with a "pooh" syllable. I like to have students draw a line with their finger where their top and bottom lip connect and tell them to center that in the middle of the hole on the head joint, then roll back and blow the air across that hole. Help the student when setting the head joint and rolling it back before blowing the air. You want to make sure the head joint is not rolled back too far. Make a low sound with the flat of your palm against the end of the head joint, then make a high sound with the end of the head joint open.

**Oboe** - The first sound on oboe should be tested on the reed first. Say the word "who". Keep bottom lip pulled firmly into bottom teeth, not overly rolled in over bottom teeth. Chin should be pointed down and flat. This is much like whistling. I like to use a straw and tell the student to block the bottom of the straw and suck in, just like you're sipping a nice thick chocolate shake. The way the lips surround the straw is similar to a seal surrounding the reed. Rest reed on bottom lip when formed as previously mentioned. Only half of the reed should be in the mouth. Take a breath and bring upper lip wrapped around upper teeth down to the reed and push air through reed. All beginning sounds on the oboe must be started with the tongue. Once the reed is set have the student make a sustained sound on the reed. A good embouchure uses a combination of "m" which raises the pitch and "o" which lowers and deepens the pitch. No smiling please. If a student can vibrate the reed by itself and not puff their checks, have them try it on the oboe. Students who can follow these instructions and can produce this result will work well. I always ask if they are good in school. This instrument requires a student that will not get frustrated easily, a self starter.

**Bassoon**- The first thing to take into consideration is the size of the hands. This may or may not be proportional to the overall size of the student. The most important thing to look for is whether or not the third finger of the left hand is able to reach the key or tone hole. Which one of these is present depends on the manufacturer and model of instrument being considered. Most professional level instruments will have a ring around the tone hole for the third finger. Many student instruments, particularly the Renard instruments made by Fox Products Corporation, have a plateau key for the third finger of the left hand and in many cases this is all that is required. Fox also produces a "short reach" model which has other modifications to allow smaller hands to reach. The problem with these instruments is that they are not comfortable for players with normal full size hands and should not be used by high school or adult players. In many school band programs where bassoons are provided the Fox Renard instruments are extremely popular and in many cases switching a student from another instrument to one of these will solve the problem of the left hand reaching. If the student's left hand third finger is able to reach, it is rare for there to be a problem with the other fingers reaching the keys and tone holes. As long as a student has basically straight teeth and a normal jaw position they should be fine playing the bassoon. One thing that would prevent most students from being able to play bassoon would be the presence of an under bite. Testing the student with only the reed can be of some benefit. The embouchure requires very little pressure, especially from the top and bottom lip. In order to crowd the reed, have the student drop the jaw and squeeze in from the sides. Have them try whistling first which will draw the jaw and pull the corners of the mouth in. Now have the student put about half of the blade of the reed in their mouth and draw the lips in slightly to cover the teeth. When they blow have them try to open the throat and produce the low, throaty,

scratchy sound of the crow. It should basically sound like two sounds, one high and one low, being produced at the same time. If they are able to do this it means they are able to produce a generally good embouchure. The inability to crow the reed should in no way exclude a beginner from being considered to play the bassoon. Many beginners are not able to produce a true crow right away but become successful bassoonists. As long as the hands are large enough any student who is motivated and has a genuine desire to play such a challenging instrument is generally a good candidate.

**Clarinet** – Have the student form his or her mouth as if to whistle with firm cheeks, firm chin pointed down, and lips firm against the teeth in the formation of an "O". Another approach is to have the student say "eeeeewwww" to achieve firmness of cheeks, chin, and lips. Model everything for the student as you explain how to form the correct embouchure. Have the mouthpiece attached to the barrel with the reed and ligature ready for play. A 2 1/2 strength reed is recommended for optimum tone production at the beginner level. Place the mouthpiece firm against the top front two teeth, reed facing towards the student. The mouthpiece must be anchored against the top teeth so as not to move. As the student creates a whistle formation with his or her lips, be sure the chin stays firm and flat and the bottom lip cushions the bottom teeth slightly. Be sure the lips seal around the mouthpiece like a rubber band, firm against the teeth, with equal tension all the way around the mouthpiece. As the student blows a steady air stream, be sure the cheeks do not puff out and the chin does not lose its firmness. It is recommended that the student does not hold the mouthpiece and barrel to be sure that it stays firm against the top teeth and does not press against the bottom lip. Too much pressure on the bottom lip/teeth will prevent the reed from vibrating. Tip- have student squeeze his or her abs to create the optimum air speed. I use the analogy "laser beam " air stream to create the correct visual.

**Saxophone** – look for the same physical characteristics as clarinet, but student can get away with slightly uneven teeth. Mouthpiece test – make sure student can set embouchure correctly without rolling bottom top and bottom lip in too far. Top teeth on mouthpiece and a thin pillow of lip on bottom teeth. It is very similar to clarinet, but the bottom lip is over the teeth a little more. Check the size of their hands to make sure they will be able to wrap around the body of the alto sax. I generally have them play the clarinet first and then do saxophone immediately next or vice versa. That way I can compare and contrast it. I ALWAYS use 3 or 3.5 reeds on the saxophone. Sometimes...even thicker if my numbers are getting too high on the sax. I also use the mouthpiece AND neck and we are going for a concert Ab. Once they get it, I'll attach the sax body. They hold the saxophone neck and blow like before while I do some fingerings on the top half of the sax with my right hand. Sometimes I'll let them do it while having a neck strap on.

**Trumpet** - Look for even teeth, medium to thin lips, and that all three fingers on the right hand are working well. A slight overbite is okay, but an under bite can severely hinder progress on the trumpet. Braces and other dental work can be troublesome, but it is not impossible to make a good trumpet sound with dental work in place.

Do a mouthpiece test. I have the students silently say the letter "M" and hold that embouchure position. Next, I have them feel the muscles in the corners of their mouth while forming the embouchure. Keeping those muscles firm, I ask them to buzz their lips away from the mouthpiece before placing the mouthpiece to their lips. It is helpful to model buzzing with and without the mouthpiece before the student attempts to do it. Students should be able to buzz a second line G. If a student cannot do this, then he/she may be more successful on a bigger mouthpiece. Test the student to see if he/she can get two partials (concert F and Bb). It is also a good idea to have the student match pitch while singing with the director.

**Horn** - Look for even teeth, flat chin, and that all three fingers on the left hand are working well. A slight overbite is okay, but an under bite can severely hinder progress on the horn. Braces and other dental work can be troublesome, but it is not impossible to make a good horn sound with dental work in place.

Do a mouthpiece test, and make sure 2/3 of the top lip is a comfortable fit. I have the students silently say the letter "M" and hold that embouchure position. Next, I have them feel the muscles in the corners of their mouth while forming the embouchure. Keeping those muscles firm, I ask them to buzz their lips away from the mouthpiece before placing the mouthpiece to their lips. It is helpful to model buzzing with and without the mouthpiece before the student attempts to do it. Test the student to see if he/she can get two partials (concert F and Bb). To play the horn, it is imperative that the student has good pitch reference. Have the student echo-sing a few simple diatonic scale passages and make note of how accurately they are able to do this.

**Low Brass** - Look for medium to full lips. Even teeth are not quite as important as it is for high brass instruments. A slight overbite is okay, but an under bite can severely hinder progress on low brass instruments. Students with braces and other dental work may find the larger mouthpieces of the low brass instruments more comfortable while playing. Also, check for long enough arms for those interested in trombone.

Do a mouthpiece test. I have the students silently say the letter "M" and hold that embouchure position. Next, I have them feel the muscles in the corners of their mouth while forming the embouchure. Keeping those muscles firm, I ask them to buzz their lips away from the mouthpiece before placing the mouthpiece to their lips. It is helpful to model buzzing with and without the mouthpiece before the student attempts to do it. Students should be able to buzz a fourth line F for trombone and baritone, and a low buzz for tuba. Test the student to see if he/she can get two partials (concert F and Bb). It is also a good idea to have the student match pitch while singing with the director.

**Percussion** - First, determine if the student is mature enough and capable of being a percussionist in your program. Keep in mind that it takes patience, the ability to stand still, and the willingness to learn all aspects of percussion to be a percussionist in your band. If the student cannot remain calm and still during instrument testing, chances are he or she will not be a successful young percussionist. I will also ask the student if he/she plays or has played piano. You want to check the student's ability to maintain a steady tempo...even if you start with the most basic rhythm- have them play any given rhythm and see if they can keep a steady pulse for an extended time. You want to pay attention to their motor skills- do they rotate their wrist naturally or are they stiff? Check their coordination between hands by giving them a sticking pattern-see how quick they pick up the pattern.

Use a practice pad and play rhythms to the students asking them to play back exactly that they heard you play. Give the student a score on each exercise. Here are some sample exercises:

**Example #1**



**Example #2**



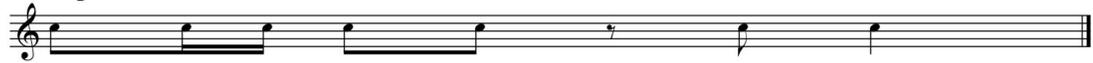
**Example #3**



**Example #4**



**Example #5**



**Please Remember - The right match is KEY!**

- Playing an instrument that is not compatible can cause frustration and then the possibility of the student wanting to quit.
- Check for any major physical limitations that would totally prohibit a student from playing a particular instrument
- The director needs to be the one that is guiding the student towards the right instrument. It is a very fine balance of the student doing well on the instrument test, finding an instrument the student is excited about playing, and also maintaining the desired instrumentation for your band.

## **Your students are signed up and on instruments – Now what?**

### **Band Carnival**

Many programs in our district have a Saturday Band Carnival for their students. Most times the high school band program hosts the event. This usually takes place the first weekend after starting in the class. The day is designed to help the students get started. The students are in section master classes in the morning. Band directors in the county are hired to come in and teach the individual sections how to assemble the instrument, hand position, make mouthpiece/head joint sounds, and learn the first few notes. This is all done in the morning from 9:30am-11:30am. They have a lunch break, games outside (inflatables, jumpy ball, funnel cakes, snow cones, etc...) and then a show and tell concert at the end of the afternoon for the other students and parents. Each section gets to show what they learned in their master class that day.

### **Beginning Band Parent Meeting**

Schedule a beginning band parent meeting sometime shortly after signing up your students to go over your handbook, expectations, how they can support their child, and answer any questions the parents may have. Some topics to address would be:

- Care of instrument
- How much their child should be practicing
- How they can motivate/support their child in learning an instrument
- Band Handbook – concert dates, events, fundraisers, syllabus, grading procedure
- Behavior expectations
- Parent volunteer/booster opportunities

Get the parents to buy into your program from the beginning. Parent support can be so beneficial to the success of the program!

### **Beginning Band Instrumentation**

Managing your instrumentation as you sign your students up is critical. I like to keep a tally as I go so I can make sure I am on track for the desired instrumentation. It is important to determine the percentage of students you would like to have on each instrument in order to achieve your desired instrumentation. It is also a good idea to share that with the parents and students in the handout you give them on the instrument testing night. This will inform the parents and students as to what the big picture outcome needs to be for the best instrumentation of the band.

In my opinion, there are some instruments you can take more of than what you originally planned. For example, clarinet...I think it is ok to take more clarinets than you originally plan for. You can always use lots of clarinets and you can also have students move to bass clarinet later or possibly switch to a different instrument from clarinet if necessary. Trumpet is another instrument that I sometimes take more of. Down the road, depending on the student, I may switch one or two to horn or a low brass instrument. This will usually depend on range capabilities as well as their motivation to switch to something new. If a student struggles with the upper range of the trumpet, I usually switch him/her to euphonium.

There are times when you may sign a student up for an instrument that would require the parent to rent or purchase. Sometimes, the student or parent will come back and say it is just not financially possible for them to pay the rental fee. In this situation I will offer to move the student to a school owned instrument (horn, baritone, tuba, bassoon, tenor sax). This way I am able to address the overall instrumentation through the use of our school owned instruments - plus I can keep the student in the band program.

- **Students Must Feel Successful**

The bottom line is we want our students to be successful. If a student is struggling with the instrument he/she is playing, offer to help before and after school or give the student the option to switch to an instrument he/she would be more successful playing. When a student feels a sense of accomplishment, he/she will want to continue and will be motivated to practice.

I give students a playing test every week. I feel that it is important to hear them individually often, especially in the first year of playing. Give them little rewards for receiving a 100% on a test. It is amazing how much a student will light up and smile over just receiving a sticker or a pencil as a reward!

- **Like Instrument Classes and Full Band**

I prefer to have my students in like instrument groupings as much as possible in the first year, but at the same time have some full band time. I use it as a reward with the students. They love coming together with the other instruments and it gives me a chance to teach them ensemble skills. I can not stress, however how important like instrument classes or sectionals can be. Much of a student feeling successful in their first year lies with the amount of information they get on a day to day basis. If they are able to be in smaller, like instruments, they will tend to get more information pertaining to just their specific instrument. The odds of a student wanting to switch to a different instrument or not being successful are a lot lower when they do not get lost in the mix of a large, heterogeneous/full band setting. For example, we have a high brass and a low brass class. Just simply placing them in these like instrument groupings has done wonders! If this is not possible to do during the school day due to scheduling issues, consider planning some before or after school sectional time. Even just once a week is better than nothing.

- **Switching a Student to a Different Instrument**

Throughout the first year, continue to monitor your students' progress and the instrumentation needs of the ensemble. If students need to switch to a different instrument, I like to do that sooner than later. There are various reasons to switch a student – student is struggling with the instrument they are on, student has financial issues and can no longer rent the instrument he/she is on and now needs to play a school owned, or the ensemble is just in need of a different instrument and that student would be a good switch.

### **Hearing and Seeing Professionals on Their Instrument is Important - Recordings, YouTube and Live Performances, and Master classes**

Expose your students to professional musicians. I play my students cd recordings and show them you tube videos of professionals playing their specific instrument all of the time. We learn about the musician, the piece they are performing, and the ensemble they might be performing with. I also like to invite professionals to come and perform for my students. In the summer, I have a week long middle school band camp for my students. Each day a guest performing group performs for them. I also invite professional musicians in the area to come and give master classes to my students. Many local symphony musicians will do this for free in an outreach program. Military bands will also perform and give master classes for free! Take advantage of these great resources for your students. Advertise concerts going on in your area. Consider taking a group of students to a concert. Some symphony orchestras perform young people's concerts during the school day. It is so important for our students to get the opportunity to hear and see professional musicians.

### **Mentor Program**

Consider setting up a mentor program with your older students and your beginners. You can match each student with an 8<sup>th</sup> grader or a high school student of the same instrument. When I do this with my students, I match them and then have 1-2 days a week when they meet after school to have a private lesson. It is great to see the older students helping the younger ones! This improves their playing, but it also helps the motivation of the student as well as retention and recruitment for the high school. Students look up to the older students and want to be like them. The older student exudes positivity about being in band and when the younger student sees that, then he/she will want to stay in and move on to the high school band as well!

### **2<sup>nd</sup> year Instrumentation**

At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year, we sit sit down and re-evaluate and make plans for the next year. In this plan, we look at instrumentation. Due to changes in numbers or weaker or stronger sections, we may need to make a few adjustments.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> year is not too late in my opinion to switch a student to a different instrument. The reading skills are already there, the student will just need to learn the mechanics of the new instrument.

This is also the time when I will move students from alto sax to tenor or baritone saxophone and clarinet to bass clarinet. Sometimes as beginners they are a little too small to handle the larger instruments and depending on the size of the student, I will wait until the 2<sup>nd</sup> year once they have grown a bit.

This is also a good time, after the student has had one year to play, to make decisions on switching from one instrument to another because of range or embouchure issues. Students that struggle with the upper range on trumpet would be good candidates for a low brass instrument. Be very selective though about any student you switch to horn. Horn is a difficult instrument, but especially coming in one year behind everyone else. Make sure any student you are considering switching is a hard working, bright student that will enjoy the challenge. Remember, we want the student to feel successful!

Take time to encourage the student and have some private lessons with him/her so that he/she will feel successful. I think it is important to let the student know the impact they will have on the band for making this switch and explain the desired instrumentation that you need to make the band sound great!

### **3<sup>rd</sup> year Instrumentation**

As we do at the end of the first year, we re-evaluate our instrumentation needs at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year as well. There may be some students that will need or want or want to switch to a different instrument.

There are also students during their 3<sup>rd</sup> year that may want to double and learn a new instrument in addition to the one they are currently playing. I allow for this in certain circumstances. There may be some students that want to learn a new instrument so they can participate in jazz band or a student that is considering playing a different instrument in the marching band the next year or switching to another instrument for high school.

I believe that the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year is the time to be communicating often with the high school director to see what it is he/she will need in the high school program. If there is a shortage of tubas, then we may need to start teaching some students at the middle school how to play tuba. If this would impact your own instrumentation, consider letting them double. The students I have that double play their primary instrument in the advanced band class and the secondary instrument in the intermediate class. If that is not an option, then have them come before and/or after school and learn the secondary instrument then.

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# ***JOIN THE TAPP BAND!***

All rising 6th graders attending Tapp M.S. next year will have the opportunity to join the band this coming fall. The Tapp Bands are well-known for their excellence. They have continuously received superior ratings at District Band Festival, have many students selected to participate in District Honor Band and All-State Bands, and have performed as a featured performing band at the University of Georgia Middle School Band Festival four times! The 8th Grade Symphonic Band even traveled to Chicago, Illinois to perform at the 2004 Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic, the most prestigious honor that can be achieved by a band.

## **WHY SHOULD I JOIN THE BAND?**

1. It has been proven that involvement in music improves many of the skills used in academic courses. Students involved in music score higher on tests and receive better grades due to the math, thinking, and motor skills as well as the discipline required of the students each day. 2. Band is a class that your child can begin in 6th grade and continue all the way into high school. The middle and high school band directors work very closely to make sure your child receives a continuous curriculum 6th-12th grade. 3. We start all students in the 6th Grade as beginners. You do not have to have any prior music experience to join the band. 4. Band promotes self-confidence and self-discipline, and at this age that is so important! When a child can learn to play an instrument well, the amount of pride instilled in that child is unbelievable. Students are also encouraged to practice on a daily basis which encourages self-discipline. 5. Band is a fun, positive experience!

## **HOW DO I JOIN THE BAND?**

1. ***SPRING SIGN-UPS*** The Tapp M.S. Band Program will be having a **TAPP BAND open house night for the parents and students May 7th after the 6th grade parent meeting at Tapp.** The meeting starts at 6pm in the theater and the band room will be open after for students to come and try the instruments and get signed up early! Come to the band room and meet the directors, see all the instruments, and get a chance to try some of them and get signed-up early!

**2. BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR SIGN-UPS** If you are unable to attend the spring sign up night, don't worry! The 1st week of school the students will be seeing a demonstration of all of the instruments in the band. They will be given a sign-up sheet for the three instruments they would like to try. If a student did not get signed-up at the open house, they will be signed-up the first two weeks of school during the school day.

3. Once the directors have selected the appropriate instrument for your child, a packet will be sent home with your child about renting and buying the instrument, what you will need for band class, and where to get it. Students signed-up for Tuba, Baritone, Horn, Bass Clarinet, or Tenor Saxophone will not have to rent or buy the instrument, because it is provided by the school.

4. Once all students are signed-up on their instruments, band classes will then become a class in their daily schedule that will meet every day. Band will take the place of either P.E. or another connections class. All band students will get all of the P.E. and connections classes that are offered 6th-8th grade while they are at Tapp.

5. The instruments offered in the band are: FLUTE, OBOE, BASSOON, CLARINET AND BASS CLARINET, ALTO AND TENOR SAXOPHONE, TRUMPET, HORN, TROMBONE, BARITONE, TUBA, AND PERCUSSION (DRUMS AND BELLS). Start thinking about what instruments you are interested in.

### **STARTING AN INSTRUMENT OVER THE SUMMER**

1. It is not required that any student start an instrument over the summer, but if you have a child that knows without a doubt what instrument he/she would like to play, it is a good idea to get them a head start if you follow the suggestions we have.

2. Go ahead and rent or buy the instrument (see the list above of the instruments we offer in the band) , accessories, and Essential Elements Book 1 2000 at a local music store. Contact the band room at Tapp M.S. if you need some referrals.

3. Sign your child up IMMEDIATELY for PRIVATE LESSONS! There is nothing more important than making sure your child starts on the instrument correctly and with a good instructor. Private lessons are offered over the summer. E-mail Erin Cole (Tapp band director) at [erin.cole@cobbk12.org](mailto:erin.cole@cobbk12.org) for private lesson teacher referrals. If you are not able to start private lessons over the summer, we recommend waiting until school starts

4. We encourage any student to start over the summer if private lessons are arranged. If you are able to arrange this for your child it will definitely motivate him/her early and allow him/her to become a better musician!

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING ALL OF YOU AT THE BAND OPEN HOUSE NIGHT MAY 7th AFTER THE PARENT MEETING** (Tapp parent meeting is in the Theater) **IN THE TAPP BAND ROOM AND ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO YOU CHILD BEING A PART OF THE TAPP BAND PROGRAM!**

\*We will be selling the Tapp Band T-Shirts and other spirit wear on May 7th. Get your Tapp Band shirt that you will need for all of your 6th grade concerts early! Shirts will also be available for purchase at the beginning of next school year.

**Tapp Band Spirit Wear (Cash Only)**

T-shirts: \$15 - short sleeve, \$18 - long sleeve (uniform shirt for concerts)

Car Window Cling Decal: \$3 Sling Back Pack: \$15 Instrument Case Tag: \$5 Water Bottle (bpa free): \$10 Magnetic Dry Erase Message Board w/marker: \$5

*Erin Cole*

Tapp Band Director

[erin.cole@cobbk12.org](mailto:erin.cole@cobbk12.org)



**TAPP MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**BAND, ORCHESTRA and CHORUS**  
**OPEN HOUSE**

***Monday, May 9th***

***Immediately Following the Tapp Parent Meeting***  
***Meeting starts at 6:30pm and we will have our open***  
***house immediately after the meeting.***

**Tapp M.S. Band, Orchestra and Chorus Room**



***This is your chance to get signed up for band, orchestra and***  
***chorus EARLY before school even starts!***

***Come out and have fun trying all the different instruments and we will find the***  
***one that is best suited for you!***

***No previous musical background is required!***

# **Tapp Middle School**

## **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Band Open House**

**Directions:**

\*Please choose at least 3 instruments you would like to try tonight. Write in the blank beside those three instruments which one is 1<sup>st</sup> choice, 2<sup>nd</sup> choice, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice. Once your paper is filled out, go to the instrument stations in order of preference. When you are finished trying all of your choices, take your paper and go to Ms. Cole's check-out table with your parents to get signed up for the TAPP BAND!

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Flute: \_\_\_\_\_

Oboe: \_\_\_\_\_

Bassoon (school owned): \_\_\_\_\_

Clarinet: \_\_\_\_\_

Bass Clarinet (school owned): \_\_\_\_\_

Alto Saxophone: \_\_\_\_\_

Tenor Saxophone (school owned): \_\_\_\_\_

Trumpet: \_\_\_\_\_

Horn (school owned): \_\_\_\_\_

Trombone: \_\_\_\_\_

Baritone (school owned): \_\_\_\_\_

Tuba (school owned): \_\_\_\_\_

Percussion: \_\_\_\_\_

**Tapp Middle School**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Band Open House**

***PARENT/STUDENT***  
***INFORMATION FORM***

STUDENT'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT'S NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS:

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PARENT'S PHONE NUMBERS:

HOME: \_\_\_\_\_ CELL: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT'S EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Miss the Tapp Band Open House Last Night?**

**It's not too late to sign up for Band!**

**You can schedule an appointment for your child's Band instrument testing**

**Go to the Tapp Band Sign Up Genius Account to sign up for an appointment on line:**

**USE THIS LINK:**

**<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0a45a9a928a75-tapp/39972265>**



## Tapp Middle School Band Permit

Congratulations! \_\_\_\_\_ has been accepted to play \_\_\_\_\_ in the Tapp Middle School Band Program! Please have all materials checked below by MONDAY, AUGUST 8th, 2016.

Thank You,

Erin Cole, Band Director - [erin.cole@cobbk12.org](mailto:erin.cole@cobbk12.org) 770-222-3758 x247

Patrick Clark, Assistant Band Director - [patrick.clark@cobbk12.org](mailto:patrick.clark@cobbk12.org) 770-222-3758 x247

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\_\_\_\_\_ Essential Elements - Book 1 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Bach 18 or 22 Tuba Mouthpiece

\_\_\_\_\_ Bach 5C Trumpet Mouthpiece

\_\_\_\_\_ Bach 61/2 AL Mouthpiece for Trombone/Baritone (small shank)

\_\_\_\_\_ Holton Farkus Medium Deep Cup Mouthpiece for French Horn

\_\_\_\_\_ One box of No. 2 Reeds for Clarinet (at least 8 reeds)

\_\_\_\_\_ One box of No. 2 Reeds for Saxophone (at least 8 reeds)

\_\_\_\_\_ Cork Grease

\_\_\_\_\_ Neck Strap

\_\_\_\_\_ Polishing Cloth (brass players) and cleaning swab (woodwind players)

\_\_\_\_\_ Handkerchief with no cleaning chemicals on it for Flute

\_\_\_\_\_ Valve Oil

\_\_\_\_\_ Rotary Oil

\_\_\_\_\_ Slide Grease and Slide Oil

\_\_\_\_\_ Mouthpiece brush for specific instrument assigned

\_\_\_\_\_ Junior Percussion Kit: 2 1/2 octave bell set, drum pad (you do not have to purchase a snare drum, you will only need the drum pad) AND Vic Firth SD1 drum sticks

\_\_\_\_\_ Wire Music Stand (Optional for home use, but highly recommended. Stands are provided at school for school use only.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

***\*Note to Dealer:*** The student is authorized to obtain only the instrument designated. Subsequent changes require the director's written authorization. Thank you for your cooperation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Instrument (rent or buy): \_\_\_\_\_

This instrument is not one of the school owned instruments. You will need to rent or buy it at one of the suggested music stores.

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\_\_\_\_\_ Wire Music Stand (Optional for home use, but highly recommended. Stands are provided at school for school use only.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

***\*Note to Dealer:*** The student is authorized to obtain only the instrument designated. Subsequent changes require the director's written authorization. Thank you for your cooperation.

\_\_\_\_\_ Instrument (school owned): \_\_\_\_\_

This instrument is school owned and will be provided by Tapp Middle School. The instrument will be checked out to your child at no cost once he/she had started in the band class