



LAKERIDGE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL BAND

INSTRUMENT SELECTION GUIDE

Flute:

The flute is the smallest of the beginner instruments.

Physical Characteristics: Flute players should have a slight “frown” to the upper lip with NO teardrop shape in the middle. Flute tones are produced by being able to focus and extremely small airstream to an exact location on the tone hole. The tear-drop-shaped lip will make it difficult to direct the air so precisely. Flute players should also have agile fingers for moving this multi-keyed instrument through a fast musical passage. Students with extreme overbites (receded jaw) should avoid choosing flute as this makes it difficult to produce quality sounds.

Other considerations: Students with double-jointed fingers should avoid selecting flute as double-jointedness can cause lack of agility in the fingers. The school district does not supply flutes.

Oboe:

The oboe is similar in its appearance to a clarinet, but it is played using a “double reed” instead of a mouthpiece.

Physical Characteristics: Students with profound overbites or under bites would have EXTREME difficulties producing good sounds on the oboe since the embouchure (mouth position) requires equal pressure on both sides of the reed at the same placement.

Other Considerations: Students are required to maintain a supply of 3-4 quality reeds at ALL times. Reeds can cost \$12-\$15 dollars each. Oboes can be rented from the school district for \$80/year. Oboe players are strongly encouraged to take private lessons when they begin on the oboe.

Starting instrument: Clarinet

Clarinet:

Unlike the oboe, the clarinet uses a “single reed” and a mouthpiece to produce the sound. Willingness to purchase or rent a good quality clarinet is a MUST as there are some clarinets on the market whose poor design and craftsmanship will make it next to impossible for your student to succeed.

Physical Characteristics: One necessity of clarinet tone production is the ability to make the chin flat. Orthodontia is okay, but if a student has an extremely rounded bottom row of teeth, it may be difficult to form the proper embouchure. Students with double-jointed fingers should avoid selecting the clarinet. Clarinet players should have agile fingers for moving this multi-keyed instrument through a fast musical passage.

Other considerations: Students who are able to focus on and perform a detailed series of instructions could do well on clarinet. Clarinet players are also responsible for maintaining a working stock of 4-6 quality reeds. A box of reeds costs \$25-\$30 and can last (with proper care) up to 4 months. The school district does not supply clarinets.

Bassoon:

The bassoon is the larger, lower sounding double reed instrument.

Physical Characteristics: A slight overbite is okay for students wishing to play bassoon, however, a student with an under bite should avoid it.

Other Considerations: Students are required to maintain a supply of 3-4 high quality reeds at ALL times. Reeds can cost \$10-\$15 each. Bassoonists are strongly encouraged to take private lessons when they begin bassoon.

Starting instrument: Clarinet

Alto saxophone:

The alto saxophone, which uses a single reed like the clarinet, is a very popular instrument like flute, and only 4-6 students will be eventually chosen to play it.

Physical Characteristics: Since the balance of the saxophone is maintained by the use of a neck strap, it is extremely important that students be able to sit up straight and carry the weight of the instrument.

Other Considerations: Saxophone players are responsible for maintaining a working stock of 4-6 quality reeds. A box of 10 reeds costs \$20-25 and can last (with proper care) up to 4 months. Alto saxophone students will have the opportunity after their first year of instruction to audition for tenor sax or baritone sax (based on their proven musical and behavioral abilities with alto saxophone). The school district does not supply alto saxophones.

Starting instrument: Clarinet

Cornet/Trumpet:

The cornet/trumpet is the smallest member of the brass family. The sound on cornet/trumpet is produced by buzzing into a small mouthpiece.

Physical Characteristics: While orthodontia is troublesome to a cornet/trumpet player, it is not impossible to make good sounds with braces. A slight overbite is okay, but an under bite can severely hinder progress on cornet/trumpet. Cornet/trumpet players come in all shapes and sizes.

Other Considerations: Cornet/trumpet parts usually have the melody (recognizable) part, therefore students who choose cornet/trumpet should exhibit a confident demeanor, strong personality, and demonstrate a high level of self-motivation. The school district does not supply trumpets.

French Horn:

The French horn is also a member of the brass family. Its sound is produced by buzzing into a small mouthpiece similar to a trumpet. It is perhaps the most difficult of all the brass instruments due to the close nature of its notes.

Physical Characteristics: While orthodontia is troublesome to a French horn player, it is not impossible to make good sounds with braces. A slight overbite is okay, but an under bite can severely hinder progress on French horn. Because the bell of the French horn rests on the knee of the player while playing, it is imperative that a student's upper torso be long enough to accommodate the size of the French horn to make good sounds. The French horn's keys are manipulated with the LEFT hand.

Other Considerations: Because of the close nature of French horn notes (mentioned above), students should exhibit GREAT ability to match pitches vocally. This may be a good instrument choice for students who have participated in piano lessons or choir groups. French horns can be rented from the school district for \$80/year.

Starting instrument: Trumpet

Trombone:

Like the French horn, trombone players should have good "musical ears." The trombone is played like the other brass instruments (buzzing into a cup-shaped mouthpiece), but uses a slide instead of valves. The slide is not marked or notched and players rely on their memory and hearing to tell if they are in the EXACT proper location.

Physical Characteristics: While some might think that trombone players must have long arms, the truth is there are numerous accommodations that make it possible for students of all shapes and sizes to play. A slight overbite is acceptable, while an extreme under bite would hinder success.

Other Considerations: Great trombone playing takes good concentration and study. The school district does not supply trombones.

Euphonium (Baritone):

The euphonium is sometimes known as a baritone. It is a member of the brass family and looks like a small version of a tuba. Its sound is similar to that of a trombone, but it uses valves like a trumpet instead of a slide.

Physical Characteristics: Euphonium players should have moderately full lips, but not too full. A slight overbite is okay, but an under bite would hinder good sound. The euphonium requires a medium-sized hand span to reach the valves and students should have an above average lung capacity.

Other Considerations: Students with a lot of orthodontia will find the mouthpiece of the euphonium a bit more comfortable than trumpet or French horn.

Starting instrument: Trumpet or trombone

Tuba:

While many believe that because the tuba is the largest instrument in the band it would be hard to physically manage, the tubas we use for beginners are $\frac{3}{4}$ size and easier to handle.

Physical Characteristics: Tuba players need to have fuller lips and a large lung capacity. While size of student doesn't matter TOO much, a long torso (upper body) helps students reach the mouthpiece of the tuba while resting the bottom of the tuba on the edge of their chair.

Other Considerations: The tuba provides the musical foundation for the band and requires that tuba players are self-motivated achievers.

Starting instrument: Trombone

Percussion (Drums):

Just because you are always tapping on things does not mean you are a natural percussionist (drummer). The percussion section is made up of those who are well disciplined, can have some background in piano, and fine motor skills. Percussion is the most technically demanding of all instruments in the band, requiring the most practice.

Physical Characteristics: Students should exhibit above average coordination in gross and fine motor skills.

Other Considerations: Percussion students will be able to exhibit the ability to maintain a steady tempo while echoing rhythms played on a desk. The study of percussion includes snare drum & mallets, as well as bells, triangle, tambourine, maracas, and claves, among many other instruments. Percussionists will need to rent practice equipment and buy a stick bag with all necessary sticks to be brought to and from school.