

## Step Up Instruments!

Our school district provides Student Line (often called Novice) instruments, which are designed to get an individual up and playing. At some point in time, EVERY student will outgrow this Student Line instrument. It is highly encouraged to begin looking into purchasing a new instrument for your child during the freshman year. There are numerous advantages!

- A student learns more responsibility with a personal instrument
- There is a stronger desire to play on their own instrument due to personal connection
- A Step-up instrument will also provide more room for musical growth
- The student will sound better!
- The student is more likely to continue with music now that the family has invested time and money in them!
- It makes for an EXCELLENT Birthday AND/OR holiday gift!
- A Step-up instrument can help fuel a student to go on to study music in college, and even provide a suitable instrument for said college experience!

There are things to consider before buying a new instrument...

- Parent is unsure if student will stay with music after investing \$\$\$ in a new instrument
- Pending the instrument, it could be pricey...

The benefits outweigh the negatives. I would be happy to speak to you regarding if your student should get a step-up instrument!

There are typically three levels of instrument classification:

- **Novice:** For young musicians in their first few years of study. Provides a basic concept of the instrument, but due to cheaper cost and design will eventually limit the student's growth.
- **Intermediate:** The Step-up we are referring to above. Better quality instruments that will help the student grow as a musician. Generally will last the student a long time. I personally made it through high school and my college undergraduate music studies on an intermediate level instrument.
- **Professional:** The best of the best! Be prepared to spend thousands of dollars on a top quality instrument that will help the musician in the professional field!

\*It is not necessarily recommended to jump from a Novice to a Professional level instrument... Think of it like learning to drive in an old reliable VW Bug, and the next car you get is a Lamborghini!

## **What to look for and other recommendations:**

So you are planning on purchasing a new instrument... There are some things you should be aware of!

**Test Drive:** First and foremost, you are about to spend a large amount of \$\$\$, so it is in yours and the students' best interest that they try out the potential instrument that you will purchase. Contact a music store (I recommend Nick Rail, and have had excellent luck and service with the Sabre Springs store in Poway) and see if they have the potential instrument in stock at their store. See if they have a couple models in stock, or can order a couple to be shipped to them for your student to try out. Again, it's like buying a car... they don't all come off the assembly line exactly alike, and different instruments will handle differently. Plus you test drive the car before you buy it!

**What do they play:** If you are investing in your student you may want to know more about what types of music they play... Are they a Jazz Saxophonist? They may be limited in potential if you get them a Symphonic instrument... You can better understand what your child plays by being involved with the band program!

**Watch out for Bells and Whistles:** A music store and ESPECIALLY online music stores are in it to make money. A lesser quality instrument may be featured as a "Deal of the Century" and come with a fancy case, etc... Ultimately that instrument will not have longevity. Watch out for the recommendation from the Music store salesmen. Generally they can be trustworthy and knowledgeable on instruments, but be careful for the "It's *like* the instrument you want to get." A good quality horn will last ten times longer than an okay horn...

**What is it made of:** Generally a wooden Clarinet will sound better than plastic one, however, that \$2,000 wooden clarinet will not fair well in outdoor weather (say, during marching season) Flutes can be made of nickel or silver plating. As this is a step up, look into silver. Brass instruments come in lacquer or silver finishes. I recommend silver finishes for trumpets and horns as the sound will be more precise, and lacquer for trombones, euphoniums and tubas as the sound will be warmer and not as piercing.

**What brands can be trusted:** Budweiser is the "King of Beers" because millions of dollars are spent in advertising to make sure they sell a lot of it. Whether you personally feel that way or not makes no difference. In the next section I will address recommended brands as well as brands to stay away from.

**Avoid Costco/Walmart/EBay!:** If there is anything you take away from this information page, it is this! These cheap instrument shaped objects do not last, fall apart quickly, sound terrible, and most repair shops REFUSE to fix these instruments as they do not have in stock parts easily accessible! This also means you'll have to buy a new instrument AGAIN! If you want to throw money away, by all means disregard this warning!