

The decision concerning which student should play which instrument depends on four factors:

1. The physical suitability of the student for the specific instrument. (Structure of mouth and teeth, lip size, hand size, body build, etc.)
2. The student's natural abilities in pitch discrimination and rhythmic recognition.
3. The wishes of the student and his/her family.
4. The balanced instrumentation of the band as a whole.

The process of choosing individual instruments, which takes place in the first couple of weeks of band class, consists of four steps:

Step One -- During the students' PE class, I will come and talk to students regarding the joining of band and send information home to you. I will give you a couple of days to talk this over with your child and make sure that this is the proper decision for your family. The students will then begin coming to the High School Band Room immediately after school. For the first couple of days they are actually in class I will administer a short test designed to measure each student's level of musical "hearing ability." This is not a test that your child can study for or fail, and it is used only as a guide for instrument selection. At this time I also give the students some basic information on the different instruments and ask them to think about three instruments that they might like to try. The instruments they may choose from are the **flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, baritone, tuba and percussion (drums).**

Step Two -- I consult with the students' fifth and sixth grade teachers concerning progress in academic areas.

(Please Remember: We allow every student who wishes to start band an opportunity to do so. Students are not excluded from the program on the basis of test scores or past academic performance.)

Step Three -- I will meet with each student individually to allow him/her to try any of the instruments used in the band. We begin with the three instruments that the student has chosen (as discussed in Step One above). If one of these is not satisfactory, the student may try any of the others as well. At this point we discuss the student's success with each instrument and recommend the instrument that would "fit" your child most appropriately.

Step Four -- Students interested in playing percussion will take a short test in which rhythms are clapped back to the teacher. Piano experience is also very helpful in playing drums. The students selected (usually 4-6) play drums; the others play their previously chosen wind instruments.

After instrument fitting and percussion testing are completed, I will send home a letter which indicates the instrument that was recommended for your child. An enclosed response form allows you to indicate whether or not you wish for your child to participate, and which option you wish to pursue for purchasing an instrument.

(IMPORTANT: We require every student (with his/her parents) who chooses to participate in band to commit to staying in the class through the end of the school year. At that point, the parent and student will be given two weeks to make a decision regarding continued participation. After the two-week “window” students are expected to continue with band for the following school year.)