



5th Grade Band Handbook



5th Grade Parents and Students,

Thank you for making the decision to participate in the Overton Band Program! From now until graduation, you are choosing to be part of something much bigger than yourself – an activity that allows students to learn and practice a lifelong skill, and share that skill with others through the art of performance. Along the way you'll experience the values of commitment, determination, teamwork, and artistry.

The first step toward being part of the band is to obtain an instrument. I am well aware, just as you should be, that band students routinely interact with some of the most expensive equipment in the school. A family's inability to afford a musical instrument will never prevent a student from participating in band. If your family qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch, the student will be provided with a functioning school-owned instrument which they must care for as if it were their own. Percussionists will also regularly play school-owned percussion instruments, and older students are given the opportunity to learn other specialty brass and woodwind instruments which are too impractical for families to purchase. All students who play a school-owned instrument must sign the *School Instrument Use Form* as an assumption of liability for any damages incurred to the instrument beyond normal wear and tear.

Required/Recommended Supplies for 5th Grade Band

Students will be required to attend every class period (5th period on M/W/Alternating Fridays) with each of the following items:

- Their instrument and all accessories (reeds, mouthpiece, oil, grease, cleaning kit)
- *Sound Innovations for Concert Band, Book 1* (purchase from the school for \$8.00; see below)
- A pencil
- Not required: A chromatic tuner/metronome combo for at-home practice (Korg CA40 or similar; also plenty of free apps); CD/DVD player to practice with discs in book

Book

The “textbook” for 5th grade band is *Sound Innovations for Concert Band, Book 1* (blue). All students must have access to this book, as it contains the exercises and information which help us learn to play our instruments. The book retails online for \$8.99 but I encourage you to purchase the book directly from the school for \$8.00. Each instrument has its own book. Yandas Music & Pro Audio in Kearney also carries this book in stock. 6th grade band students will be required to purchase Book 2 (red) of this series (same price), and after that the school will begin providing all method books for the class.

Each book comes with a CD of recorded examples of the exercises, as well as a DVD featuring a master musician teaching the basic concepts of the instrument. Students are encouraged to watch and listen at home while they are practicing.

Performances

The 5th grade band will perform at three concerts during the year. As these dates near, more information will be sent home. Attendance at all performances is required unless excused by the director. 5th grade students are expected to dress nicely for the event – you are the star!

12/19 7pm Winter Concert (K-6)

2/24 TBA Spring Showcase

4/26 7pm Spring Concert

Mr. Chase Christensen chase.christensen@overtoneagles.org
5-12 Instrumental Music Director

402.834.1072
308.987.2424 x 127



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Parental Involvement

Numerous studies have shown that parental support of children’s music study will often result in enhanced learning of music skills, and higher levels of positive student self-assessment, motivation, and behavior. Parents’ roles as tutors, resource providers, and decision-makers are significant. However, parents who have little to no background in music often feel they have nothing to offer their child. You can help your child be successful even with no musical ability!

- Provide your child with a private space for practicing – a bedroom or a basement is great.
- Hold your child accountable to a regular practice schedule in this location – Beginners should set a practice goal of 5-6 days per week, 10-20 minutes per day.
- Support your child’s involvement – attend concerts and show an interest in the activity.
- Ask questions about what your student did in band, and what they are learning.
- Encourage your child to perform for you at home or at a family gathering – always be encouraging and supportive of your child’s efforts!
- Ask your child to teach YOU how to play the instrument – make sure they start with how to handle and assemble the instrument properly!
- To the best of your ability, provide your child with an instrument and the supplies they need for it. These include reeds (saxophone/clarinet; may be purchased from the school for \$3 apiece), valve oil (trumpet), slide cream and spray bottle (trombone), the method book (purchase from the school for \$8), sticks/mallets (percussion), cleaning supplies, and yearly maintenance.

Rules, Procedures, and Grading

- Students will be allowed to store their instrument in the school’s instrument storage room. Instruments must be taken home over long breaks.
- Students must have their name on their instrument case (ID/luggage tag or tape).
- Students are not allowed to handle another student’s instrument.
- The school is not responsible for damages that occur to student-owned instruments. Students are responsible for making sure that their instrument is placed in a safe location (e.g. in plain sight, not on a chair, not in a walkway).
- Students who require the use of a school-owned instrument will be liable for damages that occur to that instrument beyond normal wear and tear.
- There is to be no food, drink, or candy (including gum) consumed in the music room.
- Students are required to have their instrument, book, and a pencil at all class meetings.
- If a student forgets their instrument, they must sit quietly during rehearsal and will be given a worksheet to complete. They will also lose half of their participation points for the day.
- Fidget spinners and other distracting devices will not be allowed.
- Students who are disruptive during rehearsal may receive a detention, or may be sent to study hall for the remainder of the period.
- Students will be able to participate in Band Karate as an incentive to master skills. Participation in Band Karate is optional and is not required for a grade.
- Grading will be delineated as follows:

Playing tests	10%
Music quizzes	10%
Daily participation	30%
Performances	50%



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The Instrument Matching Process

For the first three weeks of school, all 5th grade students have met together for band class to learn about each instrument and try out small parts of each (mouthpieces, reeds, etc.) to determine their aptitude level on each instrument. Aptitude does not refer to a student's *talent or ability*, but rather to their *likelihood for instant success*. I want all students to see success as quickly as possible. My recommendation for which instrument your child should play is just that – a recommendation. However, deviating from my recommendations may make your child's time in band much more difficult (or discouraging) than it ever has to be.

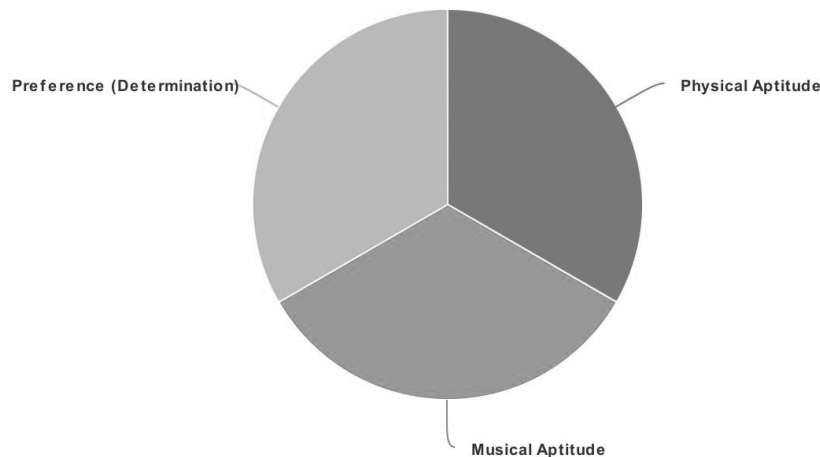
Criteria

In order to find the perfect instrument match, I look for three important factors:

1. A student's physical aptitude
2. A student's musical aptitude
3. A student's interest

Any student can play any instrument. My recommendations will be based on which instrument has the most equal balance of all three of these criteria. If one of these is out of balance, the student will require more of another area to see success.

INSTRUMENT MATCHING



1. Physical Aptitude

Certain physical characteristics play a role in determining how easy it will be for a student to play a given instrument. For example, a student with severe overbite may have difficulties playing a trombone, which requires both teeth to line up fairly evenly. A student with braces may cause damage to the orthodontic equipment and their mouth by pressing a trumpet mouthpiece up against them. A student with a “teardrop” shaped upper lip may have initial difficulties playing the flute because of an altered air flow.

All of these quirks can be overcome and do not indicate whether a student will be “good” on any instrument. However, they may have to work harder than their peers at first to develop good sounds and good habits. If, for example, a student is not a great initial fit for the trumpet, but they are determined to play the instrument anyway (or the family already has an old trumpet and refuses to spend the money on a different instrument), this success may come very slowly, and the student's confidence level is drained quickly. I want every student to see success as quickly as possible!



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2. Musical Aptitude

Certain instruments require higher levels of musical aptitude than others. This criterion does not receive a great deal of weight, but it is particularly important for students to be matched with percussion or trombone. Why do these two instruments require high musical aptitude, and what exactly *is* musical aptitude? Here are some examples.

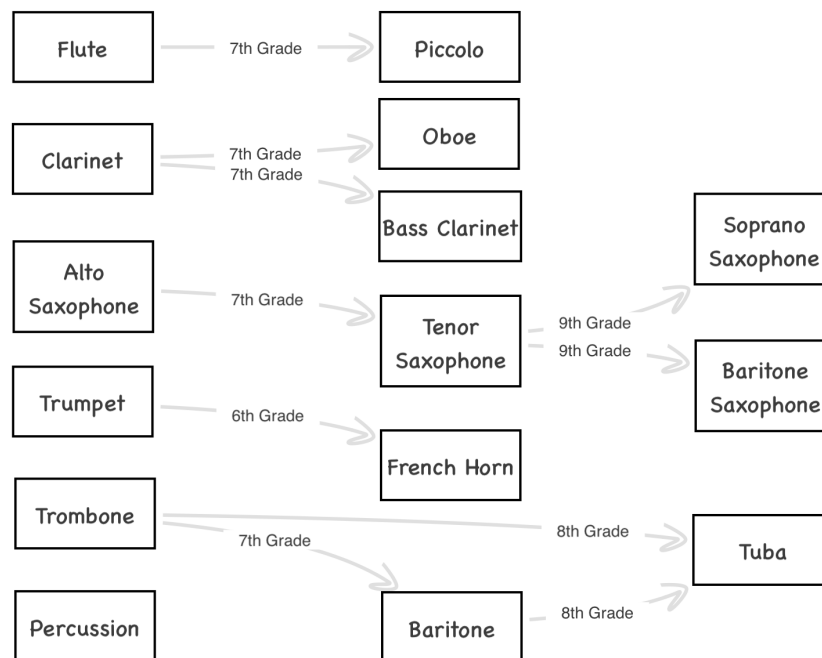
In order to see early success on percussion (i.e. have a high aptitude), students must be able to keep a steady beat, have good hand-eye coordination, and the ability to read and understand rhythms quickly. Many schools require percussionists to have taken piano lessons, and this is beneficial, but not required here. Trombone players must also have good hand-eye coordination, as playing the correct note requires exact placement of the slide in a specific place with no guides (just like a violin). Trombonists must also possess a good ear, meaning they can hear when a pitch is too high or low, and are thus able to adjust their slide in the right direction. Again, these examples of musical aptitude are but one piece of the puzzle I consider when recommending a student to an instrument, and a student without a high degree of this can still be successful with enough practice.

3. Student Preference (Determination)

This is by far the most important factor I take into account when matching students to an instrument – not only because I value the student’s desires, but also because if a student truly loves the instrument and will do anything to be successful with it, that translates directly into determination and commitment. The right amount of determination can balance out any shortcomings in physical or musical aptitude. After trying every instrument, students give me their top three choices, and I use that list to help recommend an instrument.

Pathways

5th graders have the opportunity to play one of six instruments. What follows is a list of these instruments and the optional “pathways” that can be explored in later years. Students wishing to learn a different instrument should consult with the director.





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Obtaining an Instrument

Once you have received from me your instrument match, the first thing parents and students should do is discuss – together – whether to honor that recommendation or deviate from it, and the reasons for doing so. If you do decide to deviate, stay within the same family of woodwinds (flute, clarinet, saxophone) or brass (trumpet, trombone). Remember that too much of a deviation will make it more difficult for the student to see early success, which may lead to loss of confidence, falling behind, and perhaps even dropping out of band.

The second step is to obtain an instrument. My #1 instrument buying rule is to know what you're getting and where you're getting it from. This section aims to educate parents about the instrument options available and what to look out for. Instruments do not have to be brand new. In fact, used instruments from high quality brands can be 75% or more less expensive than a new version of the same model and will still play just as well. Renting an instrument is also a very affordable way to start out as a beginner, and is especially nice if you want to take the year to decide if band is really for you.

Yandas Music & Pro Audio in Kearney is the main music store in the area, and Overton Public School partners with them for many of our band needs (from instrument supply to repairs, accessories, and materials). Yandas has an amazing instrument rental program (I took part in it when I joined band!) and even has a nice selection of used instruments (also available for rent). The staff at Yandas has a keen eye for quality instruments – any band instrument they carry is one I would recommend (and they aren't paying me to say that!). Please consult me or a professional at Yandas before spending any money. Simply say, "My son/daughter is starting band, he/she will be playing the [instrument] and I'm not sure what the best options are."

Buying an Instrument on Your Own

I understand how tempting it is to look up "alto saxophone" on Amazon and find the cheapest model they have for sale. I'll bet that saxophone is priced around \$150 - \$300, and I'll bet it also comes with a lot of nice accessories: a cleaning cloth, gloves, a stand, a tuner/metronome, etc. It might be made of plastic, and it might even be your child's favorite color. If you look up "flute" or "trumpet," I bet you'll find the same sort of thing, for even less.

These instruments may look beautiful, but they're made of inferior-quality metals (that some people are actually allergic to), and are assembled with fragile pieces without much care given to the most important details. The joints may not fit together well, and keys can easily bend. These instruments are mass-produced for 5th grade families just like you, who fall for the cheapest option.

While these instruments may not fall apart in your hands on the first day (though sometimes they do), when it is time to repair/clean them, a music shop like Yandas will likely refuse to touch them at all, partly because the low-quality construction will not be able to hold up under the stress of repairs and partly because the repair cost will almost always exceed what you paid for the instrument. If your car costs more to repair than it does to purchase, you may need a higher quality car. The same applies to purchasing an instrument. You get exactly what you pay for.

So, what is the right brand of clarinet to buy? Where do I buy it? And – more importantly – how much will it cost? The following page contains all of that information.



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Where to Look

The first place I recommend looking to buy/rent a new or used instrument is Yandas Music & Pro Audio in Kearney (2301 Central Ave; 800.338.6939; www.yandasmusic.com). Again, I'm not being paid to promote them, but they will have your family's best interest in mind and will give you some amazing deals. It's always nice to support your local music store as well! Every year, Yandas comes to Overton to display the instruments they have for rental/purchase, and this meeting is open to anyone considering an instrument purchase – not just 5th grade families!

The internet is a double-edged sword when it comes to just about everything, and that includes buying a new instrument. While I love my Amazon Prime, I don't recommend going to Amazon at all to purchase an instrument. In fact, you probably shouldn't buy an instrument from a place that also sells toilet paper and stuffed animals! Instead, consider sites like Woodwind & Brasswind (www.wwbw.com) which carry higher-quality instruments for affordable prices.

For used instruments online, avoid eBay as it will turn up the same a lot of the same cheap results as Amazon. MusicGoRound.com is an excellent resource for high-quality used instruments. Trumpet players can find used trumpets on some Drum Corps International websites (a "pro"-level marching band organization with groups that get new instruments every summer, and sell their old ones). Finally, check out Facebook exchange groups for other families selling used band instruments in the area. These instruments are often from good brands at a small fraction of the cost of new instruments. However, they may be decades old and need some repairs or cleaning. Even so, a decades-old instrument from a quality manufacturer is always better than a brand new one from a cheap manufacturer! Always double check with me/this list before purchasing an instrument by yourself.

Which Brand Should I Buy?

Please contact me if you are considering purchasing an instrument from a different brand, if you have an old family instrument, or if you have any questions at all!

Flute: Yamaha, Gemeinhardt, Armstrong, Jupiter, Artley, Emerson, Selmer, Pearl.

Clarinet: Buffet, Selmer, Yamaha, Vito, LeBlanc, Noblet, Artley.

Reeds must be purchased for the clarinet regularly. One reed will last about 3-4 weeks. Buy Juno, Vandoren, or D'Addario Royal B-Flat Clarinet reeds of strength 2.5. Students should have at least 3 reeds in their case at all times. I recommend purchasing a reed case/reed guard to store them properly. Reeds may be purchased from the school for \$3 apiece.

Alto Saxophone: Yamaha, Selmer, Conn, Keilwerth, Blessing, Jupiter, Yanagisawa, Bundy.

Reeds must be purchased for the saxophone regularly. One reed will last 3-4 weeks. Buy Juno, Vandoren, or D'Addario Royal Alto Saxophone reeds of strength 2.5. Students should have at least 3 reeds in their case at all times. I recommend purchasing a reed case/reed guard to store them properly. Reeds may be purchased from the school for \$3 apiece.

Trumpet: Yamaha, Bach, Holton, Blessing, Conn, B&S, Kanstulz, King, Getzen, Jupiter.

Trombone: Yamaha, Blessing, King, Bach, Conn, Jupiter, Getzen.

Percussion: *Required:* Stick bag with 1 pair each of yarn mallets, hard mallets, and snare drum sticks
Recommended for at-home practice: Bell kit w/ practice pad or bell kit w/ snare drum