

Supply List and Recommended Instrument Brands

Saratoga District & Redwood Middle School Bands

Renting vs. purchasing? In-store vs. online?

We understand that an instrument and music lessons are a significant investment and we always want to make sure that the equipment does not get in the way of all of that time that your students will invest in return.

Even from reputable online sites, I always take large retailer reviews with a grain of salt when it comes to instruments. The reviews can really come from anywhere and anyone. There are some off-brand instruments on Amazon and other sites that have quite positive ratings, though they've caused our own students a significant amount of grief and frustration because the materials are so inexpensive. Even our smaller students could literally bend the metal pieces with their fingers! Many music repair technicians won't even work on them because they know that the fixes won't last long.

Our best recommendation is to treat an instrument rental and/or eventual purchase like shopping for a new car. The well-known brands guarantee quality and reliability. When you're looking at a cheaper, "can't believe this great deal" type of instrument, especially a used or off-brand one, there is always a reason why it's so inexpensive.

We absolutely recommend renting an instrument to start, as students learning an instrument for the first time will often accumulate those regular dents, scratches and mishandlings on their instruments as they learn to manage and manipulate it. Most stores will actually have a rent-to-own program, so if you do rent an instrument and decide that it's in a condition/you're happy with its condition, you can put the cost that you've paid for rental toward the purchase of it. At this point, some families will either choose to purchase the instrument, or return it and buy a better quality horn, at which at that point in time their students would be more comfortable handling a more expensive and better-playing horn. Each store will have its own details and "perks" for rentals and rent-to-own, so it may be worthwhile to check out a couple and see what they offer!

See below for recommended brands and accessories.

ALL STUDENTS

Wind instruments: Chromatic tuner & metronome (some brands make a combo device, such as the Korg TM50)

All: Music stand (essential for home practice!)

Optional: Instrument stand (recommended for many; oftentimes an instrument already out and set up yields more motivation and ease to practice!)

FLUTE

Recommended Brands: Yamaha, Muramatsu, Miyazawa, Haynes, Powell, Gemeinhardt

Daily Accessories: Tuning/cleaning rod, cleaning cloth

OBOE

Recommended Brands: Your oboe should have a LEFT F key. Check to be sure before obtaining any oboe. Loree, Fox, Yamaha

Accessories: at least two good, working reeds from Forrests or another professional reed maker (no plastic/fiber reeds!), protective container for the two reeds (**not** the plastic tubule), small water cup/container, silk oboe swab, cork grease

BASSOON

Recommended Brands: Fox, Renard

Accessories: at least two good, working reeds from Forrests or another professional reed maker (no plastic/fiber reeds!), protective container for the two reeds (not the plastic tubule), seat strap, small water cup/container, silk bassoon swab, cork grease

CLARINET

Recommended Brands: Buffet, Yamaha

Accessories: at least three good, working reeds (#2 1/2 or higher traditional Van Doren; no plastic/fiber reeds!), reed guards/case, silk clarinet swab, cork grease, mouthpiece brush

Recommended Mouthpiece: Yamaha, Van Doren, Clark Fobes

SAXOPHONE

Recommended Brands: Yamaha, Selmer, Yanagisawa (for professional horns)

Accessories: at least three good, working reeds (#2 1/2 or higher traditional Van Doren; no plastic/fiber reeds!), reed guards/case, silk sax swab, cork grease, mouthpiece brush

Recommended Mouthpiece: Selmer C*, Yamaha 4C, Van Doren Optimum AL, Clark Fobes – (make sure the mouthpiece that you get is a *classical* sax mouthpiece)

TRUMPET

Recommended Brands: Yamaha, Bach, Conn, King, Getzen

Accessories: Valve oil (not key oil), tuning slide grease, mouthpiece brush, cleaning snake, polishing cloth

Recommended Mouthpiece: Bach 5C, 3C, or equivalent

FRENCH HORN

Recommended Brands: Yamaha, Holton, or Conn DOUBLE horn for rental, Conn 6D or 8D Double Horn for purchase

Accessories: Rotary valve oil (not key oil), tuning slide grease, mouthpiece brush, cleaning snake, polishing cloth

Recommended Mouthpiece: Vincent Bach 7, Schilke 30

TROMBONE

Recommended Brands: Yamaha, Bach, King, Getzen

Accessories: Liquid trombone slide cream and spray bottle filled with water, mouthpiece brush, tuning slide grease, cleaning snake, polishing cloth

Recommended Mouthpiece: Yamaha 51 (or 48 for significantly smaller students)

BARITONE/EUPHONIUM

Recommended Brands: Yamaha, Conn, Bach, Besson

Accessories: Valve oil, tuning slide grease, mouthpiece brush, cleaning snake, polishing cloth

Recommended Mouthpiece: Yamaha 51 (or 48 for significantly smaller students)

TUBA

Recommended Brands: Students usually borrow school tubas, BUT if you want to rent or buy one: Bach, Conn, Yamaha (B-flat tubas!!!)

Accessories: Valve oil, tuning slide grease, mouthpiece brush, cleaning snake, polishing cloth

Recommended Mouthpiece: Helleberg, Conn

PERCUSSION

Recommended Supplies:

Stick bag

At least one pair of snare drum sticks (Vic Firth SD1 or SD2)

At least one pair of plastic bell/xylophone mallets

One pair of each: blue yarn mallets (23R) and green yarn mallets (22R)

FOR HOME: A bell/pad practice set. Vic Firth has several sets: V8705, V8806, and V6705 (V6705 features a snare drum in addition to the practice pad and bell set)