



UPGRADES FOR YOUR INSTRUMENT



GENERAL TIPS:

Buying an instrument is a big step and can be very expensive.

The student instrument you have started on will be sufficient throughout your elementary and early middle school music experience. As you gain more experience and get more serious about your playing, however, you may want to start thinking about an intermediate instrument or at least some simple upgrades. With that in mind, I will make the following qualifications:

- **Student line instrument / Beginner instrument:** Most music stores lease/sell less expensive models of instruments. These instruments are made to be relatively inexpensive and relatively durable. They are not necessarily made to play with the best tone quality or to stand up to many years of intense playing. Simply put, they sometimes “wear out” or musicians “grow out” of them as they gain more experience.
- **Step up instrument / Intermediate instrument:** These instruments are made with better quality materials and better quality control. In some cases (woodwinds), these instruments have more keys or have a bigger bore (brass--to help get a bigger sound), or are made of more expensive metals (including gold on some flutes). Some of these options are cosmetic, and some are truly beneficial. Generally, if your child is serious about band and really enjoys playing their instrument this can be an excellent option.

Rather than go out and purchase a “step up/intermediate/advanced” model instrument, you can change the sound that you get (on *most* instruments), simply by changing the mouthpiece. You will be surprised at the difference, and at much less of a price tag!

If you are considering upgrading your mouthpiece I recommend the following:

Clarinets: Rovner or Bonade ligature
Vandoren 5rv Lyre mouthpiece

Saxes: Rovner or Bonade ligature
Yamaha 4C mouthpiece **OR**
Meyer 5 medium rubber mouthpiece **OR**
Selmar C* mouthpiece

Trumpets: Bach 3C mouthpiece

French Horns: Conn 11 or Giardanelli mouthpiece

Trombones/Euphoniums: 6 ½ AL mouthpiece

IMPORTANT: Clarinet and sax players - do *not* purchase the mouthpiece without the ligature! You can buy the ligature alone, but *never* the mouthpiece without the ligature. AND, if you are going to upgrade your mouthpiece and/or ligature, you **must also** upgrade your reeds. You should move to Vandoren reeds. The size/strength is dependent on the player. However, size 2 is recommended for 6th or 7th graders and size 2½ or 3 is recommended for 8th graders.

Shop around! Get as much information as you can, get the best value you can! Some options are:

- Rick’s Musical Instruments – Cumberland, RI
(Delivers to Riverside Middle School every Thursday. Just call before 5 p.m. Wednesday to place your order.)
- Doug’s Music and Learning Center - Seekonk, MA
- Axelrod Music – Johnston, RI
- Robert’s Musical Instruments – Warwick, RI
- Musician’s Friend - www.musiciansfriend.com



Do NOT buy from places like Wal-Mart, Sam’s Club, etc. Please, talk with me before you make a final decision!