



**Texas Bandmasters Association
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Stepping Up to the Plate

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Sponsor: Music & Arts

**HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

Stepping Up to the Plate: Getting More Step-up Instruments in Your Program



**TBA Convention
Presented by Jason Hargrave
Sponsored by Music and Arts**

Step 1: Deciding to Play the Game

Reasons Why People Don't

- Money is usually the BIGGEST concern, and it ALWAYS will be
 - a. Low Income
 - b. Parents paying for multiple activities
 - c. It is a lot of money!
- LOTS of work
 - a. It requires time by the director to make it successful
 - b. Hard conversation to have with students and parents
 - 1. This goes back to \$\$\$
- Think it does not really benefit the band program
 - a. Students sound good on current instrument (especially first year)
- Don't know a lot about them

Reasons Why You Should

- Encourages Students to Stay in Band
 - a. Financial commitment=More commitment
 - b. Not only in Junior High but into High School
- Students/Parents see that you are invested in the program
- Students/Parents see that you are invested in THEM
- You can start small
 - a. If getting started seems overwhelming, start with one instrument
- Students are more successful on these instruments
 - a. Most "beginner" instruments are meant built to produce a good sound in a limited range.
- Improves quality of the Band
- Gives your students an opportunity to try multiple brands/instruments

Step 2: Learning the Fundamentals of the Game

Brand/Type of instrument you want

- Evaluate your current beginner instruments
 - a. There are step-up instruments that have similar instruments
- Have specific brands of instruments you want the students to purchase
 - a. Check with High School Directors to make sure it is aligned
- Start with just one instrument if needed
 - a. Can be based on cost of step-up
 - b. Easier to get a few students with them in your program

Provide opportunities for students to see the instruments

- Have your private lesson staff show the students
- Contact a Music and Arts rep about bringing the instruments to concerts

- Have older band students show them to the younger ones
 - a. Means more coming from peers that have them
 - b. Beginners playing recruiting concert with older kids
 - c. High schoolers with Junior High students at Band Night

Have your School Owned Instruments step-up

- Unique to campuses where students attend multiple campuses

Step 3: Standing On Deck

Get to know the pricing and financing options

- Brochure that Music and Arts puts out every Fall and Spring
- This is also based on credit worthiness
 - a. Only thing this affects is amount of down payment or number of months for financing

Communicate with students and parents about the instruments

- This relationship needs to be established BEFORE this conversation
- Whatever your expectations, MAKE THEM CLEAR
 - a. Need a step-up to be in a certain band
- Give them an idea of the financial commitment
 - a. This will help alleviate a LOT of issues later
 - b. Let parents know their options for financing
 - 1. Music and Arts will do this, but it is WAY more successful when coming from the band director

Decide whether you want a Store Event or Campus Event

Make a decision on when you want to do it

- Winter or Spring are when Music and Arts have their big sales
 - a. Manufacturers usually offer rebates at these times also

Fliers for event

- Create your own
- Get one from Music and Arts

Who is going to be there to help?

- Private Lesson Teachers
- Other Band Directors

Store Event vs. Hosting Event

- Hosting Cons
 - a. You may have to host it (But this can be a pro!)
 - b. More work
 - c. It could be a bust
 - d. Selection of instruments could be limited
 - e. Have to get additional people to help

- Hosting Pros
 - a. You can host it!
 - 1. Your students can get there sooner and get the first selection of instruments
 - 2. You can invite other schools in your district/region to make it a bigger event
 - b. Parents/students know exactly where to attend the event
 - c. Easier for you to schedule around your schedule
 - d. Another opportunity for your administration to see parent, student, and your involvement with the program
 - e. You are able to control how long it lasts
 - f. Ensures that the student gets the instrument brand/quality that YOU want for the program
- Store Cons
 - a. Could be a long way from your school
 - b. Student/parent could select an instrument brand/style/quality that is suggested to them (especially if it is CHEAPER)
 - c. Store hours are a LOT longer
- Store Pros
 - a. Could have a greater selection of instruments
 - b. Don't have to reserve the building
 - c. May have more people to help your students

Step 4: Up to Bat (Event Time!)

For Any Type of Event

- BE THERE!!!
 - a. Biggest influence in parents/students investing in these instruments is having you help them select the instrument
 - 1. Shows dedication and commitment to them
 - b. Helps ensure the student gets a great instrument
 - 1. Adult helping/trying instrument rather than just student
 - 2. Gives process more credibility
 - c. It's fun to see!!
- Be Honest and Upfront
 - a. Parents may not qualify for the financing/have sticker shock
 - 1. This info is handled better if they know everything beforehand
 - 2. Make it ok if students cannot get one (i.e. won't stunt their musical growth)
 - 3. Remind them that Music and Arts has sales every 6 months
 - b. Not all students will be ready for a step-up
- Make sure there are plenty of people there to help our students
 - a. Parents/students do NOT like to spend money AND wait

- Ensure students know to bring their mouthpiece/ligature/reeds to event
 - a. Have these on hand just in case they forget
- Stay involved with parents/students throughout the event
 - a. Check tuning tendencies of the instrument
 - b. Check for any visible damage/issues
 - 1. Loose slides, valves with “play”, sticky slides, thick corks
 - a. Most of these can be fixed if the instrument is good
 - c. Inform the parents of what you are doing
 - 1. Shows you are dedicated to making sure they are getting the best instrument possible
- Store Event Addition Expectations
 - a. Know the hours of the event
 - b. Communicate with the store the number of people attending
 - 1. Music and Arts will even make appointments
 - 2. Helps them ensure they have enough staff
 - 3. Events are also a good time to get school owned instruments or an instrument for yourself
 - if you let a store know and they can get more instruments for you to try
 - have special pricing for educators
 - c. Greet your students/parents when they show up
 - 1. Allows you to establish a great first impression
 - 2. You can take them to the specific instrument brands/type that you want them to get
 - If they see cheaper and don't know why it's that way, they will get that one

Step 5: Got a hit...Now Score!

Financing vs. Purchasing

- Music and Arts will need to run a credit check if they are financing
 - a. There are different levels of financing
 - 1. May have to put a certain amount down
 - 2. May only qualify for certain number of months
 - b. Some parents may not qualify for the brand of instrument
 - 1. Music and Arts has intermediate level instruments available for rental
- Pricing may be less if they are purchasing outright
- Now is also the time to get the repair service
- Trading in beginner instruments
 - a. Need to inform parents/students of those expectations
 - b. Sometimes they can use these instruments for marching band

Correct Mouthpiece for New Instrument

- They may need a new one for the new instrument
 - a. Make sure they purchase this with the instrument
 - 1. Harder to go back later and get more money for this

When to bring instrument?

- Communicate with students/parents best time to bring new instrument to school

6 month adjustment

- Most instruments need a slight adjustment when they come from the factory
 - a. Music and Arts provides them with this service

ENJOY THE GAME!!