

## What the 2025 All-State Adjudicators had to say about the auditions

We highly encourage directors and students to read over these comments. Obviously these items had an impact on how the audition was perceived and adjudicated. By having this insight, we hope your 2026-2027 auditions can represent the very best each student has to offer!

“Based on the auditions you heard this year, what advice you would like to give the students and band directors in Colorado to help them with their performance and preparation?”

- The Process
  - Make sure you follow the instructions! As adjudicators, we have the option of lowering scores if auditions are assembled in the wrong order, or if we hear excessive reverberation or a metronome. The instructions are there to help your scores!
  - Listen to your audition before submitting it. You would be surprised at the number of auditions we receive that are missing one or more element – or it is cut off. It’s worth the three minutes of your time.
- Tone Production
  - Embouchure and tone production. Keep the oral cavity/resonance chamber open and the teeth apart. Reduce the smiling in the embouchure/keep the corners down. (from a brass adjudicator)
  - Several students were playing at a very awkward angle, holding their horns up at a similar angle to a mellophone. Right hand placement was also very strange and incorrect. (from the Horn adjudicator)
  - Encourage students to use a “classical” set-up. Using a jazz set-up gives a sound that won’t blend well in the ensemble. (from the saxophone adjudicator)
- Rhythm and Pulse
  - Steady pulse is one of the biggest issues, plus fundamentals of tone production!
  - In general, playing the etudes slightly slower, but with better accuracy would be beneficial. Most of the better players I heard still played their scales and the faster etude just a little TOO fast, so they couldn’t really accurately represent their abilities from a technical standpoint.
  - Play all scales evenly, whether at full tempo marked or not. Speed up/Slow down isn’t the way to go.
- Articulation and dynamics
  - The vast majority of students do not articulate where the music specifies. It is mostly random or slurred.
- Percussion Specific
  - In the percussion auditions, you MUST include your tuning of the timpani drums. We need to determine how you tune them and how quickly you can tune them. If you don’t show us, we can’t reward your score.
  - In the percussion auditions, you MUST audition in all three areas. If you don’t include (for example) the mallet audition, we cannot place you in the ensemble.

“Based on the auditions you heard this year, what would you recommend the majority of players place extra emphasis on as they practice through the year?”

- Fundamentals of tone production and expression – Play your long tones
- Articulating as written in the music and realizing the dynamics.
- Rhythm, rhythm, rhythm. Subdivision
- Steadiness and use a tuner.
- A few needed to have a quieter room
- Proper setup and regular warmup and fundamental exercises to strengthen technique and musicality.

“Based on the auditions you heard this year, what would you recommend players know about the audition process that would help them be more successful in the future?”

- Practice making recordings more than once to ensure that you can get a quality one!
- Articulation is very important in bringing out phrases and dynamics for expressive impact.
- On some instruments, there are a LOT of auditions. The level is high, and being prepared is not optional.
- Be mindful of the required tempi, especially for scales. Additionally, if you know you have notes and rhythm errors, re-record.
- Great job playing etudes at a manageable tempo. This was wonderful to hear this year- even if the tempo was a bit under the recommendation, this was some of the cleanest playing I've heard in several years!
- Be sure to listen to the reference materials. There are links to help videos provided by some of the local university teachers, and recordings of the literature that will be performed by the All-State Bands (for re-auditions). The better you can emulate the styles, and tempos, the better prepared you sound.
- Record in a quiet place and make sure your equipment reproduces YOUR sound. If we hear babies crying, a TV or you are so close to the microphone that you sound very bright and edgy, we can't really hear YOU.
- Do a complete recording about a week before it's due and give it to a couple of people you trust. Ask them to listen to them as a judge would, and get their comments. See how much you can address when you make your final recording.