

PTA Council of Baltimore County

Reflections Program

2023-2024



Guide for Local/Council Chairs

Dear Reflections Chairs,

Welcome to the **2023–2024** Free State PTA Reflections Program and thank you for volunteering to chair this wonderful arts enrichment program! Enclosed you will find many resources to help you run a successful Reflections program at your local school/Council.

Please read all of the materials carefully.

We NEVER want to disqualify a student's entry because the instructions were unclear – read carefully and contact your Council or Free State PTA if you have ANY questions.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: PLEASE NOTE, YOUR PTA/PTSA UNIT MUST BE UP TO DATE WITH SoA REQUIREMENTS TO ADVANCE BEYOND YOUR LOCAL/COUNCIL LEVEL!

(For a complete list of those requirements please refer to page 6 of this guide)

Important Deadlines:

Theme Search Contest:

Theme entries must be received by Free State PTA by **Fri, November 3, 2023.**

Reflections Entries Deadlines:

Local Winning Entries to Council Deadline is **Wed, December 20, 2023.**

Council Winning Entries to Free State PTA - 4:30pm **Fri, January 26, 2024.**

This year's Reflections program for Free State PTA will be conducted virtually. Please note that National PTA has conducted this program electronically for some time. COVID prompted us to adopt this approach and for the foreseeable future we will continue on this path.

QUICK REFERENCE:

This year's theme is: **"I Am Hopeful Because . . ."**

Local Unit entries are due to your PTA Council no later than Wed., Dec 20, 2023.

Reflections chairs are responsible for ensuring winning entries meet ALL REQUIREMENTS.

Please be sure your winning entries have met all Free State PTA and National PTA requirements plus all program requirements, **BEFORE you submit the entries.**

Entries must be disqualified if they are incomplete or if the Free State PTA and National PTA requirements are not met, for example, Local unit not in good standing.

Free State PTA asks that each Local and Council register on the National PTA website at <https://pta.org/home/programs/reflections> is a blue highlight "Register Today".

Free State PTA recommends that no Local or Council use the National PTA website to submit student entries. Free State PTA will use the student entry portal to submit Free State PTA winners to National competition ONLY. This is consistent with Free State PTA efforts in advocacy for the protection and safety of children's information. Unnecessary exposure of information electronically is a serious concern.

Format Rules since 2022-2023:

Dance Choreography and Film Production entries must be submitted in MP4, MOV, or AVI format.

Music Composition entries must be submitted in MP3 or WAV format.

Photography and Visual Arts entries must be submitted in JPEG, JPG or PNG format.

Literature and scores as required for Music Composition must be submitted in PDF format.

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1.National PTA Reflections

1.1 About the Reflections Program

The National PTA Reflections program is PTA’s cornerstone arts program. It was developed in 1969 by Colorado’s PTA President Mary Lou Anderson to encourage students to explore their talents and express themselves. Since then, the Reflections program has inspired millions of students to reflect on a specific theme and create original artwork. **Each year, students in Grades Pre-K – 12, are recognized for bringing the theme to life in the following six categories: dance choreography, film production, literature, musical composition, photography and visual arts (including 3D Art).**

Top entries from Free State PTA Reflections contest advance to National PTA for the final round of judging. National PTA awards are announced each May.

As a Local Leader of this program, you will play a critical role in promoting exploration of arts and culture in the home, school and community. Students who participate in the Reflections program may not recognize themselves as artists when they sign up—but by the end of the Reflections celebrations, they will.

I Am Hopeful Because, the 2023-2024 Reflections program theme, was submitted Alice Meko of Hampton Cove Elementary School in Alabama through the National PTA Reflections Theme Search Contest (see section 1.3).

1.2 PTA Reflections and Family-School Partnerships

Research shows students with involved parents are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and pass their classes
- Attend school regularly and have better social skills
- Go on to post-secondary education

The National PTA Reflections program is a valuable tool for building stronger partnerships in your school community. Consider how you can apply the following PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships to your Reflections activities:

- **Standard 1 – Welcoming All Families Into the School Community.** Promote PTA Reflections to all families in the school. Emphasize that every child’s participation is valued and offer tips for how parents can support their children’s artistic expression.
- **Standard 2 – Communicating Effectively.** Share Reflections program information and reminders through a variety of channels, including your school or PTA website, newsletters, PTA meetings and more.
- **Standard 3 – Supporting Student Success.** Emphasize that PTA Reflections is designed to support students’ learning by enhancing quality arts education. Entries can be created in school, and the program can be used to support curriculum.

- **Standard 4 – Speaking Up for Every Child.** Use PTA Reflections to rally families to speak up for the value of arts education—to work with teachers, school administrators and legislators to keep the arts in your school, despite budget cuts.
- **Standard 5 – Sharing Power.** Give students a voice by encouraging them to enter the annual PTA Theme Search Contest. Invite parents and caregivers to volunteer with the PTA Reflections program and welcome their ideas.
- **Standard 6 – Collaborating with Community.** Seek community partners to support PTA Reflections with prizes and exhibit space.

For more information about PTA’s National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, including an implementation guide and assessment forms, visit the National PTA website:

<https://pta.org/home/run-your-pta/family-school-partnerships/National-Standards-for-Family-School-Partnerships>

1.3 Other Reflections Opportunities

National PTA Reflections sponsors a student-focused Theme Search Contest annually to determine a theme for two years later. The winner for the 2022-2023 school year will be selected in January 2023 and will receive \$100 from National PTA and recognition at the 2023 Annual PTA Convention.

Free State PTAs deadline for this year's theme search contest submissions is **November 3, 2023 (NO EXCEPTIONS!!!)**. For theme search student entry form and a list of past themes, see Appendix 10.

Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grants: The National PTA Mary Lou Anderson Grant Program provides matching-dollar funding to local PTAs to support in-school and after-school arts enhancement programs in local communities. PTAs serving at-risk student populations are particularly encouraged to apply. **Applications will be available at <https://pta.org/Reflections> in January 2024.**

For more information, visit: <https://pta.org/Reflections>

1.4 Free State PTA Reflections Guidelines

The materials included in this packet are based on information provided by the National PTA Reflections Program Chair and are meant to provide the *general* rules applicable to PTAs throughout the nation. However, there are specific guidelines and rules which must be followed to meet Free State PTA Reflections program requirements:

- **Local PTAs must meet all Free State PTA Standards of Affiliation to participate beyond your Local/Council level in the Reflections Program.** Please contact your Council or Free State PTA with any questions or clarifications.

- In Maryland, students may only participate in the Reflections program through a PTA that is affiliated with their school and is in good standing. Students no longer/not attending a PTA school may not enter the Reflections program through their former/some other PTA school.
- In Maryland, home-schooled students may not participate in the Reflections program.
- Free State PTA is participating in the Special Artist part of the program. In addition to the grade/age bracketed entries, every PTA may also submit entries meeting the requirements for participation in the Special Artist division. See the Special Artist rules on the Free State PTA website.
- Free State PTA will accept three (3) entries per age division per arts category for judging at the state level this year.
- Baltimore County PTA Council will accept four (4) entries per age division per arts category.
- Local PTAs in counties without an active PTA Council may participate in the Reflections program, and, may send up to three (3) entries per age division per arts category to Free State PTA for judging. The entries for all the participating local units without an active PTA Council will be combined, according to age division and art category, and will be reviewed by judges arranged by the Free State PTA Reflections chairperson. The three (3) winning entries per age division per arts category will advance to the state competition for judging along with the winners from the counties with active PTA Councils.
- Free State PTA will honor its winners as determined by the Reflections Committee and the Free State PTA Board of Directors. Recognition for Outstanding Interpretation, Award of Excellence, and Award of Merit per arts category per age division will be awarded.
- Free State PTA will honor its Outstanding Interpretation winners at its 2024 Annual Free State Convention. Details will be sent to the winners at the address provided on their student entry forms. All Award of Excellence and Award of Merit winners will receive their awards in the mail or through their Council.

1.5 Free State PTA Standards of Affiliation

*Local Chairs - check with Free State PTA to make sure your PTA unit meets all requirements before sending entries to the Council or Free State PTA for judging. Units not meeting the Standards of Affiliation by **January 27, 2024** will have any submitted Reflections entries disqualified at Free State PTA.*

- Adhere to the purposes and basic policies of the National PTA and Free State PTA;
- Remit the national and state dues to the Free State PTA by dates designated;
- Have bylaws approved every three (3) years according to the procedures of Free State PTA;
- Have a minimum of ten members;
- Submit the names and contact information including phone number, address and e-mail address of all elected officers to the Free State PTA within two (2) weeks of their election;
- Remit bonding and liability insurance premiums by the date designated;

- Have an EIN (Employer Identification Number) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on file with the Free State PTA;
- Maintain its status as a corporation, have as required by MD Non-Profit law, at a minimum a president, secretary, and treasurer;
- File the appropriate tax forms with the IRS by the required dates, and submit a copy to the Free State PTA within thirty (30) days of filing;
- Submit a copy of its annual financial review to the Free State PTA within 120 days following the fiscal year end of June 30th.
- File all appropriate state forms with the appropriate Maryland state authorities by the required dates and submit a copy to the Free State PTA within thirty (30) days of filing;

1.6 Free State PTA Reflections Requirements

National PTA uses an online submission system, this helps to alleviate the program's administrative burden, decreases submission errors, improves tracking and reporting processes at National. All submissions from Free State PTA going to National PTA will use this system.

- Free State PTA asks that each Local and Council register on the National PTA website at <https://pta.org/home/programs/reflections/startyourprogram> under the box in the body of the page "Register Today".
- All Local and Council PTAs shall **NOT** use the National PTA on-line student entry submission system. Free State PTA will use the on-line submission system only for student entries that go forward from Free State PTA to National competition.
- Use the Free State PTAs Reflections Guide to plan and implement the program. This guide includes the National PTA contest rules.

Follow the directions regarding sending artwork. The student entry forms must be sent with all entries advancing to the next round. Please check with your Council for deadline information.

Ensure that all Local PTA winning entries reach the Council level (counties with a Council) or Free State PTA (counties without a Council) for judging by the Local Artwork submissions due date for your particular situation. Please check with your Council or Free State PTA for more details.

Be sure to Make/Keep Copies of Everything

It is imperative to keep electronic copies of the original Student Entry Forms and the art work that is submitted to the next level of judging in the event of questions.

Originality

All entries must be artwork inspired by the current year's theme and created expressly for the program. Artwork created and used for another competition or program may not be submitted.

Use of Copyrighted Materials and Plagiarism

Use of Copyrighted materials is prohibited in entries submitted to the Reflections program. The exception is the use of music in Film or Dance entries if that music is credited on the student entry form. Incidental use of copyrighted images in background of a film or photo is

acceptable as long as the copyrighted image is not the focus of the entry. Questions about any specific entry can be sent to your Council chair or the Free State PTA Arts in Education/Reflections Chair.

Required Artist Statement/Required Title for Art Work

The statement must be at least 10 words *but may not exceed 100 words*. The artwork is required to have a title (“Untitled” is not considered a title). The student and or the Reflections chair must fill out the sections of the Entry Form that pertain to the arts category in which the student is submitting an entry.

Guidelines for Display of Art Work

Free State PTA will follow National PTA’s suggestion that when displaying artwork, only the following information about each piece will be displayed:

- *Title of Work
- *Artist’s first name and last initial
- *City and state of school
- *Arts area and grade division

Local and Council PTAs may want to consider displaying only digital copies of photography and visual arts/3D entries. **Securing the safety of our students is always the top priority; similarly, consider the safety of the artwork itself when it is on display in any and all settings.**

See the Appendices to this document on the Free State PTA website for rules sheets for all Arts Categories and the Special Artist Division. Please note that Free State PTA will continue to participate in the Special Artist Division. Also, in the appendices are the General Participation Rules, and the Free State PTA student entry form.

Theme Search Contest (See Section 1.3 – Additional Opportunities) forms are also in the appendices.

Good luck, and please contact your local PTA Council or Free State PTA) with any questions!

2. Program Planning

Below are the steps needed to implement your program. As you read through this guide, make notes about specific tasks, who will be responsible for each task, and when tasks are due.

Your action plan may include the following steps for starting your Reflections program:

Step 1: Orient yourself to the Reflections program.

Step 2: Organize a team of volunteers. (Including judges)

Step 3: Promote the Reflections program to students, school personnel, and the community.

Step 4: Collect and organize artwork for judging.

Step 5: Begin judging process.

Step 6: Advance winning artwork to the next round of judging.

Step 7: Celebrate student participation and achievement.

Step 8: Wrap up.

To become oriented to the Reflections program, continue reading this guide and engage your PTA Reflections Network of National, State and Local PTA Leaders.

We Are Here to Help You!

The Free State PTA Reflections State Chair is responsible for the overall implementation of the National PTA Reflections Program in Maryland. A key aspect of this role is to provide training to Local/Council PTAs on how to implement and promote the program in their communities.

Throughout the fall, Free State PTA and National PTA will host opportunities for you to connect with other PTA Reflections leaders. Your Reflections Network is a support system comprised of National, State, Council, and Local PTA Leaders eager to answer your questions and share best practices.

3. Organizing Your Team

As a Local PTA Reflections Chair, you will be responsible for overseeing the administration of the PTA Reflections program in your community. This is a big job ... but *you are not expected to do it alone!* Your Free State PTA Reflections Chair and your Council Chair are here to help at every step of the process.

We also strongly recommend that you recruit a committee of volunteers to help. Volunteers will enrich the program by bringing a variety of ideas, talents and skills ... and they will make your job much easier and more enjoyable by ensuring that program tasks don't fall on your shoulders alone.

When building your committee, keep the PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships in mind. Welcoming all families, communicating effectively, sharing power, and collaborating with the community are all strategies that will enhance your committee and help make your events a success.

3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

As the Local PTA Reflections Chair, you will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Recruit Local PTA Reflections Committee members.
- Oversee the Local PTA Committee's planning and implementation of the Reflections program.
- Establish a program timeline.

- Communicate with other PTA leaders
- Represent your Local PTA at statewide arts-related events and collaborations.

Additional tasks for you and your committee include:

- Promote the Reflections theme search and program to local students, teachers, parents, and the community as a whole.
- Recruit other committee members, Reflections judges, and volunteers as needed.
- Distribute and answer questions about the rules, deadlines, and student entry forms.
- Collect student artwork.
- Coordinate the Local judging process.
- Host recognition activities for participants and winners.
- Register your Local PTA and prepare winning artwork for submission to the next round of judging.
- Return artwork to students as appropriate.
- Evaluate the process at the end of the year and make recommendations for improvements to the Local PTA Reflections Committee, your Council, Free State PTA, or National PTA.
- Collaborate with other Local PTA leaders to promote Reflections activities and arts advocacy messages through social media and traditional media (i.e., print/broadcast).

3.2 Tips for Recruiting Reflections Volunteers

You may find the following tips helpful when recruiting volunteers to help with your Local PTA Reflections Program:

- **Announce planning meetings widely**, rather than relying on the same small circle of volunteers. Ask the principal to suggest parents who might be interested in getting more involved, and have your board members extend a personal invitation. You might be surprised who steps up!
- Invite a representative of the student council or student government to participate on the planning team—or ask the **student council** to promote the program and host events, with PTA support.
- Consider recruiting **school staff** who have a natural interest in arts education for your committee. These might include choir or band directors or teachers of other art, music, media, technology, journalism, or creative writing classes. School administrative staff might be willing to help, too—for example, by collecting and organizing student entries.
- People who don't want to attend planning committee meetings might still be willing to **help with a specific role**. This might include promoting the program through social or traditional media, creating a flyer or banners, or making phone calls to solicit community support.

- Community members such as **arts professionals or teachers** might be interested in participating as Reflections judges. See more about this in section 5 on “Collecting and Judging Student Entries.”

3.3 Recruiting Volunteer Judges

Inviting professionals in the arts and community leaders who serve as trustees, donors, and patrons of arts organizations to participate as Reflections judges increases the credibility of your program and exposure for PTA. All judges should have a working knowledge of their assigned arts area. Familiarity with student art is a plus and encourages age appropriate considerations. Sources of judges might include:

- **Parents** who work as professionals in the arts or arts education.
- **School and community teachers** of music, art, dance, theatre, language arts, writing, graphic design, and media arts.
- **Working professionals in organizations or companies** such as museums directors and curators, symphony and choral directors, musicians, librarians, editors of newspapers, photographers, and local television personalities.

Always recognize judges in promotions and thank them for their participation. Some PTAs give each judge a small PTA gift or certificate of appreciation.

4. Promoting Reflections

One of your most important tasks is to promote the Reflections program to students and families, to encourage as many students as possible to participate. Taking time to promote the program to school personnel and the community, can help increase participation, enhance family engagement at the school, and garner additional support.

4.1 Program Messages

Below are some important messages to emphasize as you spread the word about the PTA Reflections program, especially through the media or to school and community partners:

- **All children deserve opportunities to explore and be involved in the arts.** The arts play a critical role in students’ success in school and beyond, enhancing their reading and language skills, mathematics skills, thinking skills, social skills, motivation to learn and positive school environment.
- The National PTA Reflections program is **PTA’s cornerstone arts program**. It offers students the opportunity to earn local, state, and even national recognition for original artwork they create in response to a specific theme.
- Students who participate in the Reflections program get an **opportunity to explore the arts and culture, develop creative thinking and problem-solving skills, and recognize themselves as artists.**

- This year's entries should reflect upon and interpret the theme: ***I Am Hopeful Because.***
- **Families can support their children's participation** by creating time and space for students to work on their entries, providing encouragement and needed materials and volunteering to support the Reflections Program.
- Entries should **represent students' unique creativity**—adults are welcome to encourage students but are asked not to assist in any way with their interpretation of the theme or artistic expression. Appropriate accommodation for Special Artists is allowed.

4.2 Student Recruitment Messages

Share the following sample messages with teachers and student leaders to promote the PTA Reflections program. You may find these messages work best within a school newspaper, during morning announcements, and at activity fairs promoting school clubs.

- *Who are you? Who inspires you? What makes you special? Choreograph a dance, produce a film, write a poem or story, compose a song, take a picture, or create a piece of visual art and tell us your interpretation of the theme: "I Am Hopeful Because..."*.
- *Discover your world and explore new cultures or your own through dance, film, literature, music, photography, or visual arts. No experience is required to participate in Reflections! Be recognized as an artist in your community. Choose the arts category you're interested in, create an original piece of artwork based on the theme: "I Am Hopeful Because..."*.

4.3 Ideas for Promoting Reflections

Connecting with other Local Reflections Chairs can help build your support network. For Locals with Councils, contact your Council Reflections Chair.

By communicating about challenges and successes, Local Reflections Chairs can help one another with tasks such as identifying community judges, promoting the Reflections program in the community, locating affordable vendors, and finding additional sources for support.

To Students and Families:

Use a variety of channels to reach students and families. Consider creating promotional messages and materials in multiple languages, to reach all families in your school community. Some possibilities include:

- Host a **school wide assembly** to introduce the program. Feature examples of artwork from last year's winners at the local, state and national levels.
- Include messages in students' **morning announcements**.
- Hang **posters and flyers** in visible locations and send copies of flyers home to parents. You can find sample flyers on <https://pta.org/Reflections>. Send an interest flyer like the one in the appendices on the Free State PTA Reflections page.
- Post the deadline and reminders on signs near **student drop-off** and pickup locations.
- Post announcements and updates on the **school and/or PTA website** and via **social media** (e.g., Facebook, Twitter).

- Write an article about Reflections for a **PTA or school newsletter**. Showcase prior years' winners and/or the benefits of arts education. Ask a student to write a similar article for the school newspaper.
- Appoint “**student ambassadors**” to talk positively about the program among peers. Willing students might be found in art or dance classes or clubs, school music programs (choir, band, orchestra), or creative writing or journalism classes.

Among Teachers and Administrators:

Invite arts teachers to serve as Reflections chairs, committee members or volunteers. The more involved they are in planning, the more likely they will be to serve as “champions” of the program among other faculty and staff, as well as to students and parents. Other ways to engage school staff:

- Request **time at a staff meeting** to present the Reflections program to teachers. Highlight the benefits of arts education and invite their ideas about how they might encourage their classes to participate.
- Provide suggestions for how this year's theme might be **linked to curriculum**. Ask a teacher volunteer to create a sample lesson plan and share it with peers.
- Engage school staff in **planning the awards ceremony/celebration**. The school might be willing to hold a school-wide assembly or host a special lunch for participants and winners.

In the Community:

When reaching out to potential community partners, focus on the *impact* of the Reflections program on students, schools and families. For example, share how a local PTA showcases students' artwork and brings families together to celebrate. Here are some ways your community can get involved:

- Invite community members to serve as **judges**.
- Reach out to nearby gathering places (neighborhood centers, barber/beauty shops, coffee houses) to **exhibit student artwork**.
- Local businesses might be willing to support **fundraisers for Reflections** (for example, a local restaurant might host a “dine out” night, with a portion of receipts benefitting the program). Proceeds might help pay for trophies, ribbons or certificates for student participants; food for the celebration; or a supplies scholarship for a student who might not otherwise be able to participate.
- Other businesses might provide **in-kind contributions**: ask a local arts-supply or craft store for donations of paintbrushes, paper, or paints; a local library or print shop might allow students to use their computers and photo-editing software for entries.
- Work with school officials to customize **media releases** to invite local coverage. Don't forget smaller, local media outlets such as neighborhood association blogs and newsletters.
- **Community bulletin boards** can be good places to promote the program or announce student winners.

5. Collecting and Judging Student Entries

The process of judging student entries for the Reflections program includes providing program rules, collecting artwork, determining eligibility, and hosting judging.

The first step of this process is to determine a deadline for students to submit their work. Expect to need at least two weeks to facilitate the judging process and another two weeks to prepare winners' artwork and complete the registration process so that winners may advance to the next round. Therefore, **set your Local PTA deadline approximately one month before submissions are due to the next round. Please see the upfront information in this document for Free State PTA specific dates and check with your local active County Council for their specific deadline.**

5.1 Understanding Program Rules

All students must adhere to the General Student Participation Rules, as well as the rules for their specific arts category. Details of these rules are provided in the appendices.

Student Eligibility and Entry Guidelines

Students must participate in the National PTA Reflections program through a Local PTA/PTSA in good standing, as determined by Free State PTA. It is your Local PTA Reflections Committee's responsibility to confirm that your PTA is in good standing and to determine each student's eligibility. If you are not sure whether your PTA is in good standing, talk with your PTA President and Treasurer.

The following additional guidelines apply to student entries:

- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- A student may develop an entry inside or outside of the school.
- A student may submit entries in more than one arts area and/or multiple entries in a single arts area.
- Each student entry must be accompanied by a student entry form, signed by a parent or guardian. This form can be found in **the appendices to this document**.
- Student entries **MUST** include a title and an artist statement, which communicates the artist's inspiration for the work and how it relates to the theme. The statement must describe the content and be at least 10 words **but not exceed 100 words**.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may participate in the National PTA Reflections program in one of two ways.

Option 1: The Special Artist Division is an optional division of the Reflections program accepting students in all grades whose physical, cognitive or mental health challenges meet guidelines set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act. Qualifying students create their own artwork but may receive non-artistic accommodation and assistance from an adult. National PTA will honor one Special Artist from across all arts categories to receive an Outstanding Interpretation Award. Up to five additional Special Artists will receive a National PTA Award of Excellence. Free State PTA

will recognize Special Artists in the same way the age ranges are recognized – up to one Outstanding Interpretation, one Award of Excellence, and one Award of Merit for each arts area. Submissions recognized as Outstanding Interpretation will be forwarded to compete at the National level.

Option 2: Students who qualify for the Special Artist Division may choose instead to enter in one of the traditional four age divisions (primary, intermediate, middle or high school). In this case, students follow all general rules and arts category rules but may submit their entries in the age division most closely aligned to their cognitive or functional abilities. These students are recognized and awarded as part of the general student population, without regard to special needs or challenges.

Originality

Specific rules related to originality for each arts category can be found in the appendices. In general:

- An adult may not alter the creative integrity of a student's work.
- Only one student may be recognized for each entry; collaboration with other students is not allowed. Other individuals may appear in or perform a student's work, but the work itself—the dance choreography, film production (i.e., screenplay, camera work and directing), or musical composition (i.e., written score and any lyrics)—must be the creative product of one student alone.
- The artwork must be inspired by the current year's theme and created expressly for the program. Artwork produced before the dissemination of theme or used for another competition or program may not be submitted.

Use of Copyrighted Materials

Use of copyrighted material is generally prohibited in the literature, music composition, photography, and visual arts/3D categories. This includes the use of copyrighted cartoon characters, copyrighted material from the Internet, advertisements or advertising ideas, musical themes from existing copyrighted compositions, copyrighted recorded music, copyrighted photographs, or stock images. Use of copyrighted music in dance choreography and film production entries is **acceptable when the title, composer, and performer of any music in the submission are cited on the student entry form.**

Film productions, photography, and visual art/3D may include public places, well-known products, trademarks, or other copyrighted material, as long as that copyrighted material is incidental to the subject matter of the piece and is a smaller element of the whole. Visual arts collages may include portions of existing copyrighted works, such as portions of photos, magazine clippings, internet images and type cut out of a newspaper, as long as those pieces of copyrighted works are used to create a completely new and different work of art. A collage should be judged for its whole—not its parts—and its creativity as an original work of art. Misuse of the above materials constitutes plagiarism—taking and using another's words, ideas, or inventions as one's own.

Addressing Student Ineligibility

Occasionally, entries submitted to the Reflections program are ineligible. One reason for ineligibility is that the Local PTA is not in good standing. It is very important that you check with your PTA President/Treasurer to ensure your PTA is in good standing with Free State PTA.

Other common reasons for ineligibility are plagiarism and resubmission. The following recommended procedures apply to both plagiarized and resubmitted entries:

1. **Scan entries** to ensure that all are original and have not previously been submitted to Reflections or another art competition.
2. **Alert judges** to the possibility that some pieces may not be original and encourage them to communicate when one may be questionable.
3. **Check questionable entries** via Google or another search engine.
4. **Return ineligible pieces** to students; explain why they are being returned.
5. **Talk with appropriate school personnel**, such as school counselors, the principal, or teachers, about ways to address the seriousness of copying someone else's work or resubmitting artwork with the student and his/her family.
6. If ineligibility is confirmed after judging, **determine whether awards (including award money, pins, certificates, etc.) should be returned.**

5.2 Judging Process

The judging process has two goals:

1. To determine which student entries will advance to the next round of judging.
2. To award other prizes and recognition as determined by your Local Reflections Committee.

All PTA Reflections program entries should be judged on **artistic merit, creativity, mastery of the medium, and interpretation of the theme**. Mastery of the medium refers to the level of skill the student demonstrates in the basic principles and techniques of the arts area. However, a well-developed concept is more important than technique. Entries should be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme.

To facilitate the judging process, judges should receive the title and artist statement for each entry and the rules specific to their arts category. It is important to conduct *blind judging*—where judges do not see the artists' names—in situations where judges may know a student. Here are some tips for conducting blind judging:

- **Literature:** Distribute photocopies of *only* the front side of each literature entry. However, send the *original* manuscript of each winning entry on to the next level of judging.
- **Musical composition, dance choreography, and film production:** Prepare a file of all the entries for each arts area, as well as a list of the entries, using a code in place of the students' names.
- **Photography and visual arts/3D:** Cover the personal information attached to the artwork by folding the student entry form. If the student has signed the artwork, cover the signature for judging.

The following is a simple judging rubric your PTA may find helpful in evaluating entries and assigning awards. Notice that interpretation of the theme is weighted more heavily than the other considerations.

Sample Judging Rubric		
Interpretation of Theme	How closely the piece relates to the theme, based on the artwork itself and the artist statement	40 pts
Artistic Merit/ Creativity	How creative and original the piece is in its conception of the theme and its presentation	30 pts
Mastery of Medium	The level of skill demonstrated in the basic principles/techniques of the arts area	30 pts

With this rubric, each entry may receive a total of no more than 100 points from each judge. Have judges record their points for each entry on a score card. Add the points from each judge and rank the artwork accordingly. **If two entries are tied, the entry with the higher score for interpretation of theme receives more recognition.**

6. Opportunity for State and National Recognition

Reflections provides your students with opportunity to share their artwork across the state and nation. National PTA Reflections is a multi-layered competition that has local, council, state and national levels of competition. We encourage all Local PTAs participating in Reflections to advance their student winners to the next round.

In Maryland, the National PTA on-line system is utilized only by the Free State PTA promoting entries to National competition.

6.1 Report Participation

After your judging process is complete, share participation information with your Council and Free State PTA. Complete the Local/Council Unit participation form (Appendix 8) and send it with the art that moves to the next round. Locals and Council must also include a list of the entries being forwarded to Free State PTA (Appendix 9).

6.2 Advance Winning Entries to the Next Round

Local Reflections Chairs will select and notify their Local unit winners. Local winners will be forwarded to the Council (in counties with an active Council) or Free State PTA (in counties without an active Council) by the Local Unit Artwork submission deadline for your circumstance, listed in the front of this booklet.

Active Councils will select and notify Council winners. Council winners will be forwarded to Free State PTA by the Council Artwork submission deadline listed in the front of this booklet.

In all cases this includes:

- Properly prepared and packaged artwork of advancing students (see arts rules pages for details)
- A copy of the list of student entries per awards category that are advancing.
- A participation form (see Appendix 8) summarizing participation for your PTA/Council.
- Electronic media (thumb drive, CD, DVD) with a copy of all artwork being sent forward

If you are shipping the entries for the next level of competition, we recommend that you use a company that offers online tracking capabilities, just in case the shipment is delayed or gets lost.

Please contact the Free State PTA Reflections chair with any questions or concerns.

7. Celebrate! Recognize Student Participation and Achievement

Now it's time for you to be creative too! Follow your PTA and school traditions or add new ways to celebrate student participation in the arts. Recognition helps all students recognize themselves as artists, encourages family engagement, and provides opportunities to connect with the community.

7.1 Ideas for Recognizing Students Locally

The PTA Reflections program offers opportunities for PTA visibility throughout the year. There are many ways Local PTAs celebrate Reflections participants and winners. Examples include:

- Presentations at PTA and school board meetings
- School awards nights, banquets, or luncheons
- Announcements in the school newsletter or on the website
- Exhibits at community arts galleries or other public spaces (e.g., shopping malls, community centers, coffee shops)
- Features in local newspapers or television broadcasts
- Sharing photos, links, quotes, or anecdotes about the Reflections program or related events through social media channels such as Twitter or Facebook
- Invite the media to your celebration! Email the media in your hometown and follow-up with a phone call to encourage their presence or post-event coverage.

7.2 Regional and State-Level Recognition

Free State PTA award recipients are typically announced mid-March. All artwork will be returned that is not being forwarded to National PTA as a winner.

7.3 National PTA Recognition

National PTA award categories include the following:

- **Outstanding Interpretation Awards:** Seven Outstanding Interpretation Awards are given—one to the submission in each arts category, plus one in the Special Artist Division, that best interprets the theme. Each Outstanding Interpretation award replaces one of the Awards of Excellence described below. Winners at this level receive: A certificate, trophy, medal, \$800 cash prize, \$200 for their Local PTA, and a trip to the 2024 National PTA Convention.
- **Awards of Excellence:** These are given to the top three scores for each arts category in each age division. Winners at this level receive: \$200 cash prize, certificate, and medal.
- **Awards of Merit:** These are given to the next five highest scores for each arts category in each age division. Winners at this level receive: A certificate and medal.

National PTA award recipients are typically announced via news release and on <https://pta.org/> early in May. State PTA Presidents and State PTA Arts Chairs are notified via email. Each State PTA contacts the Council/Local Units of students who receive national recognition (except for the Outstanding Interpretation Award recipients—see below). Local Unit chairs notify winners.

The National PTA notifies Outstanding Interpretation Award recipients directly and coordinates their travel to the National PTA Convention, where they are recognized. National PTA mails certificates to students who received Awards of Excellence and Awards of Merit following the National PTA Convention in the summer.

8. Wrapping Up

You're almost done! This chapter covers other important items including recognizing volunteers, returning artwork and sharing program information with your PTA President.

8.1 Recognize Partners and Volunteers

After your Reflections program concludes for the year, one of the most important tasks is to thank those who helped make it a success.

Be sure to include all of the following groups in your recognition plan:

- Students who entered, as well as any students who helped to promote or administer the program
- Family-member volunteers
- School personnel

- Judges
- Community partners that provided donations, such as prizes or exhibit space

8.2 Return Student Artwork

Return of Artwork is less of an issue in an all electronic environment. In the past, National PTA recommends that original photography and visual arts/3D pieces be returned to student artists as soon as possible after judging and/or recognition. Art works submitted electronically, including those in the dance choreography, film production, literature, and music composition categories, will not require return.

Non-advancing artwork can be returned immediately after judging or after your Local PTA celebration. National PTA recommends that artwork be returned by the end of the school-year. Please be sensitive to secondary students needing their artwork for college admission. If student artwork advances, it will be returned according to Free State and/or National policy (see below).

Free State PTA Policies

Free State PTA Outstanding Interpretation entries will be displayed at the 2024 Annual Free State PTA Convention. All other artwork will be given to the Councils (in counties with Councils) or Locals (in counties without Councils) for return to the participants within the year following the submission to Free State PTA. Electronic submissions will not require return.

Free State PTA Reflections Awards Announcement and Entry Return Policy

Free State PTA will announce its winners during March 2024. Please do not plan for entries to be returned prior to this date. If you want entries to be included in your Local Awards Celebration, please plan accordingly being sure to schedule your celebration after March 31, 2024. Free State PTA will make every effort to return all entries (as necessary) with the exception of Outstanding Interpretation Winners.

National PTA Policies

National PTA's award-winning entries are featured online at <https://pta.org/home/programs/reflections/awards>. Visual artworks and photographs are displayed throughout the National PTA headquarters, exhibited at National PTA special events and returned (non-electronic) within three years following their submission to National PTA.

8.3 Evaluate Your Program

Evaluation is a critical part of wrapping up your Reflections program. It is important to understand what worked and what didn't, so that you can plan for an even more successful program next year. Here are a few ideas:

- **Survey Reflections students, parents, school and PTA volunteers, and community partners.** Share quotes in a newsletter, blog or at your PTA and school meetings. With permission, use these quotes to further recognize student achievement on the school or PTA website or share them when seeking funding for your PTA.

- **Meet with your Reflections Committee** and other team members to review the program, gather feedback, and document successes and areas needing improvement. Sharing this information with next year's team will provide a smooth transition from one Reflections Chair to another.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Official Rules

Appendix 2 Category Guidelines Summary Sheet (for reference)

Appendix 3 Reflections Student Interest Flyer (optional)

Appendix 4 Maryland Student Entry Form (fillable PDF)

Appendix 5 Rules Sheets for the Six Arts Areas

Appendix 6 Special Artist Division Rules

Appendix 7 Judges Packet (3 pages)

Appendix 8 Local Participation Summary (Elem, Middle & High)

Appendix 9 Local Entrants Contact List

Appendix 10 Theme Search Information (3 pages)

Appendix 11 Leader's Checklist

Appendix 12 Celebration Guide (3 pages)



National PTA's Reflections Category Summary Sheet

(See individual sheet for full details)

Dance Choreography

Solo and ensemble works of all dance styles are accepted. Entrant must be the choreographer and may also be the performer, or one of the performers. If background music is used, cite it on the entry form.

Video file must not exceed 5 minutes in length and 1,000 MB (1,000 megabyte) in file size and be in MP4 or AVI format.

Film Production

Accepted short film styles include: Animation, narrative, documentary, experimental or media presentation. Use of PowerPoint is prohibited. Entrant must be the screenwriter, cinematographer, editor and producer.

If background music is used, cite it on the entry form. Video file must not exceed 5 minutes in length and 1,000 MB (1,000 megabyte) in file size and be in MP4 or AVI format.

Literature

Accepted forms of fiction and nonfiction include: Prose, poetry, reflective essay, screen play and play script, narrative, and short story. Entrants may write in their primary language as long as an interpretive English translation is also attached. Use of copyrighted material is prohibited.

Writing must not exceed 2,000 words and may be handwritten or typed. Accepted formats: Single-sided print on 8 ½x11" paper, PDF file.

Music Composition

All music styles and combinations of instrumentation are accepted. Entrant must be the composer and may also be the performer, or one of the performers. Use of copyrighted material is prohibited.

Audio recording must not exceed 5 minutes in length and 1,000 MB (1,000 megabyte) in file size. Accepted audio file formats include: MP3 and WAV. Notation (score/tablatore) in PDF format is only required for middle and high school divisions.

In place of a notated score entrant may include a written reflective statement that provides a musically technical explanation of how you wrote the music (100 words or less).

Photography

Photo must be a single print/digital image. Collages and collections of photos are not accepted. Entrant must be the photographer and may use a variety of digital editing techniques including but not limited to, multiple exposure, negative sandwich and photogram.

Use of copyrighted material is prohibited.

Print image dimensions must be no smaller than 3x5 inches and no larger than 8x10 inches. Accepted print formats:

Mounted on mat or poster board no larger than 11x14 inches. Framed prints are not accepted.

Digital image dimensions must be at least 640x960 (pixels) and 300 dpi (resolution). Accepted file formats: JPEG, JPG, and PNG.

Visual Arts

Works of both fine and design arts are accepted, including but not limited to: architectural drawing and models, ceramics, collage, computer generated images and graphics, crafts, drawing, fashion clothes and jewelry, fiber work, mixed media, painting, printmaking and sculpture.

Use of copyrighted material is prohibited.

2D artworks must be mounted on sturdy material and no larger than 24x30 inches with matting. Framed entries are not accepted. Include one digital image of artwork with your submission.

3D artwork submissions must contain 3 digital images of artwork at different angles. Image(s) are used for artwork identification, judging and exhibition purposes. Accepted file formats: JPEG, JPG, and PNG.

Special Artist

Students who identify as having a disability and may receive services under IDEA or ADA: Section 504 may enter in the Special Artist Division OR grade division most closely aligned to their functional abilities. See Official Rules for details.

National PTA - Reflections Official Rules

By submitting an artwork to the “National PTA Reflections Program,” entrants accept and agree to be bound by the official rules for participation as well as the entry requirements for their specific arts category and division. Additional state program requirements may apply. Any violation of these rules may, at PTA’s discretion, result in disqualification. All decisions of the reviewers regarding this program are final and binding in all respects. (The “PTA” referred to in these rules include all PTAs reviewing the submission).

1. **ELIGIBILITY.** Students must participate through a local PTA/PTSA. Each student’s eligibility is determined by the state and local PTA/PTSA. A student may develop an entry inside or outside of school.
2. **ARTS CATEGORIES.** There are six arts categories—dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography and visual arts. Students may enter the National PTA Reflections Program in one or more arts categories. See each arts category rules for additional entry requirements.
3. **GRADE DIVISIONS.** Students may enter in the appropriate division for their grade (Primary: Preschool-Grade 2; Intermediate: Grades 3-5; Middle School: Grades 6-8; High School: Grades 9-12; Special Artist: All grades welcome). The Special Artist Division welcomes students from all grades and abilities and offers non-artistic accommodations (e.g. adaptive technology; transcribing; holding a camera) for students to participate fully in PTA Reflections. Assistants must refrain from being involved in the artistic process (e.g. developing an artist statement, choreography, music lyrics, storyboards, etc.) Student recognition and awards are announced as part of the Special Artist Division.
4. **HOW TO ENTER.** Entrants must submit their artwork and student entry form to their local PTA/PTSA program according to local and state PTA procedures. Entrants must follow requirements and instructions specific to each arts category and division. Contact local PTA programs for deadlines and additional information.
5. **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS.** (All participants must also follow arts category and if applicable, Special Artist Division rules)
 - Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the current year’s theme may be submitted.
 - Each entry must be the original work of one student only. An adult may not alter the creative integrity of a student’s work. Because the program is designed to encourage and recognize each student’s individual creativity, help from an adult or collaboration with other students is not allowed except in the Special Artist Division. Other individuals may appear in or perform a student’s work, but the work itself must be the creative product of one student only. Only one student may be recognized as the award recipient for each entry. See the specific arts category rules and special artist division rules for details.
 - Each entry must contain a title and all entries must include an artist statement. The artist statement communicates what inspired the work, how it relates to the theme, and the content of the work. The statement must include at least 10 words and not exceed 100 words.
 - Use of copyrighted material is prohibited, except for background music in dance choreography and film production entries. If used in dance choreography and film production entries, background music must be cited on the entry form. Plagiarized entries will be disqualified. Use of PowerPoint templates are prohibited.
6. **FINALIST SELECTION AND NOTIFICATION.** Entries are reviewed at local, regional, state and national levels. Each PTA determines its own reviewers for the program. Entries will be reviewed primarily on how well the student uses their artistic vision to portray the theme, their originality and creativity. The National PTA Reflections® program makes no restrictions on content or subject matter in artwork submitted by the local, regional or state levels. National PTA reserves the right to use its sole discretion in selecting the submissions to be recognized at the national level. Under no condition may parents or students contact a reviewer to dispute the status/score of any entry. Each PTA in its sole discretion will select finalists for exhibition and provide awards/prizes. Awards are announced per local and state procedures. National awards and events are announced May 1, 2023 at [PTA.org/Reflections](https://www.pta.org/Reflections).
7. **OWNERSHIP AND LICENSE.** Ownership in any submission shall remain the property of the entrant, but entry into this program constitutes entrant’s irrevocable permission and consent that PTA may display, copy, reproduce, enhance, print, sublicense, publish, distribute and create derivative works for PTA purposes. PTA is not responsible for lost or damaged entries. Submission of entry into the PTA Reflections program constitutes acceptance of all rules and conditions.
8. **PARTICIPATING ENTITIES.** This program is administered by the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and PTA affiliates. Parent groups not affiliated with National PTA are not eligible to sponsor this program.

Take Part In the PTA's Reflections Program



2023-2024 Theme:

"I Am Hopeful Because"

Entries from all grades and all abilities WELCOME!

Categories:

Dance Choreography

Film Production

Literature

Music Composition

Photography

Visual Arts

All Entries Due _____

Contact: _____

Return bottom portion of the Form: *This is not the official Entry Form*

The official entry form will be emailed to you, or sent home with your child after this form has been returned to your school. Please return this form by _____

Student's Name _____ Parent/Guardian's Name _____

Phone Number _____ Email address _____

School _____ Grade _____ Teacher _____

Entry Category – pick areas of interest

Dance Choreography

Literature

Film Production

Photography

Musical Composition

Visual Arts

Students with Special Needs may receive special accommodations by entering the special artist division.



National PTA Reflections® Program

Student Entry Form 2022-2023 "Show Your Voice"



To be completed by Local PTA before distribution to students

FULL LOCAL PTA/PTSA NAME: _____

LOCAL PTA/PTSA ADDRESS: _____

LOCAL REFLECTIONS CHAIR NAME: _____

LOCAL CHAIR EMAIL: _____ LOCAL CHAIR PHONE: _____

NATIONAL 8-DIGIT PTA ID # _____ COUNCIL _____ STATE **Maryland** ☐ PTA in good standing

STUDENT NAME: _____ GRADE: _____ AGE: _____ CLASSROOM: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME(S): _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN PHONE _____ PARENT/GUARDIAN EMAIL _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

Ownership in any submission shall remain the property of the entrant, but entry into this program constitutes entrant's irrevocable permission and consent that PTA may display, copy, reproduce, enhance, print, sublicense, publish, distribute and create derivative works for PTA purposes. PTA is not responsible for lost or damaged entries. Submission of entry into the PTA Reflections program constitutes acceptance of all rules and conditions. I agree to the above statement and the National PTA Reflections Official Rules.

Signature of student

Signature of parent/legal guardian (required if child is under 18 years)

Fold Here

Fold Here

JUDGING INFORMATION

GRADE DIVISION (Check One)

- ☐ PRIMARY (Preschool- Grade 2) ☐ HIGH SCHOOL (Grades 9-12)
☐ INTERMEDIATE (Grades 3-5) ☐ SPECIAL ARTIST (All Grades)
☐ MIDDLE SCHOOL (Grades 6-8)

ARTS CATEGORY (Check One)

- ☐ DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY ☐ MUSIC COMPOSITION
☐ FILM PRODUCTION ☐ PHOTOGRAPHY
☐ LITERATURE ☐ VISUAL ARTS

TITLE OF ARTWORK: (Avoid using the theme as the title) _____

ARTWORK DETAILS: (Dance/Film: cite background music; Music: musician(s)/instrumentation; Literature: word count; Photo/Visual Arts: materials/equipment & dimensions) _____

ARTIST STATEMENT: (Must be 10 to 100 words describing your work and how it relates to the theme.)



National PTA Reflections® Program
Student Entry Form 2023-2024
"I Am Hopeful Because"

Free State
PTA®
everychild.one voice.®

To be completed by Local PTA before distribution to students

FULL LOCAL PTA/PTSA NAME: _____

LOCAL PTA/PTSA ADDRESS: _____

LOCAL REFLECTIONS CHAIR NAME: _____

LOCAL CHAIR EMAIL: _____ LOCAL CHAIR PHONE: _____

NATIONAL 8-DIGIT PTA ID # _____ COUNCIL _____ STATE **Maryland** ☐ PTA in good standing

STUDENT NAME: _____ **GRADE:** _____ **AGE:** _____ **CLASSROOM:** _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME(S): _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN PHONE _____ **PARENT/GUARDIAN EMAIL** _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

Ownership in any submission shall remain the property of the entrant, but entry into this program constitutes entrant's irrevocable permission and consent that PTA may display, copy, reproduce, enhance, print, sublicense, publish, distribute and create derivative works for PTA purposes. PTA is not responsible for lost or damaged entries. Submission of entry into the PTA Reflections program constitutes acceptance of all rules and conditions. I agree to the above statement and the National PTA Reflections Official Rules.

Signature of student

Signature of parent/legal guardian (required if child is under 18 years)

Fold Here

Fold Here

JUDGING INFORMATION

GRADE DIVISION (Choose One)

PRIMARY (Preschool- Grade 2)

INTERMEDIATE (Grades 3-5)

MIDDLE SCHOOL (Grades 6-8)

HIGH SCHOOL (Grades 9-12)

SPECIAL ARTIST (All Grades)

ARTS CATEGORY (Choose One)

DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY

FILM PRODUCTION

LITERATURE

MUSIC COMPOSITION

PHOTOGRAPHY

VISUAL ARTS

TITLE OF ARTWORK: (Avoid using the theme as the title) _____

ARTWORK DETAILS: (Dance/Film: cite background music; Music: musician(s)/instrumentation; Literature: word count; Photo/Visual Arts: materials/equipment & dimensions). _____

ARTIST STATEMENT: (Must be 10 to 100 words describing your work and how the theme inspired you to create it.)



Dance Choreography Guidance



All participants must also follow Official Rules for Participation.

DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY is the act of creating movement. The **choreographer** (student submitting the entry) is a person who expresses their original thoughts and ideas through the use of scripted movement. The choreographer may be the performer or one of the performers, but the choreographer does not have to perform in the entry.

Consider the following styles and ensembles to portray your original choreography: Ballet, Contemporary, Hip Hop, Jazz, Tap, Folk Dance, Religious Dance, Dance Ensembles (color guard/indoor guard), Ice Skating/Dancing, or Gymnastics-floor Routine.

Consider use of background song(s), props, and the location to show a clear relation of the dance choreography to the theme. An explanation of the origin of the dance and/or the significance of the choreography might be a useful addition to the artist statement when submitting a dance choreography entry that involves traditional, cultural or regional dances. Whether an entry displays formal dance technique or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme, originality and creativity.

Use of copyrighted music in dance choreography is acceptable when the **title, composer, and performer of any music in the submission is credited** on the student entry form. Plagiarized entries will be disqualified.

Tips for Audio/Visual Quality:

- Use a tripod to hold the camera still.
- Make sure there is plenty of lighting, especially if shooting indoors.
- Turn off all noise-making devices in the room (air conditioners, fans, telephones, etc.).
- Record a short test and watch it. If needed, change the recording volume or microphone location.
- Make sure the background music (if any) is audible on the recording.
- Record two seconds of silence at the beginning and end of your production.

Submission Instructions:

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Performance must not exceed 5 minutes in length or 1 GB (one gigabyte) in file size.
- Keep a recording of your entry.
- Accepted file formats are AVI, MOV, and MP4.
- Credit background music (title, composer, lyricist, and performer) on the student entry form.
- Submit electronically as prescribed by Free State PTA



Film Production Guidance



All participants must also follow Official Rules for Participation.

FILM PRODUCTION is the process of making a film. The **producer** (the student submitting the entry) is a person who expresses their original thoughts and ideas through the use of images that change over time. The producer is not required to appear in the film but if the producer chooses to appear, a camera tripod may be used. All screenwriting, directing, camera/filming, and editing must be done by the student producer. ***PowerPoint presentations are prohibited.***

Consider the following styles to portray your original work of fiction or nonfiction:

- **Animation:** Demonstrates motion by sequencing still objects or using computer-generated graphics.
- **Narrative:** Tells a fictional story developed by the student.
- **Documentary:** Presents facts and information.
- **Experimental:** Explores movement, light, and montage.
- **Multimedia:** Uses a combination of different contents (text, audio, still images, animation, etc.).

An explanation of the storyline and/or the significance of the film style might be a useful addition to the artist statement. Whether an entry displays use of technologies or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme, originality and creativity. Software can be used to create an entry, but only to enhance and present the work, not provide the primary design.

Use of Other Copyrighted Material

Films may include public places, well-known products, trademarks, or certain other copyrighted material as long as that copyrighted material is incidental to the subject matter of the piece and/or is a smaller element of a whole. The resulting work cannot try to establish an association between the student and the trademark/business/material, or influence the purchase/non-purchase of the trademarked good. Use of background music must be credited on the student entry form.

Tips for Audio/Visual Quality

- Use a tripod to hold the camera still.
- Make sure there is plenty of lighting, especially if indoors.
- Turn off all noise-making devices in the room (air conditioners, fans, telephones, etc.).
- Record a short test, listen to it. If needed, change the record volume or microphone location.
- Make sure the background music (if any) is audible on the recording.
- Record two seconds of silence at the beginning and end of your production.

Submission Instructions

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Performance must not exceed 5 minutes in length or 1 GB (one gigabyte) in file size.
- Keep a recording of your entry.
- Accepted file formats are AVI, MOV, and MP4.
- Credit background music (title, composer, lyricist, and performer) on the student entry form.
- Submit electronically as instructed by Free State PTA.



Music Composition Guidance

All participants must also follow Official Rules for Participation.

MUSIC COMPOSITION is the process of creating a new piece of music. The **composer** (the student submitting the entry) is a person who expresses their original thoughts and ideas through the use of sound changes over time. The composer may submit an entry performed by an individual or group and/or make use of a sound library generated performance of a score composed in its entirety by the student. Composers are not required to perform their composition themselves. A recording of the composition must be included. *Primary, Intermediate, and Special Artist divisions do not require musical notation. The student may choose to submit iconic (“made-up”), traditional, or tablature notation, if desired. Middle and high school grade divisions must include music score/notation, either traditional or tablature, or a written reflective statement that provides a musically technical explanation of how the music was created (100 words or less).*

- Notation software may be used to create a score.
- Whether the score is handwritten or computer-generated, appropriate instrumentation and voicing are required for the performance.
- For electronic copies of notation, accepted file type is PDF.

Consider the following musical styles and instruments to portray your original

composition: A Cappella, Blues, Choral, Country, Electronic, Hip hop, Jazz, Latin, Musical, Orchestral, Pop, R&B, Religious, Rock, Symphonic/Concert Band and Traditional.

All instruments, sounds, styles, and combinations are accepted. Software may be used to produce an audio recording. Entries containing algorithmic composition techniques are not accepted. An explanation of the origin of the music and/or the significance of the music style might be a useful addition to the artist statement when submitting a music composition that involves traditional, cultural, or regional instruments. Whether an entry displays formal composition technique or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme, originality, and creativity. Use of copyrighted material is prohibited.

Tips for Audio Quality

- Do not place the recording device on top of an instrument(s) or speakers.
- Turn off all noise-making devices in the room (air conditioners, fans, telephones, etc.).
- Record a short test and listen to it. If needed, change the recording volume or microphone location.
- Make sure the music is audible on the recording.
- Record two seconds of silence before and after performing your composition.

Submission Instructions:

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Performance must not exceed 5 minutes in length or 1 GB (one gigabyte) in file size.
- Keep a recording of your entry.
- Accepted file formats are MP3 and WAV. Video files are not accepted.
- Submit electronically as instructed by Free State PTA



Photography Guidance

All participants must also follow Official Rules for Participation.

PHOTOGRAPHY is the process of creating an image. The photographer (student submitting entry) is a person who captures their own thoughts and ideas with a camera. By focusing on objects using various lenses, filters and light sources, photographers may demonstrate the use of photographic techniques conventionally or digitally.

- **Accepted** types include single photographic print, panoramic, photomontage (one print of multiple original photos), multiple exposure, negative sandwich, or photogram. Black-and-white and color are accepted.
- **Non-accepted** forms include entries with added graphics over the image (including lettering) (Consider submitting this as Visual Arts.). Film (negatives or transparencies) and multidimensional pieces are not accepted. Collages or collections of photos are not accepted.

Special note for Free State PTA entrants: Submissions may not be created using artificial intelligence software (such as DALL-E rotor, hotpot AI, deep AI, Craiyon, nightcafe, or other text-to-art software tools) to generate any part of the content or composition. Content generation, including composition and arrangement, must be the result of student exercise of skills and tools. This does not preclude the use of image painting and editing software such as photoshop, gimp, paint or similar software tools to filter, crop, rotate, or adjust brightness / contrast or color for photography entries. Retouching or compositing may result in photography submissions being re-categorized from Photography to Visual Art.

Consider use of objects, lighting and the location to show a clear relation of the photo to the theme. An explanation of the photography process/form might be a useful addition to the artist statement. Whether an entry displays use of technologies or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme, originality, and creativity.

Use of Copyrighted Material

Use of copyrighted material, including copyrighted cartoon characters or other such material, is not acceptable in any photography submission, with the following exception: Photographs may include public places, well-known products, trademarks or certain other copyrighted material as long as that copyrighted material is incidental to the subject matter of the piece and/or is a smaller element of a whole. The resulting work cannot try to establish an association between the student and the trademark/business/material, or influence the purchase/non-purchase of the trademarked good.

Submission Instructions:

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- **Non-digital photo:** If the submission was produced with a non-digital camera and developed by traditional process, submit an image of your photo in JPEG, JPG, and PNG
- Photo may not be smaller than 3 x 5 or larger than 8 x 10
- Accepted file formats are JPEG, JPG, and PNG.
- Images must be high resolution not less than 640 x 960 pixels and 300 dpi
- The digital file may not exceed 1 GB (one gigabyte) and keep a copy of your submitted entry. Submit electronically as directed by Free State PTA



Visual Arts Guidance



All participants must also follow Official Rules for Participation.

VISUAL ARTS include many art forms that are visual in nature. The artist (student submitting entry) is a person who captures their own thoughts and ideas to create a visual piece of art. Accepted forms of visual art includes but is not limited to: architecture (2D/3D), carpentry, ceramics, collages, photographic collages (multiple photos cut/pasted), computer-generated image, crafts, design, dioramas, drawing, fiber work, jewelry, kites, metal etching/punch work, mobiles, painting, printmaking, sculpture, and wind chimes. Reproductions or enlargements of other artwork are not accepted.

An explanation of the art form might be a useful addition to the artist statement. Whether an entry displays use of formal technique or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme, originality and creativity.

Special note for Free State PTA entrants: Submissions may not be created using artificial intelligence software (such as DALL-E rotor, hotpot AI, deep AI, Craiyon, nightcafe, or other text-to-art software tools) to generate any part of the content or composition. Content generation, including composition and arrangement, must be the result of student exercise of skills and tools. This does not preclude the use of image painting and editing software such as photoshop, gimp, paint or similar software tools for Visual Arts entries.

Copyright: Use of copyrighted material, including any copyrighted cartoon characters or likeness, is not acceptable in any visual arts submission, with the following exceptions:

- Visual artwork may include public places, well-known products, trademarks or certain other copyrighted material as long as that copyrighted material is incidental to the subject matter of the piece and/or is a smaller element of a whole. The resulting work cannot try to establish an association between the student and the trademark/business/material, or influence the purchase/non-purchase of the trademarked good.
- Visual arts collages may include portions of existing copyrighted works, such as photographs, magazine clippings, internet images, and type cut out of a newspaper, as long as those portions of copyrighted works are used to create a completely new and different work of art.

Submission Requirements:

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- 2D artwork (e.g. painting)
 - Dimensions must not exceed 24 inches x 30 inches, including matting.
- 3D artwork (e.g. sculpture)
 - Must be able to be moved for display purposes.
 - Submit 3 photos of the entry (a combination of angles) for judging, ID, and exhibition purposes.
- Accepted file formats are JPEG, JPG, and PNG.
- Images must be high resolution not less than 640 x 960 pixels and 300 dpi
- The digital file may not exceed 1 GB (one gigabyte) and keep a copy of your submitted entry. Submit electronically as directed by Free State PTA



Literature Guidance



All participants must also follow Official Rules for Participation.

LITERATURE is the art of writing. The **author** (the student submitting the entry) is a person who expresses their original thoughts and ideas through the use of words. Authors submit a single literary work, handwritten or typed, using grade-appropriate grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Collections of literary works (such as collected poems or short stories) are not accepted.

Consider the following literary styles to portray your original work of fiction or nonfiction: Prose, Poetry, Drama, Reflective essay, Narrative, or Short story.

An explanation of the storyline and/or the significance of the literature style might be a useful addition to the artist statement. Whether an entry displays formal writing technique or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme, originality, and creativity. Illustrated entries, including books, with pictures drawn by the student author are acceptable; however, only literary content is judged.

Dictation and Typing

- Students may have their entries typed by another person as long as the original work or a copy of the original work is included.
- Students in pre-school, kindergarten or 1st grade may dictate to another person who may print or type exact words as spoken by the student.
- Transcribers should attempt to retain the same level of language and accuracy that is present in the student's original work.

Translation

- Students for whom English is not their first language may submit literature entries in their own language. **An interpretive translation in English must accompany the entry.**
- Translators should attempt to retain the same level of language and accuracy that is present in the student's original work.

Submission Instructions:

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Entry must not exceed 2000 words.
- Submit entry on 8.5 x 11 paper (one sided only).
- Hand written & typed entries are accepted on 8.5x11 paper (one sided only), PDF file.
- Save a copy of your submitted entry.
- Submit electronically as instructed by Free State PTA.



Special Artist Division Rules

SPECIAL ARTIST ELIGIBILITY. The National PTA Special Artist Division is an option for students with disabilities who receive services under IDEA or ADA: Section 504 to have the opportunity and accommodations they may need in order to participate fully in the program. The Special Artist Division offers modified rules and guidelines to ensure that every student has the chance to be part of the National PTA Reflections® program.

Who qualifies as a disabled individual under the law? The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines an individual with a disability as a person who: (1) Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of that person; (2) Has a record of such an impairment; or (3) Is regarded as having such impairment.

HOW TO ENTER. Students who identify as having a disability have two ways to enter the National PTA Reflections® Program. All students may enter in only one division. Student Entry Form requires parent/legal guardian signatures.

Option 1. Enter in Grade-Level Divisions: Regardless of age, students with special needs may enter in the grade division most closely aligned to their functional abilities. Students may not receive assistance other than that which is allowed for all children. The divisions are as follows: Primary (preschool – grade 2); Intermediate (grades 3-5); Middle School (grades 6-8); High School (grades 9-12). *Students are recognized and awarded prizes as part of the general student population without regard to special needs or challenges.*

Option 2. Enter in Special Artist Division: Eligible students entering the Special Artist Division create their own artwork, but may receive non-artistic accommodation and assistance from an adult. *Students are recognized and awarded prizes as part of the Special Artist Division.*

SPECIAL ARTIST GUIDELINES. Special artists should follow the general rules and guidelines outlined in the arts category student rules specific to their submissions, modified only by accommodations for individuals with disabilities. The accommodation, in general, should be both specific and limited to the student's disability.

Allowable Accommodations: Given the diverse range of physical and mental disabilities that exist, it would be impossible to outline specific accommodations for each and every disability, but the following provides a non-exhaustive list of allowable accommodations:

- The Special Artist Division will not be divided by age /school grade level.
- Use of adaptive technology is allowed.
- All submissions must be solely created by the special artist. However, a parent, teacher or other adult may assist the special artist with typing, holding a camera, etc.

Accommodations that are Not Allowed: Individuals providing assistance to special artists may not, in any way, involve themselves in the actual artistic process by:

- Personally selecting a title for artwork.
- Writing, editing or interpreting a student's artist statement, story, poetry or script.
- Choreographing a dance, composing music or writing lyrics.
- Drawing, painting or personally creating a visual arts submission, choosing a camera angle, etc.

All participants must also follow Official Rules for Participation



Instructions for Judges

Welcome Reflections Judge!

Thank you for supporting the artistic and cultural exploration of our studies by serving as a volunteer reviewer for the PTA Reflections Program! Your artistic expertise and enthusiasm contributes to the vibrancy and creativity of our school community. Before you begin, please familiarize yourself with the following criteria, theme and scoring materials.

CRITERIA: All PTA Reflections program entries are judged on three criteria:

1. Interpretation (40 points)
2. Creativity (30 points)
3. Technique (30 points)

Notice how heavily “Interpretation of Theme” is weighed? This is what makes the National PTA Reflections Arts Program unique. A well-developed concept is more important than technique.

If two entires are tied, the entry with the higher score for inspiration of theme receives more recognition. Use the provided rubric to keep your scores consistent.

THEME: Entires should be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme.

MATERIALS: The following entry information will be provided to you during your review:

- **Title of Artwork and Artist Statement** - These should provide insight on the students artistic style/genre and the materials the student used. Look for personal meaning and reflection on the theme to help you decide the student’s *Interpretation of Theme* Score.
- **Grade Division** - The student’s division will provide insight on the student’s range of technical skill, ability and competencies displayed in their submission.
- **Additional Artwork Details** - If noted, artwork details will offer information related to cited materials, submission size, length, etc.

Please record points for each entry on the provided score card. To flag questionable entries, contact your PTA Reflections Chair. After scoring your assigned entries, please turn in your score to the Chair.

Thank you!



Judges Rubric

Judging of Reflections entries must be blind judging. All PTA Reflections program entries are judged on three criteria:

- Interpretation of Theme (40 pts.) How closely the piece relates to the theme, based on the artwork itself and the artist statement.
- Creativity (30 pts.) How creative and original the piece is in its conception of the theme and its presentation.
- Technical Skill (30 pts.) The level of skill demonstrated in the basic principles/techniques of the arts area.

Notice how heavily “Interpretation of Theme” is weighted? This is what makes the National PTA Reflections Arts Program unique. A well-developed concept is more important than technique. **If two entries are tied, the entry with the higher score for interpretation of theme receives more recognition.** You may use the rubric below to help keep your scores consistent.

Criteria / Level	Beginning 1-8 pts.	Developing 9-16 pts.	Proficient 17-24 pts.	Accomplished 25-32 pts.	Advanced 33-40 pts.
Interpretation How closely the piece relates to the theme, based on the Work itself and the artist statement.	The interpretation lacks clarity and does not communicate the student's concept.	The interpretation lacks clarity and does not fully communicate the student's concept based on the theme.	The interpretation communicates the student's concept based on the theme.	The interpretation clearly communicates the student's concept based on the theme but lacks meaning, purpose, and integrity.	The interpretation clearly communicates the student's whole concept based on the theme with meaning, purpose and integrity.
Merit/Creativity How creative and original the piece is in its conception of the theme and its presentation.	1-6 pts. Work is somewhat original and reflects the theme using very conventional ways.	7-12 pts. Work is somewhat original and reflects the theme using conventional ways.	13-18 pts. Work is original and reflects the theme using conventional ways.	19-24 pts. Work is primarily original and reflects the theme using imaginative ways.	25-30 pts. Work is highly original and reflects the theme using unconventional, interesting, imaginative and new ways.
Mastery/Technique The level of skill demonstrated in the basic principles/ techniques of the arts area.	1-6 pts. Work demonstrates very limited skill of the arts area.	7-12 pts. Work demonstrates limited skill of the arts area.	13-18 pts. Work demonstrates capable skill of the arts area.	19-24 pts. Work demonstrates expertise of skill of the arts area.	25-30 pts. Work demonstrates mastery of skill and knowledge of the arts area.

Score Card

Entry	Interpretation (40 pts)	Creativity (30 pts)	Technique (30 pts)	Total Score	Notes
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					

Elementary



“I Am Hopeful Because” 2023-24 PTA Reflections Program LOCAL PTA PARTICIPATION SUMMARY



INSTRUCTIONS:

Elementary schools should complete one block for primary, one for intermediate, and one for special artist (if applicable).

Local PTA Name _____ 8-digit PTA ID _____

Local PTA Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Reflections Program Chair Name _____

Chair Phone _____ Chair Email _____

Grade Division: Primary: Preschool - 2nd grade

	Total entries received	Total entries forwarded	Maximum
Dance choreography			4
Film production			4
Literature			4
Musical composition			4
Photography			4
Visual arts			4
Total number of entries			24

Grade Division: Intermediate: Grades 3 - 5

	Total entries received	Total entries forwarded	Maximum
Dance choreography			4
Film production			4
Literature			4
Musical composition			4
Photography			4
Visual arts			4
Total number of entries			24

Grade Division: Special Artist (All Grades)

	Total entries received	Total entries forwarded	Maximum
Dance choreography			4
Film production			4
Literature			4
Musical composition			4
Photography			4
Visual arts			4
Total number of entries			24

Please send this completed form with your entries to your Council.



High School

"I Am Hopeful Because"

2023-24 PTA Reflections Program LOCAL

PTA PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

Baltimore County Council
PTA
everychild.one voice.®

INSTRUCTIONS: Elementary schools should complete one block for primary, one for intermediate, and one for special artist (if applicable). Middle-High schools should complete one block for middle school participation, one for high school participation, and one for special artist (if applicable). Middle schools and High schools should complete one age appropriate block and a special artist block (if applicable).

Local PTA Name _____ 8-digit PTA ID _____

Local PTA Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Reflections Program Chair Name _____

Chair Phone _____ Chair Email _____

Grade Division: Grades 9 - 12

	Total entries received	Total entries forwarded	Maximum
Dance choreography			4
Film production			4
Literature			4
Musical composition			4
Photography			4
Visual arts			4
Total number of entries			24

Grade Division: Special Artist (All Grades)

	Total entries received	Total entries forwarded	Maximum
Dance choreography			4
Film production			4
Literature			4
Musical composition			4
Photography			4
Visual arts			4
Total number of entries			24

Grade Division:

	Total entries received	Total entries forwarded
Dance choreography		
Film production		
Literature		
Musical composition		
Photography		
Visual arts		
Total number of entries		

Please send this completed form with your entries to your Council/MD PTA.



Middle School

“I Am Hopeful Because”

2023-24 PTA Reflections Program

LOCAL PTA PARTICIPATION SUMMARY



INSTRUCTIONS: Elementary schools should complete one block for primary, one for intermediate, and one for special artist (if applicable).

Middle-High schools should complete one block for middle school participation, one for high school participation, and one for special artist (if applicable).

Middle schools and High schools should complete one age appropriate block and a special artist block (if applicable).

Local PTA Name _____ 8-digit PTA ID _____

Local PTA Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Reflections Program Chair Name _____

Chair Phone _____ Chair Email _____

Grade Division: Grades 6 - 8

	Total entries received	Total entries forwarded	Maximum
Dance choreography			4
Film production			4
Literature			4
Musical composition			4
Photography			4
Visual arts			4
Total number of entries			24

Grade Division: Special Artist (All Grades)

	Total entries received	Total entries forwarded	Maximum
Dance choreography			4
Film production			4
Literature			4
Musical composition			4
Photography			4
Visual arts			4
Total number of entries			24

Grade Division:

	Total entries received	Total entries forwarded
Dance choreography		
Film production		
Literature		
Musical composition		
Photography		
Visual arts		
Total number of entries		

Please send this completed form with your entries to your Council/MD PTA.

Theme Search Judging Instructions

The search is on for a future National PTA Reflections program theme!

One child's theme search submission will be chosen to inspire the creativity and imagination of thousands of students across the country and in U.S. schools overseas.

Only **five state finalists** will be chosen to advance to the national round and only **one national winner** will be selected in February. The winner's theme will be used the year after next (i.e., the theme is chosen two years in advance).

Use the considerations and scale below to score each theme submission.

Please send your strongest entries to PTA Council of Baltimore County, Reflections Chair at reflections@bcptacouncil.org by Wed., November 1, 2023.

Considerations:

- Theme is **unique**, inspiring and unlike past program themes.
- Theme is **focused** without being too narrow or too broad.
- Theme is **clear**, concise and appropriate for all grade levels.
- Theme is **applicable** to all arts categories.
- Theme **promotes PTA values**.
- Theme is **relevant in 2 years**.
- *Past themes and duplicate entries are not considered.*

Score Range:

- 10 pts Exceptional Theme
- 8 pts Strong Theme
- 6 pts Appropriate Theme
- 4 pts Weak/Basic Theme
- 2 pts Less Appropriate Theme
- 0 pts Disqualified



Theme Search Entry Form

The search is on for a future Reflections theme!

National PTA's Reflections program has helped students explore their own thoughts, feelings and ideas, develop artistic literacy, increase confidence and find a love for learning that will help them become more successful in school and in life.

Each year, over 300,000 students in Pre-K through Grade 12 create original works of art in response to a student-selected theme. In response to this theme, students create works of art in one or all the available arts categories: Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography, Visual Arts.

Help us pick the theme idea that will spark fun and creativity during the 2025—2026 Reflections program! The student who submits the winning entry will receive \$100 prize from National PTA.

Past themes and duplicate submissions are not considered. This means we're looking for the most original theme ideas.

To participate, complete this form and submit to _____
email _____ by _____.

Theme Idea:

Student Name _____ Grade _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Parent/Guardian Phone _____ Email _____

Student Signature _____ Parent/Guardian Signature _____

This box is to be completed by PTA before distribution.

PTA LEADER NAME _____ EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

PTA ID _____ PTA NAME _____ STATE _____

COUNCIL PTA PTA Council of Baltimore County DISTRICT PTA _____ N/A _____ REGION PTA _____ N/A _____

MEMBER DUES PAID DATE _____ INSURANCE PAID DATE _____ BYLAWS APPROVAL DATE _____

Past Program Themes

1969-1970 Reflections: Children and Youth, Mirror Their World

1970-1971 Reflections: Children and Youth, Look to Tomorrow

1971-1972 Reflections: America, The Beautiful, The Ugly

1972-1973 Reflections: This is Our Country

1973-1974 From Sea to Shining Sea

1974-1975 Our Heritage—Our Hopes

1975-1976 Spirit of '76—Miracle of America

1976-1977 What the World Needs Now

1977-1978 Love Is...

1978-1979 Look Out Your Window

1979-1980 Behind the Gates of Tomorrow

1980-1981 What a Family Means to Me

1981-1982 What Makes Me Smile

1982-1983 Life in These United States

1983-1984 I Have a Dream

1984-1985 What Sparks My Imagination

1985-1986 From Liberty's View

1986-1987 In Celebration: A Past to Remember, a Future to Mold

1987-1988 Wonders of the World

1988-1989 Proud Experiences

1989-1990 Where Does the Sky End?

1990-1991 If I Had a Wish

1991-1992 Exploring New Beginnings

1992-1993 Imagine That

1993-1994 If I Could Give the World a Gift

1994-1995 Dare to Discover

1995-1996 Just Open Your Eyes and See

1996-1997 It Could Happen

1997-1998 Wouldn't It Be Great If...

1998-1999 Suddenly You Turn Around And...

1999-2000 Anything is Possible...

2000-2001 It Would be Really Strange If...

2001-2002 I Hold in My Hand...

2002-2003 Signs of Courage

2003-2004 I Am Really Happy When...

2004-2005 A Different Kind of Hero

2005-2006 I Wonder Why...

2006-2007 My Favorite Place

2007-2008 I Can Make a Difference By...

2008-2009 Wow!

2009-2010 Beauty Is...

2010-2011 Together We Can...

2011-2012 Diversity Means...

2012-2013 The Magic of a Moment...

2013-2014 Believe, Dream, Inspire

2014-2015 The World Would Be a Better Place If

2015-2016 Let Your Imagination Fly

2016-2017 What Is Your Story?

2017-2018 Within Reach

2018-2019 Heroes Around Me

2019-2020 Look Within

2020-2021 I Matter Because...

2021-2022 I Will Change the World By...

2022-2023 Show Your Voice!

2023-2024 I Am Hopeful Because...

2024-2025 Accepting Imperfection

Reflections Leaders Checklist

Step 1. Getting Started

- ☐ Enroll in the national program at [PTA.org/Reflections](https://www.pta.org/Reflections).
- ☐ Visit your [state's Reflections website](#) to confirm student eligibility and gather important deadlines and materials.
- ☐ Determine which arts categories and grade divisions your PTA will offer. New program leaders may consider getting started with one or more arts category and division.
- ☐ Plan and budget for your awards, prizes and recognition activities.
- ☐ Recruit a committee to help you promote participation, coordinate judging and host events.
- ☐ Recruit experienced artists to review student works.
- ☐ Share your program plans with your PTA and school leaders.

Step 2. Promote Your Program

- ☐ Distribute program rules and entry forms to students and teachers.
- ☐ Promote your submission deadline and instructions on how to enter. Don't forget to include any available awards, scholarships and prizes!
- ☐ Use **#PTAReflections** to share how your school participates in Reflections during National Arts & Humanities Month this **October**.

Step 3. Review Submissions

- ☐ Collect and organize submissions by category and division.
- ☐ Qualify entries according to each arts category rules.
- ☐ Share judging materials and submissions with your volunteer judges.
- ☐ Collect scores from judges and rank submissions.
- ☐ Gather awards and prizes and prepare works for exhibition.

Step 4. Celebrate Participants

- ☐ Announce awardees to the whole school community.
- ☐ Host a Reflections Celebration Event to showcase student work and distribute certificates/awards.
- ☐ Offer state and national opportunities for student recognition by sending your finalists to the next judging round.

Step 5. Wrap Up

- ☐ Return non-advancing submissions to students.
- ☐ Recognize volunteers, community partners, and judges.
- ☐ Evaluate your program to consider future improvements.



**National
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PTA Reflections[®] Celebration Guide





What Is a PTA Reflections Celebration?

The PTA Reflections Celebration is a powerful tool for encouraging students to explore and be involved in the arts. Together, school leaders and families **offer positive reinforcement for participation in the National PTA Reflections program.**

Parents and community leaders are welcomed into the school to discover the rich culture and artistic skills presented by student artists. An art exhibit with live student performances and an awards ceremony will showcase the importance of arts education in your school.

During the PTA Reflections Celebration, families will:

- Recognize their child's participation and achievement in the arts.
- Discover new opportunities to stay involved in their child's learning through the arts.
- Understand how arts programs provide necessary educational benefits and share their positive experiences with school and community leaders.

Why Is Student Recognition Important?

Celebrating student learning provides an opportunity for schools and families to connect with each other and to their community.

When PTAs and schools celebrate the arts together, all families feel welcomed into the school and are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning. Research shows positive recognition and engaged families attribute to higher rates of student success.

Celebration events also serve as a platform for communicating the importance of arts education in your school. Ensure school leaders, policy makers and community leaders recognize the value of learning through the arts.

Steps for Planning Your PTA Reflections Celebration

1. **Build your team** to discuss the objectives for this event, as well as plan event logistics (e.g., space, time, date, promotion).
2. **Decorate the school with student artwork.** Prior to the event, recruit parent and student volunteers to assist teachers with displays of student art in the classrooms and hallways. Place your Reflections exhibit in a prominent location in the school such as the lobby, cafeteria, library or hallway.
3. **Plan your awards ceremony.** Secure a location in the school that is large enough for all attendees, as well as performances (e.g., gym, auditorium, multi-purpose room, library or cafeteria). Then identify student artists to exhibit their art or perform during the awards ceremony. Consider including welcoming or closing remarks from your PTA President, PTA Reflections Chair and/

or school principal. You could also invite special guests to deliver remarks. Create a program listing the names of student performers and featured presenters. Also include names of students whose artwork is exhibited.

4. **Gather event supplies** for your awards ceremony and art exhibit. Consider certificates, medallions and prizes to present during your awards ceremony. Visit *ShopPTA.com* and click on “Reflections” to see options. Other supplies may be small gifts to recognize guest speakers, as well as table cloths, signage for reserved seats, decorations, audio visual needs and a microphone. Art exhibit materials may include name cards, a welcome sign and refreshments.
5. **Promote your event.** All families are welcome to celebrate the arts together. Send personalized invitations to school leaders, community arts advocates and policymakers. Use all of your PTA and school communications tools. Feature your award winning entries in these communications. Invite local media to attend and generate visibility for your school and PTA.
6. **Host your PTA Reflections Celebration.** Revise the schedule below to best fit your school community. This is one example for a 2-hour event with 30 minutes of celebration in the beginning as families congregate, 60 minutes of awards ceremony featuring student performances and guest speakers, and 30 minutes of celebration at the end.
 - *Set-up:*
 - o Decorate reception room and prepare refreshments, exhibits and awards ceremony space.
 - o Prepare the welcome table to include programs, marked school maps of exhibit space, as well as PTA membership information.
 - o Hang directional signage where appropriate (including parking areas).
 - *Families Arrive:*
 - o Welcome families with a program, encourage them to visit the art exhibit and take a membership card if new to PTA.
 - *Opening Reception (30 minutes):*
 - o Families visit the PTA Reflections Exhibit and enjoy live student performances.
 - *Awards Ceremony (60 minutes):*
 - o Welcoming remarks by school principal and/or PTA President.
 - o Keynote speaker such as arts teacher, community arts professional or public official.
 - o Presentation of awards.
 - o Closing remarks by PTA Reflections Chair, PTA President or student leader.
 - *Closing Reception (30 minutes):*
 - o Families visit the PTA Reflections Exhibit and enjoy live student performances.
7. **After your celebration concludes, thank those who helped make it a success.** Be sure to include all of the following groups in your recognition plan: student leaders, volunteers, school personnel and community partners.

Visit [PTA.org/Reflections](https://www.pta.org/Reflections) for additional resources.

Tweet your Reflections celebration  [@NationalPTA](https://twitter.com/NationalPTA) #PTAreflections

Gather more ideas on  [Pinterest.com/NationalPTA](https://www.pinterest.com/NationalPTA)