

PTA Reflections Program State Arts Chairs' Guide

2009–2010 Reflections Program Theme:

“Beauty is . . .”

Deadline for state entries:

Tuesday, March 2, 2010

Everything a State Arts Chair Needs to Know

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40 Years of Achievement in the Arts

For 40 years, the national PTA Reflections Program has encouraged students across the nation and in American schools overseas to explore their artistic talents.

The PTA Reflections Program is designed to enhance quality arts education for students in preschool through grade 12, encouraging them to create works of art in the areas of dance choreography, film production, literature, musical composition, photography, and the visual arts. More than 500,000 students participate through their local PTAs each year—millions over the course of the program's 40 years.

The Reflections Program helps parents encourage the creativity and lifelong learning of their children, and offers children recognition for their artistic endeavors.

Parents, teachers, and community members all play a critical role in providing a positive learning environment for children. Supporting the PTA Reflections Program is one way you can increase student achievement, foster student talents, and promote the arts in your home, your school, and your community.

State Arts Chair Responsibilities

State arts chairs are responsible for the following aspects of each state's Reflections Program:

- Establishing a Reflections Program network and answering questions
- Establishing a timeline
- Determining the number of entries each PTA level may submit to the next level
- Distributing the rules, deadlines, and Student Entry Forms to local, council, and district/region arts chairs
- Recruiting judges and setting up the state judging process and judging dates
- Determining state awards and recognition
- Keeping records and tracking participation
- Submitting entries to the national PTA office
- Submitting required forms to the national PTA office
- Announcing national award recipients
- Returning artwork to participants

Establishing a Reflections Program Network

Create a network of district/region, council, and local PTA arts chairs to help distribute information about the state Reflections Program and answer questions regarding rules and deadlines. Make sure the network knows how the Reflections Program works at every level, what the deadlines are for each level, and what steps local, council, and district/region PTAs must take to participate in the program. Distribute this information to the network as soon as possible.

Rules and deadlines differ from state to state. The national PTA office refers the hundreds of parents who call with questions related to state rules, requirements, or deadlines to their state PTA. The state arts chairs are best qualified to answer questions pertaining to a state's program. Local PTAs need contact information to share with their members. Publish the state office address, telephone number, and e-mail address on all materials distributed to local PTAs.

Establishing a Timeline

When establishing state deadlines, allow ample time for students to create the works of art and for entries to be received and judged at each level of the program (i.e., local, council, district/region, and state judging levels). Work backward starting with the deadline for national-level judging. Allow at least two weeks for judging at each level, and another two to three week for copying paperwork and packaging the winning artwork for the next level of judging.

State entries must arrive at the PTA Office of Programs and Public Policy, 1400 L Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005-9998 by the national deadline, **Tuesday, March 2, 2010.**

To avoid confusion, **do not distribute the national deadline to local PTAs.** Many local PTAs assume that it is their deadline, and they submit entries too late or directly to the national PTA office.

Please note these other important dates when planning your Reflections Program:

2009–2010 Reflections Program Year	
2009 July–August	Launch of New Reflections Program Website and Online Gallery
2009 September	Suggested Introduction of Reflections Materials, Reflections Theme Search Information to Units
2009 October	Suggested Introduction of Dear Mr. President, Please Save the Arts Campaign
2009 November	Suggested Introduction of Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grants
2009 December	December 7 – National Deadline for Reflections Theme Search Entries December 14 – National Deadline for Dear Mr. President, Please Save the Arts
2010 January	National Reflections Exhibit (U.S. Department of Education)
2010 March	Tuesday, March 2, 2010 – NATIONAL DEADLINE for Reflections Program Entries
2010 March–April	National Reflections Judging
2010 May	May 3 – Deadline for Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grant Applications
2010 June	Announcement of National Reflections Winners at PTA National Convention, with Arts Education Luncheon
2010 July	Launch of 2009–2010 Reflections Program Online Gallery
2010 August	Announcement of Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grant Recipients


Determining the Number of Entries

Each state may submit up to 24 entries to the national level for judging—one entry for each of the four grade divisions in each of the six arts areas. To rephrase, within each arts area a state may submit only four entries—one entry for each grade division. For example, a state may submit no more than one entry for visual arts, primary division. While states can accept and judge any number of entries submitted from local, council, and district/region PTAs, it is recommended that they judge no more than 1,500 entries. The time, attention, and number of judges needed to handle more than 1,500 entries can become unmanageable.

Distributing the General Student Participation Rules, Arts Area Rules, and Student Entry Form

General Student Participation Rules and Arts Area Rules

Align state program rules with those of the national PTA organization to eliminate discrepancies and avoid conflicting instructions that could disqualify an entry at the national level. Once deadlines and state rules packets are finalized, distribute copies to all local PTAs in the state. Require that local PTAs distribute the general student participation rules along with the arts area rules.

 Once you have developed your state program rules, forward a copy to the national PTA office for filing purposes.

Student Entry Form

In order to be accepted, each entry submitted to the national level for judging must include a completed and signed Student Entry Form. **The form must have the signatures of both the student and the parent/guardian, unless the student is 18 years old. If the student is 18 or over, only the student's signature is required. Entries submitted to the national PTA office without the entry form or the appropriate signatures will be disqualified.**

Use the existing Student Entry Form. If needed, you may adapt the form to serve the state's program, as long as the specific information the national PTA office requires is retained. **Do not omit any portion of the Student Entry Form.**

Do not change the legal section of the Student Entry Form. The legal permission section gives PTA, including the national PTA organization and all local, council, district/region, and state PTAs, permission to use student artworks for publicity purposes. It gives PTA rights to use the artworks in public presentations, publications, promotions, galleries, programs, etc., in print, electronic, and multimedia formats.

Student Entry Forms need to be on 8½-inch by 11-inch (8½" x 11") paper. Do not reduce the size of the form.

The Student Entry Form is available in English and Spanish. All Student Entry Forms submitted in Spanish must have an English translation attached.

Required Artist Statement

Each entry must include an artist statement that describes how the piece relates to the theme. The statement should not exceed 250 words; there is no minimum length. The Student Entry Form provides a space for the artist statement; if the statement does not fit in the space given, it may be written on a separate sheet and attached to the Student Entry Form. Make sure the student's full name appears on any sheet attached to the Student Entry Form.

Requirements for the Student Entry Form for Original Photography and Visual Arts Entries

Place the original signed Student Entry Form in a sheet protector and tape the sheet protector to the back of the artwork using masking tape. The form is designed so that the sheet can be folded in half for judging purposes. **Please do not tape the form directly to the artwork; make sure the form is in a sheet protector.** Taping the form directly to the artwork makes it difficult to photocopy the form without risking damaging the work. For any artwork being submitted to the national level for judging, states are required to send the original Student Entry Form to the national PTA office. States should keep a copy of the form attached to the artwork and in state files.

Consent Forms

It is recommended that states include in their rules a requirement that signed consent forms be submitted along with the Student Entry Form for all individuals who appear in a dance choreography, film production, or photography entry—and if it includes images of an individual, a literature or visual arts entry. If an individual appearing in an entry is under the age of 18, parental consent should also be obtained and submitted. Keep a copy of the consent forms on file in the state office.

Judging

Judging at the National Level

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

Literature, musical composition, dance choreography, and film production: Each of the four judges in the arts area receives entries from one grade division to review. Each judge selects 10 entries from his or her assigned grade division for presentation to the full panel. After the presentation, the judges collectively assign awards of excellence and awards of merit. Up to three awards of excellence and up to five awards of merit are awarded in each grade division of each arts area.

Photography and visual arts: Entries are judged from electronic files of the original artwork. The judges view all of the artwork for one grade division and select the pieces that they would like to see in a second round of viewing. In the second round, they pick the top eight and assign awards of excellence and awards of merit. Up to three awards of excellence and up to five awards of merit are awarded in each grade division of each arts area. The judges then repeat the process for the other grade divisions.

Tiebreakers: If two entries are judged as equal across all areas, the entry that best interprets the theme receives more recognition.

Outstanding Interpretation selection: All recipients of awards of excellence in each arts area are reviewed together. The piece in each arts area that best interprets the theme is selected for the Outstanding Interpretation Award. There are a total of six Outstanding Interpretation Award recipients—one in each arts area.

A state-level judging system could have a similar design.

Below is a basic judging rubric states may use in evaluating entries and assigning awards.

Sample Judging Rubric

All entries should be judged on artistic merit, creativity, mastery of the medium, and, most heavily, interpretation of the theme.

Interpretation of Theme	How closely the piece relates to the theme, based on the artwork itself and the artist statement	5pts
Artistic Merit/Creativity	How creative and original the piece is in its conception of the theme and its presentation	3pts
Mastery of Medium	The level of skill demonstrated in the basic principles/ techniques of the arts area	2pts

With this rubric, each entry would have a total of no more than 10 possible points from each judge. Add the points from each judge and rank the artwork accordingly.

Name of Entry	Interpretation of Theme	Artistic Merit/ Creativity	Mastery of Medium	Total Points

Establishing Judging Dates

Establish judging dates based on the number of judging levels and the number of entries reviewed at each level. Expect to need at least two weeks for the judging process, and another two to three weeks to prepare artwork for the next level of judging. Refer to the earlier sections “Establishing a Timeline” and “Determining the Number of Entries” for additional information.

Recruiting State Judges

All judges should have a working knowledge of their assigned arts area. Sources of judges might include:

- Art, literature, dance, film, journalism, and music educators or college/university professors
- Art museum directors, docents, curators, or historians
- Professional photographers and local artisans
- Local symphony orchestra or choral directors, musicians, conductors, or composers
- Local dance conservatories, dance studios, ballets, or theaters
- Local multimedia/video production companies
- Newspaper journalists, editors, or photographers
- Local television stations
- Arts advocacy organization presidents or directors

As a point of reference, the national PTA office has a minimum of one judge per grade division in each arts area. In addition to the judging rubric, give the judges the participation and arts area rules.

Inviting professionals in the arts or influential community leaders to participate in Reflections Program judging increases the exposure of PTA, its work, and the wonderful benefits students derive from participating in the arts.

Remember to recognize judges in promotions and thank them for their participation. Some PTAs provide each judge with a small gift or certificate of appreciation.

Resolving Conflicts of Interest

If a judge knows a student participant or a student’s work, the judge should remove him- or herself from the judging process for that particular arts area to prevent a conflict of interest.

Blind Judging for Local, Council, and District/Region PTAs

It is important to conduct blind judging—where judges do not see the artists' names—in situations or settings where judges may know a student. Following are some suggestions on how to conduct 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:** For each arts area, prepare a CD or DVD of all the entries, as well as a list of the entries, using a code for the students' names. Include the grade division, title of work, playing time, and artist statement in the list of entries.
- **Photography and visual arts:** 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.

Beyond the local PTA level, blind judging will need to occur only if there is a chance that the judges may know a student. In most situations, judges at the council, district/region, and state levels should be able to use the original materials for judging.

Teachers from a host school may know student work and/or have a conflict of interest in judging, so it is better for local units to invite teachers from another school that offers the Reflections Program.

Judging Different Musical Genres

The Reflections Program welcomes a variety of musical composition styles. Encourage local PTAs to consider diverse styles of composition by recruiting judges who have the ability to judge a variety of musical genres. Michael Blakeslee, senior deputy executive director at MENC: The National Association for Music Education, suggests the following guidelines for judging different genres of musical compositions: “All styles and genres of music are accepted and encouraged; the judging will be on the consistency of the use of the elements of music [rhythm, harmony, melody, instrumentation, or orchestration] within the piece [rather than the style]. Judges will then be looking at the artistic validity of the piece rather than at its validity as a reggae piece, rock piece, or classical piece.”

Determining State Awards and Recognition

Each state determines how it will recognize and award participants. Formal award ceremonies, certificates of participation, ribbons, and plaques are some types of recognition. In addition, states may recognize students by publishing photography, visual arts, and literature entries in state newsletters, or by creating an online gallery or special publication of state award-winning entries.

Keeping Records and Tracking State Participation

Record Keeping

Keep copies of Student Entry Forms for local, council, district/region, and state PTA records. It is recommended that you document and make copies of all materials mailed to the national PTA office. As a method of record-keeping it is best to submit a record of your paperwork to your state office each year so that there is a comprehensive log of all artwork submitted to the national office. This becomes vital when you have students who have received recognition at the state level but do not receive awards at the national level. Also keep a detailed record of all pieces that are being displayed within your state and that have been returned to students. Share this information with your state office so that there is more than one person or group of people privy to this information.

Tracking Participation

The national PTA office requires each state to track the number of PTAs that participated and the total number of works entered in the state's program.

State PTAs are to distribute local, council, and district/region participation forms (included with this packet) to all PTAs participating in the Reflections Program. States are to collect these forms, compile the statistics, and fill out the State PTA Participation Form. Send the State PTA Participation Form to the national PTA office with the entry packet. This form is used to track the number of Reflections Program entries judged at each level.

Submitting Entries to the National PTA Office

Each state may submit up to 24 entries to the national level of judging—one entry for each of the four grade divisions in each of the six arts areas. While a state may submit a maximum of only 24 entries, there is no specific minimum.

Dance Choreography	1 Primary 1 Intermediate 1 Middle/Junior 1 Senior	Musical Composition	1 Primary 1 Intermediate 1 Middle/Junior 1 Senior
Film Production	1 Primary 1 Intermediate 1 Middle/Junior 1 Senior	Photography	1 Primary 1 Intermediate 1 Middle/Junior 1 Senior
Literature	1 Primary 1 Intermediate 1 Middle/Junior 1 Senior	Visual Arts	1 Primary 1 Intermediate 1 Middle/Junior 1 Senior

Maximum of four entries in each arts area—one entry for each grade division.

State arts chairs are to confirm through their state offices that the entries are from local PTAs/PTSAs in good standing.

All entries from state PTAs must arrive at the PTA Office of Programs and Public Policy in Washington DC by the national deadline—**Tuesday, March 2, 2010**—or they will be disqualified.

State PTAs are responsible for sending entries to the national PTA office. Judging begins shortly after the deadline. There are many package and courier services, including the special services of the post office. Please use a service that allows you to track and confirm receipt of entries from your end.

Submitting Literature, Musical Composition, Dance Choreography, and Film Production Entries

All literature, musical composition, dance choreography, and film production entries must be submitted by mail in the appropriate format, as described below.

Literature entries: Send the original and two copies of each literature entry. Paperclip the duplicate copies of the entry to the original. The student's name should be written on the back of each page of the original and the copies. Submit the entry in a manila file folder with the Student Entry Form stapled to the back of the folder, or slip the Student Entry Form, original, and two copies into a clear sheet protector. Keep a copy of the entry for state files. Make sure all copies are clearly legible. This may prove difficult when copying handwritten entries. Check all copies before mailing them to the national PTA office.

Musical composition entries: Send each musical composition entry—the CD in a plastic or cardboard container and, if applicable, the score—in its own large envelope with the Student Entry Form in a clear sheet protector secured to the outside of the envelope. Any musical composition entries that include a score should have the student's name written on the back of each page of the score. Keep a copy of the score and CD for state files.

Dance choreography and film production entries: Send each dance choreography and film production entry—the CD or DVD in a plastic or cardboard container—in its own large envelope with the Student Entry Form in a clear sheet protector secured to the outside of the envelope. Keep a copy of the CD/DVD for state files. All dance choreography and film production entries must be saved as a file on the CD/DVD, not as a CD/DVD movie.

Please do not staple, tape, glue, or otherwise affix Student Entry Forms directly to an envelope. Place the form in a clear sheet protector and attach the sheet protector to the envelope.

Submitting Photography and Visual Arts Entries

All photography and visual arts entries must be submitted to the national PTA office on a CD:

1. Photograph the artwork using either a digital or film camera. Photographs taken with a film camera will have to be converted to digital files.
2. Save each digital file as a jpeg at a high resolution (300 DPI). Each file must be named in the following format:

**State Abbreviation - Arts Area - Student's Last Name - Grade
Division**

3. Print the files out to make sure they are clear and in focus.
4. Save the files to a CD-ROM. Place the CD in a plastic or cardboard container, then in its own large envelope.

Please save the State Entrants Form on this CD.

5. Paperclip and enclose in the envelope the original Student Entry Forms for the photography and visual arts entries, with all artist statements attached.
6. Clearly label the CD, container, and envelope with the arts areas, as well as a contact phone number in case any of the files have errors.
7. Mail the CD and accompanying Student Entry Forms with the entries from the other categories. Keep a copy of the CD and Student Entry Forms for state files.

Keep original artworks until the national award recipients have been announced. If a student from your state receives a national award, the national PTA office will contact your state about submitting the original artwork to be included in the Reflections Program Gallery on the PTA national website.

Suggestions for Photographing Entries

It is important to prepare and submit high-quality digital images of the photography and visual arts entries. These digital images are the images used by the national judges when they make their final decisions. Original artwork is not used for judging at the national level. Original artwork is not sent to the national PTA office until after the national award winners have been selected. Therefore, the quality of the submitted digital images is important for any entry submitted to the national level for judging.

It is highly recommended that you find a professional photographer or local photo lab that can donate time, equipment, and skills to prepare the photos. In the event that a professional cannot donate services, a photo lab might be less expensive than a photographer. If purchased or donated services are not available, here are some suggestions for taking quality photos:

- Use a good-quality 35mm or digital camera (one without an automatic flash feature, if possible).
- If the photos are taken with a film camera, use regular film for easy conversion to digital images.
- If the photos are taken with a film camera, use 200 ASA speed film when shooting photos outdoors or when shooting indoors with a flash. Use 400 ASA speed film when shooting photos indoors in natural lighting (with no flash).
- Photograph images outdoors in natural light to eliminate the need for a flash attachment. When a flash feature is used, the flash can produce a glare on the artwork.
- Carefully attach the artwork, using removable masking tape, to a wall or garage door at eye level. Pushpins can be used to create a “shelf” that the artwork can rest on against the wall.
- When shooting the images, stand as close to the artwork as possible, making sure to “frame” the image in the camera’s viewfinder to get the entire work of art (without showing the mat or background).
- If an outdoor location is not an option, pick an indoor location with a lot of natural light. Try not to take photos in artificial light (especially fluorescent lighting) because they will appear to have a yellow or green cast to them.
- If a separate flash attachment is used, point the flash attachment toward the ceiling so that the flash bounces off the ceiling and does not directly light the artwork.
- Experiment by shooting photos (digital and film, indoors with and without a flash, and outdoors) before state judging, using artwork similar in size to Reflections Program entries.
- **Before sending the digital files, print them out to make sure they are clear and no larger than 8 inches by 8 inches (8" x 8").**

Submitting Required Forms

All states are required to submit:

- A completed State PTA Participation Form (all applicable information is mandatory).
- A completed and signed original Student Entry Form for each visual arts, photography, literature, musical composition, dance choreography, and film production entry, including the required artist statement in the space designated or on a separate page attached and identified with the student name.
- A completed State Entrants Form (include it on the CD with the photography and visual arts entries). Proofread the list before sending it. Use standard upper- and lower-case rules where applicable. Do not omit any information or alter the form in any way.

Submitting the State Entrants Form

The State Entrants Form is used by the national PTA office to track all students that reach the national level of judging in the Reflections Program. This Excel spreadsheet should consist of information for only 24 students. The information housed on this form is the raw data by which the national office facilitates all the national awards, certificates, recognition, and exhibits for the remainder of the program year. If information is incorrect on this form, such as misspelled names or incorrect addresses, it will be transferred onto any printed materials and awards produced for the winners.

Unfortunately, every year there are dozens of students who do not receive proper recognition due to an inverted street number or an omitted ZIP code. Without receiving this form, fully completed, the national PTA office cannot process the national winners from your state. If you have any questions about completing or submitting your State Entrants Form, please contact the Program Coordinator for Arts in Education at the national PTA office.

Please keep copies of all forms for your records.

2009–2010 PTA Reflections Program

“Beauty is . . .”

National Requirements Checklist

This checklist is for use in preparing your state Reflections Program packet for submission to the national PTA office. Please keep this list for your records.

If the state packet is not complete, it will be disqualified.

- Confirmed that all entries are from PTAs/PTSAs in good standing.
- Designated each unit as either a PTA or PTSA in the State Entrants Form

Forms

Hard-copy

Student Entry Forms completely filled out, including:

- PTA ID number (found in upper left corner of PTA mailing labels)
- Original signatures of student and, if student is under 18, parent/guardian
- Required Artist Statement
- Original Student Entry Forms for all six arts areas included in the packet
- State PTA Participation Form completely filled out for all levels applicable for your state**

Copies

- Made copies of Student Entry Forms (including attached artist statements) for state files

Compact Disc

A CD clearly labeled with your state, containing

- State Entrants Form spreadsheet completely filled out
- Photography and visual arts files prepared according to guidelines
- Photography and visual arts files labeled correctly with state, arts area,

student's last name, and grade division

Literature Entries

- Student's name written clearly on the back of each page, or if a picture book, the student's name included somewhere on the entry
- One original and two copies of each entry provided
- Each entry in a manila file folder with the Student Entry Form stapled to the back of the folder, or each entry placed in a clear sheet protector

Musical Composition Entries

- Each CD packed in a plastic or cardboard container (CD and container both identified with the student's name, grade division, state, and year) and placed in a manila envelope
- Scores included for middle/junior and senior entries, with student's name written clearly on the back of each page
- Student Entry Form in a clear sheet protector attached to the outside of each envelope

Dance Choreography Entries

- Each CD or DVD packed in a plastic or cardboard container (CD/DVD and container both identified with the student's name, grade division, state, and year) and placed in a manila envelope
- Student Entry Form in a clear sheet protector attached to the outside of each envelope

Film Production Entries

- Each CD or DVD packed in a plastic or cardboard container (CD/DVD and container both identified with the student's name, grade division, state, and year) and placed in a manila envelope
- Student Entry Form in a clear sheet protector attached to the outside of each envelope

- Met deadline: Packet received at the PTA Office of Programs and Public Policy, 1400 L Street NW, Suite 300, Washington DC, 20005 on or before**

Tuesday, March 2, 2010

Announcing National Award Recipients

State PTA presidents and state arts chairs will receive a list of the national award recipients in May. It is the responsibility of the state to contact students who have received national recognition, with the exception of national Outstanding Interpretation Award recipients. The national PTA office personally notifies the Outstanding Interpretation Award recipients. National awards and certificates are mailed to students after the PTA National Convention, sometime in July.

After the announcement of the national award recipients, state PTAs are to send the selected original photographs and visual artworks to the PTA Office of Programs and Public Policy in Washington DC for preparation of the Reflections Program Online Gallery and other exhibits. All artworks must arrive at the PTA Office of Programs and Public Policy by the given deadline.

Returning Artwork

National PTA Office Return Policy

Literature, musical composition, dance choreography, and film production entries are not returned. Make copies of the entries for state files in case the family did not keep a personal copy.

Visual artworks and photographs featured in the Reflections Program Gallery will not be returned until January 2011 or until officially released by the national office. In some cases, artwork is displayed in other shows and exhibits. Please notify all students and parents that the national office tries its best to return artwork to students within the above-mentioned time frame; however, if the artwork is being used to promote the Reflections Program, it may not be returned until a later date. The national office will inform all national award-winning students and their parents of any outside exhibits or showings of the Reflections Program national award recipients.

State Return Policy

Each state is responsible for returning artwork to participants as its policy specifies. Keep original photographs and visual artworks until the national award recipients are announced. Send national award–winning photographs and visual artworks to the national PTA office as required, and keep a detailed record of that artwork. Also keep a detailed record of all artwork on display in your state and all artwork returned to students. You should be able to identify where any piece of artwork is at any time. Share this information with your state PTA office to ensure that all artwork can be accounted for and eventually returned to the student.

Originality

All entries into the Reflections Program must be new pieces of artwork inspired by the current year’s theme and created expressly for the program. Artwork produced before the dissemination of the theme or created and used for another competition or program may not 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. Only one student may be recognized as the award recipient for each entry. Other individuals may appear in or perform a student’s work, but the work itself—the dance choreography or film production (including screenplay, camerawork, and directing) or musical composition (including written score and any lyrics), etc.—must be the creative product of one student only. (See the specific arts area rules for details.)

Use of copyrighted material is prohibited in the literature, musical composition, visual arts, and photography categories. This includes the use of copyrighted cartoon characters or other such material.

Examples of copyrighted materials:

- Cartoon characters from television, videos, and comic books are copyrighted. Even if the character is in a new setting, the character itself is copyrighted and is not to be used.
- Copyrighted material from the Internet is not to be used.
- Advertisements and advertising ideas from print, film, TV, or radio are not to be used.
- Using a musical theme from an existing copyrighted composition (printed music) is not acceptable.
- Copyrighted recorded music is not to be used.
- Copyrighted photographs, especially from print media, are not to be used.
- Copyrighted photographs or stock photography may not be used as a subject for any visual arts entries.

Use of copyrighted music in dance choreography and film production entries is acceptable. The title, composer, and performer of any music used must be credited and documented on the Student Entry Form. Use of any other copyrighted material is prohibited.

Misuse of the above materials constitutes plagiarism—taking and using another’s ideas, words, or inventions as one’s own.

Please note: Photographs, visual artworks, and 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.

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. A collage should be judged for its whole, not by its parts, and whether the resulting work stands as a creative, *original* work of art on its own.

Plagiarized and Resubmitted Entries

Occasionally, entries submitted to the Reflections Program are ineligible. Two of the most common reasons for declaring an entry ineligible are plagiarism and resubmission. The Reflections Program rules define plagiarism as taking and using another person's ideas, writings, or inventions as one's own. The rules also state that only new pieces of artwork **inspired by the theme** are acceptable. If a student submits an entry that was created and submitted the previous year, it is ineligible because all artwork needs to express the current year's theme. Recommended procedures for dealing with both plagiarized and resubmitted entries follow.

Most pieces that have been plagiarized fall in the visual arts category; however, the other categories are vulnerable as well. When students use another artist's work to gain recognition from PTA, a remedy is needed to protect the integrity of the program.

Here's what you can do to maintain the Reflections Program's integrity:

- Assume that there will be entries that are not original.
- Institute a process to confirm originality.
- Alert judges to the possibility that some pieces might not be original.
- Seek judges' guidance for determining originality if a piece is questionable.
- Check questionable entries via the Internet. Google is a great tool. For example, if the submitted visual arts entry or photograph is of a famous person, type in that person's name and search listed websites to see if the image is from a book cover or a collection of published photos.
- Train arts chairs to be vigilant, as suggested above. Discuss plagiarism and its remedies in training sessions for local, council, and district/region PTAs.

The discovery that an artwork is ineligible can be very disappointing. The rules clearly state that plagiarized entries should be disqualified and returned to the student. All levels of the program—local, council, district/region, state, and national—need to be unified in their efforts to deal with this issue. The following are necessary procedures for managing a plagiarized or resubmitted work:

- At the level of discovery, return the piece to the student and let the student know why the piece has been disqualified. If the piece is discovered at the council, district/region, state, or national level, notify the local arts chair that the submitted piece is ineligible and then return it to the student.
- If judging has already occurred at the level of discovery, have the level-of-discovery arts chair and prior-level arts chair determine if awards (including award money, pins, certificates, etc.) should be returned.
- If judging has not occurred at the level of discovery, have the prior-level arts chair determine if the award should be returned.
- If it is not too late, identify another piece for recognition and forward that piece to the next level.

The arts chair and local unit will need to work with the student and the student's family to help the student understand the seriousness of copying someone else's work and claiming it as their own. School counselors or teachers might also be able to provide assistance in helping the student deal with the discovery and the consequences.

Frequently Asked Questions

Participation

What is the Reflections Program deadline for units? All local, council, and district/region deadlines must be set in accordance with established state deadlines. The national PTA office does not set, alter, or record local or state deadlines for the Reflections Program.

Who is eligible to participate? Participation in the Reflections Program is open to any student through a local PTA/PTSA in good standing. It is the responsibility of the local unit to determine each student's eligibility in the Reflections Program.

May students participate through a local PTA not affiliated with their school? State PTAs may adopt their own policies regarding this situation. The national PTA organization requires only that national entries come from local PTAs/PTSAs in good standing.

May students no longer attending a PTA school still enter the Reflections Program through their former school? State PTAs may adopt their own policies regarding this situation. The national PTA organization requires only that national entries come from local PTAs/PTSAs in good standing.

May home-schooled students participate in the Reflections Program? State PTAs may adopt their own policies regarding this situation. The national PTA organization requires only that national entries come from local PTAs/PTSAs in good standing.

Under what division should developmentally challenged students participate? PTA believes that each child with a disability should be provided a free and appropriate public education. Therefore, the Reflections Program at the national level does not have a special division for students with disabilities. The national PTA organization believes it is the right of parents to place their child in the Reflections Program grade division that best reflects the child's developmental age. Guidelines for state and local Reflections Programs may vary.

May developmentally or physically challenged students receive help from a parent or teacher? In literature and musical composition, students who are physically challenged may dictate to another person who may type or write down the original literary work or musical notation. Transcribers should make every attempt to retain the same level of language and accuracy that is reflected in the student's original work. Any other rules or policies regarding developmentally or physically challenged students are left up to the discretion of each state PTA and may be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Arts Areas

Dance Choreography

Does the choreographer (the student submitting the entry) have to be one of the performers? The choreography must be the work of one student and must demonstrate both creativity and interpretation of the theme. There may be up to three dancers. The choreographer need not be one of the dancers.

Can a martial arts, gymnastics, ice skating, or synchronized swimming performance be submitted as a dance choreography entry? A dance choreography entry may employ any number of diverse forms of dance and/or inspiration from many areas, including sports. However, the primary choreography must utilize some of the core principles of dance. The entry submitted should not be a recording of a demonstration or routine used in a meet or competition for any sport.

How is traditional dance judged for originality and/or creativity? The modification of the steps and the interpretation of the dance are considered when judging a traditional dance for creativity and/or originality. 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.

Film Production

Does the student submitting the entry have to appear in the film? The student must be the director, screenwriter, and cameraperson. He or she does not have to appear in the film. If any minors appear in a film, the student submitting the entry should obtain the consent of the minors' parents/guardians. The names of any persons who appear in the film must be listed on the Student Entry Form.

Literature

May a student use unacceptable language in an entry? The Reflections Program makes no restriction on content or subject in the literature area. Students who are submitting entries created in a school setting should be mindful of school and/or local or state PTA standards for writing. Judges should be reminded that entries are to be reviewed for creativity, artistic merit, mastery of the medium, and interpretation of the theme.

Musical Composition

May students use notation software for creating musical composition scores? A student may use notation software. Imported MIDI files or files from other sources are not acceptable.

Photography and Visual Arts

May students submit computer-manipulated photos or visual arts pieces generated on a computer? The use of digital manipulation in the areas of photography and visual arts should be noted on the Student Entry Form, along with the software used.

Display of Artworks

What student information can be displayed with artworks? When artwork is on display, label the back of the piece with only the student's name, school, and town. Do not have the Student Entry Form attached to the back of the artwork in a display setting. No one outside of PTA should have access to student information. Develop a system to easily match and reattach Student Entry Forms to artwork for returning to the student or sending on to the next judging level.