



2023-2024 Theme: “I am Hopeful Because...”

Thank you for volunteering to host a Reflections program!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

To help you get started, here are some Frequently Asked Questions regarding the National and NYS PTA Reflections Program. There are three sections:

1. FAQ for Students (page 2)
2. FAQ for Local Unit PTAs (includes Special Education, Council, and District PTAs) (page 5)
3. FAQ for Regions (page 11)

Please find the Section applicable to you and review the information provided. Many of your concerns or questions might be addressed here.

SECTION 1

FAQ FOR STUDENTS

1. What is the PTA Reflections Program?

Reflections is a National PTA arts recognition program for students in grades pre-K through 12. Students submit their completed works of art in one or all of the available arts categories: Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography, Visual Arts. Students participate in the appropriate division for their grade: Primary (Pre-K - Grade 2), Intermediate (Grades 3-5), Middle School (Grades 6-8), High School (Grades 9-12), Special Artist (All grades welcome). Submitted works of art could result in state and national level awards and recognition opportunities.

2. What is the Reflections Theme Search?

Each year, National PTA challenges students from across the country to submit theme ideas for the Reflections program. The student who submits the winning entry receives a cash award and their theme is used as the foundation for the Reflections program in a following year.

This year, any student can enter the contest by entering their information directly into the NYS PTA Theme Search Online Submission Form.

Click [here](#) for NYS PTA Reflections Theme Search Information.

3. Who is eligible to participate in the PTA Reflections Program?

Reflections is a program offered to students who are enrolled in a PTA school. Students may only submit entries through a PTA/PTSA. Parent groups not affiliated with the National PTA are not eligible to sponsor this program.

4. Do I (or does my caregiver) need to be a PTA member to enter?

Not necessarily. If you are a student at a school with a PTA, then you are eligible to enter whether you or your caregiver are members of that PTA or not. If you are homeschooled, however, you need to be a member of either the Empire State PTSA, the New York State Pride PTSA, or a community PTA, to enter. You can find out more information about the Empire State PTSA here: <https://nyspta.org/home/about/empire-state-ptsa/>, and the NYS Pride PTSA here: <https://nyspta.org/2022/03/03/new-york-state-pride-ptsa/>.

5. How does a student participate in Reflections?

Students may enter by submitting an entry form through their school's PTA unit; or 2) if their school does not have a Reflections program, through a willing PTA in the area (contact arts@nyspta.org for assistance). Look up your school's PTA president and contact them for more information about how to participate at the school PTA level.

6. When are entries due at my school?

To find out the due date for your school, ask your PTA President. If you do not know how to contact your PTA president, call the school's front office and they can put you in touch with the right person.

7. My school has a PTA, but isn't hosting Reflections? What should I do?

This may be the perfect opportunity to make a huge difference in the lives of children in the community. If your school isn't participating, your caregiver might offer to help set up a Reflections program. If setting up a program isn't feasible, contact arts@nyspta.org for assistance in finding a PTA unit or Region that will accept your Reflections entry.

8. My school doesn't belong to the PTA or I am homeschooled. Can I still participate in Reflections?

Reflections is a PTA program, and only PTA schools may participate. If your school is not a PTA school, but would like to start a PTA, contact pta.office@nyspta.org for help in joining! Belonging to PTA is inexpensive and comes with enormous benefits, including a powerful voice of advocacy for children at our state legislature.

If you are homeschooled, consider joining (or have your caregiver consider joining) Empire State PTSA or the NYS Pride PTSA and then contact arts@nyspta.org for assistance in finding a PTA unit or Region that will accept your Reflections entry. You can find out more information about the Empire State PTSA here: <https://nyspta.org/home/about/empire-state-ptsa/>, and the NYS Pride PTSA here: <https://nyspta.org/2022/03/03/new-york-state-pride-ptsa/>. Some communities have 'home' school or community PTAs that offer member benefits, like Reflections participation.

9. What is the Special Artist grade division?

Students who identify as having a disability and/or who may receive services under IDEA or ADA Section 504 may enter *either* the Special Artist Grade Division *or* the Grade Division most closely aligned to their functional abilities. Special Artist entries are judged as a group per Art Category and are not further divided up or judged by grade level. For example, a 1st grade Special Artist Visual Arts entry will be judged alongside a 7th grade Special Artist Visual Arts entry.

10. Can two or more students create a piece together?

No. All Reflections entries must be the original work of one student only. However, other people may appear in the artwork of a student, such as performing in a Dance Choreography entry or acting in a Film Production entry or singing in a Music Composition entry or being in the picture of a Photography entry.

11. Can a student appear in their own Photography or Film Production or Dance Choreography entry?

Yes, but the student is required to be the photographer for their Photography category, the camera operator for the Film Production category, and/or the choreographer of the Dance Choreography entry. Students are not required to appear in their entries.

12. Can someone help a student write the notation for a Music Composition entry?

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, note this is separate and in addition to the Artist Statement required on the Entry Form). While notation software may be used to create a score/notation, use of the software must be done by the student.

13. Can students use Legos in their 3D Visual Arts or Film Production entries?

Yes. Legos may be used as a building material for a 3D Visual Arts entry. The entry needs to be an original creation rather than a kit. For a Film Production entry, Legos may be used, but use of copyrighted characters needs to be incidental rather than the focus of the film. A film about Batman using a Lego Batman would violate copyright laws.

14. How do I tell if my Visual Arts entry is 2D or 3D?

2D and 3D art are combined as Visual Arts. In NYS PTA, we loosely interpret 2D art as a picture/painting that you would hang on a wall and 3D as a kind of sculpture.

15. Does a 3D Visual Arts entry require digital images?

Yes. All advancing 3D Visual Arts entries must have *three* digital images from a combination of angles in JPEG, JPG or PNG format.

16. Do you have any tips on how to make my Reflections entry a strong one?

Yes! Here is a list:

- Read the rules for your Arts Category carefully and follow them.
- Ensure your work of art is original and not copied from somebody else.
- Complete the Student Entry Form in its entirety. Every section must be filled out, including parent contact information, Artist Statement, Title of Work, and signatures.
- Only one student may create each entry.

- **VERY IMPORTANT:** make sure your art file is in **the correct file format!**
 - Dance and Film: mp4, mov, or avi file formats ONLY
 - Literature: pdf file format ONLY (No image files, screen shots, or camera uploads!)
 - Music Composition: mp3 or wav file formats ONLY (no videos!) for the audio piece; pdf ONLY for the notation/statement
 - Photography and Visual Arts: jpeg, jpg or png file formats ONLY (no pdf!)

17. What are the different NYS PTA awards given in Reflections?

There are two Reflections awards given by NYS PTA - the Award of Excellence and the Award of Merit. Award of Excellence is awarded to the entries that are judged to be the best in their Arts Category and Grade Division. These entries move on to the National level of judging. Award of Merit recipients are the runners-up. National and NYS PTA encourage units to similarly recognize winners and/or hold an event of some sort that recognizes not only the students who receive awards, but all students who participate. If this is done and how it is handled is up to the Local Unit PTAs and Regions.

18. What are the different National PTA awards given in Reflections?

Of the national-level submissions, over 200 student Reflections participants will receive the following awards from National PTA:

- Merit Award: Bronze Medal; Certificate of Merit; Work featured in the traveling exhibition
- Award of Excellence: \$200 Young Artist Scholarship; Silver Medal; Certificate of Excellence; Work featured in the traveling exhibition
- Outstanding Interpretation Award: \$800 Young Artist Scholarship; Gold Medal; Certificate of Outstanding Interpretation; Work featured in the traveling exhibition; \$200 Prize for Local PTA Unit

National PTA celebrates the national Reflections winners and their artwork starting May 1 through the following calendar year. Outstanding Interpretation winners are featured during National PTA's Convention in June and select artists are featured at the Reflections Student Arts Showcase in January.

19. Who should I contact with questions about Reflections?

You should reach out to your school's PTA leadership first, especially to find out the due date for entries and how entries are being collected. For all other inquires, contact arts@nyspta.org. You can find more information here: <https://nyspta.org/home/programs/reflections/>.

SECTION 2
FAQ FOR LOCAL UNIT PTAs
(INCLUDES SPECIAL EDUCATION, COUNCIL, AND DISTRICT PTAs)

1. What is the PTA Reflections Program?

Reflections is a National PTA arts recognition program for students in grades pre-K through 12. Students submit their completed works of art in one or all of the available arts categories: Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography, Visual Arts. Students participate in the appropriate division for their grade: Primary (Pre-K - Grade 2), Intermediate (Grades 3-5), Middle School (Grades 6-8), High School (Grades 9-12), Special Artist (All grades welcome). Submitted works of art could result in state and national level awards and recognition opportunities.

2. What is the Reflections Theme Search?

Each year, National PTA challenges students from across the country to submit theme ideas for the Reflections program. The student who submits the winning entry receives a cash award and their theme is used as the foundation for the Reflections program in a following year.

This year, any student can enter the contest by entering their information directly into the NYS PTA Theme Search Online Submission Form.

- Click [here](#) for NYS PTA Reflections Theme Search Information.

3. Who is eligible to participate in the PTA Reflections Program?

PTAs/PTSAs **in good standing** (i.e., bylaws, membership dues, tax filing, and insurance are up to date) may sponsor a Reflections program. Students may only submit entries through a PTA/PTSA. Parent groups not affiliated with the National PTA are not eligible to sponsor this program.

4. Do students or their caregivers need to be a PTA member to enter?

Not necessarily. A student at a school with a PTA is eligible to enter Reflections whether they or their caregivers are members of that PTA or not. If a student is homeschooled, however, they need to be a member of either the Empire State PTSA, the NYS Pride PTSA, or a community PTA, to enter. You can find out more information about the Empire State PTSA here: <https://nyspta.org/home/about/empire-state-ptsa/>, and the NYS Pride PTSA here: <https://nyspta.org/2022/03/03/new-york-state-pride-ptsa/>.

5. My school doesn't belong to the PTA. Can we still participate in Reflections?

Reflections is a PTA program, and only PTA schools may participate. If your school is not a PTA school, but would like to start a PTA, contact pta.office@nyspta.org for help in joining! Belonging to PTA is inexpensive and comes with enormous benefits, including a powerful voice of advocacy for children at our state legislature.

6. How does a student participate in Reflections?

Students may enter by submitting an entry form through their school's Local PTA Unit; or 2) if their school does not have a Reflections program, through a willing PTA in the area (contact arts@nyspta.org for assistance). As a Local PTA Unit, you decide how and when student entries are collected and judged.

If you are contacted by a parent or student from a school with a PTA not running Reflections, or from a homeschooled student/caregiver who is a member of the Empire State PTSA (which doesn't run a Reflections program), please consider accepting their entry for your program.

7. Our PTA has not participated in Reflections before. Where do we begin?

It is great your unit is thinking about running a Reflections program! It is very rewarding, and the students love it. Here are five steps to help you get started:

1. Decide which Arts Categories you want to handle and modify the entry form accordingly. Remember, you don't need to offer every Arts Category. You can try one, like Visual Arts or Literature, see how it goes, and expand next year as you get more comfortable with the program.
2. Find out when and how your Region is accepting advancing entries (check [here](#)) and set your deadline accordingly. Regions typically have deadlines in late November, early December, so be sure to set your Local Unit PTA deadline accordingly.
3. Find your judges! Reach out to your local arts community and public library for help here.
4. Advertise! Use social media, email, Memberhub messages, and ask your principal/art teachers for help spreading the word. There are great promotional materials that you can modify on the National PTA site [here](#). (Check out the Shareable Promotions for great downloads.)
5. Register with National PTA to receive Reflections communications. You can register here (note, you will **not** receive a confirmation of registration): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/23-24RefRegistration>.

Remember, the Reflections program starts at the Local Unit PTA. First, students submit entries to Local Unit PTAs; second, Local Unit PTAs submit their winning entries to their Region. Each Local Unit PTA can submit to Region two entries per Arts Category per Age Division.

You can find more help and resources in the [Local Leaders Guide](#), as well as the [NYS PTA site](#) and [National PTA site](#). Always remember your Region Reflections Chair and the NYS PTA Arts Specialist (arts@nyspta.org) are here to help you.

8. Where are the Entry Form and rules located?

The Entry Form and rules can be found here: <https://nyspta.org/home/programs/reflections/>. Your Local Unit PTA should feel free to modify the forms in accordance with your local needs.

9. How do Local Unit PTAs promote Reflections?

Use our theme and program materials to get started and try some of these ideas to get the word out:

- Reach out to school leaders to learn the best methods for communicating with your school community. Be flexible, innovative, and persistent if something doesn't work, don't give up!
- Create email campaigns to make a call for submissions and communicate key program dates and deadlines through social media. Don't be hesitant to repeat information on multiple platforms. The more references people have, the more likely they are to connect with the program.
- Connect with your school's teachers and ask them to include informational flyers in their beginning-of-the-year materials for students.
- Place signage on popular drive-by locations. Does your school have a fence? Consider decorating with theme-specific signs from Shop PTA. You can also use dollar store yard signs and DIY your own Reflections signage.
- Consider tailoring your messaging to today's world by highlighting the importance of the arts for students' social-emotional needs.
- Promote the program during virtual meetings. Use technology platforms your school community is already using to insert Reflections announcements, promotions, and deadlines. Consider sharing links to materials and websites in the chat function.
- Some parents have decided to home-school their students this year, so don't miss out on communicating with them. Work with NYS PTA to learn about or create avenues for these students to participate in the program. Some state PTAs have 'home' school or community PTAs that offer member benefits, like Reflections participation.

10. How do Local Unit PTAs collect entries?

National and NYS PTA support and encourage Regions to run their Reflections programs virtually. However, all Regions may fashion their programs in ways that best serve their communities.

****Regardless of whether Local Unit PTAs collect entries electronically or manually, all Local Unit PTAs must enter submissions advancing to their Regions into the Student Entry Portal as well as through whatever means Regions require.****

Google Form Collection

Units may set up a Google Form to collect all the Student Entry Form information and have students upload artwork in the correct file format through the Google Form. This way all the information is automatically gathered and filed by Google and a spreadsheet can be easily generated. A sample Google Form can be found here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_LVocrDa2kL2TfDVj-u4LTdH26MV5H4d1aqi89gsj8/edit?usp=sharing

If collecting entries via Google Form, Units should require all the information requested on the Student Entry Form. Here are links to:

- [How to set up a Google Form](#)
- [How to add file upload question on Google Form](#)

Also, please add the following disclaimer within the form:

- 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.

You will likely not need to increase the storage capacity of Google Drive, but if you do, check out your options [here](#).

Email Collection

Another option Units have used is requiring entries (the Student Entry Form and the artwork) to be emailed to a PTA email address. Select the method that works best for your Unit. When collecting electronic files/artwork by email, Units should consider naming files in the following format:

ArtsCategory GradeDivision RegionName Student'sLastnameFirstname
Ex: Literature SpecialArtist Suffolk PerezNicole

Create different folders for the arts categories and label files consistently to stay organized. Typed signatures on the Student Entry Form will be accepted if submitted electronically.

Other Collection Options

Offer a socially distanced art drop-off option if you do not wish to collect pieces online or choose a hybrid model. Use CDC and local guidelines to ensure the health and safety of your community.

- Set up a mailbox or central location for drop off (e.g., PTA leader home, central library, or other public location).
- Host a socially distanced and touch-free drop-off event. Provide a large window of time when artwork can be dropped off.
- Encourage saving artwork onto jump drives to avoid storing larger physical pieces.
- Provide clearly labeled and multiple bins for the artwork to ensure that the works can be dropped off with no-touch ease. Let the artwork sit for several days before handling.

11. When are entries due to my Local Unit PTA?

Local Unit PTAs set their own deadlines (typically early November). However, Local Unit PTAs should first find out their Region's deadline and set the Local Unit PTA deadline accordingly.

Remember, the Reflections program starts at the Local Unit PTA. First, students submit entries to Local Unit PTAs; second, Local Unit PTAs submit their winning entries to their Region. Each Local Unit PTA can submit to Region two entries per Arts Category per Age Division.

12. When are entries due to Region?

To find out when your entries are due to the next level, contact your Region Director or your Region Reflections Chair.

13. How do we review and judge student entries?

Local Unit PTAs may accept entries electronically or manually (please note that National and NYS PTA are accepting entries electronically only).

An electronic review process will require some creative thinking due to the important step of anonymizing the student submissions and providing judges with “blinded” pieces for review. If you used Google Forms or Google Drive for collection, consider creating an anonymized Google Sheet that includes the student’s Title of Work, Artist Statement, and a link to Google Drive storage place. You can add a column for scores and send a copy of the sheet to your judges.

- [How to use Google Sheets](#)

A virtual judging event could be hosted via Go to Webinar or Zoom, where reviewers can learn more about the program and are trained to judge remotely. These platforms may be used for live judging with breakout rooms to provide judges with a private “space” to review the pieces in their respective categories.

If you choose to collect physical pieces, host a socially distanced review event with your judges at school or in a public location. Use CDC and local guidelines to ensure the health and safety of your community. Display works at a distance to ensure no-touch judging. Provide a sufficient window of time when artwork can be reviewed.

14. How are entries advanced?

NYS PTA is divided into 12 Regions. The top two entries from each Local Unit PTA per Grade Division per Arts Category can be advanced to Region in accordance with the Region’s submission instructions.

All units must ALSO input advancing entries into the Student Entry Portal. Instructions may be found under “Reflections Program Information / The Student Entry Portal” [here](#) and in the “Local Leader Reflections Chair Student Entry Portal Directions” under the “Reflections Program Information / The Student Entry Portal” [here](#).

15. How do I know what Region I’m in?

We have 12 Regions within NYS PTA. They are:

- 04 - Central Hudson (includes Orange, Rockland, and Sullivan counties)
- 05 - Suffolk
- 06 - Leatherstocking (includes Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, part of Montgomery, Oneida, Oswego, and St Lawrence counties)
- 07 - Genesee Valley (includes Cayuga, Livingston, Monroe, part of Onondaga, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne, and Yates counties)
- 10 - Nassau
- 11 - Niagara (includes Niagara and Orleans counties)
- 12 - Northeastern (includes Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, part of Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, and Washington counties)
- 14 - South Central (includes Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, and Tompkins counties)
- 15 - Southeastern (includes Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, part of Onondaga, Otsego, and Tioga counties)

- 17 - Taconic (includes Dutchess and Ulster counties)
- 18 - Westchester-East Putnam
- 19 - Western (includes Erie, Genesee, Wyoming counties)

16. Is NYS PTA collecting original submissions?

No. Only digital submissions are being collected.

17. What are the different NYS PTA awards given in Reflections?

There are two Reflections awards given by NYS PTA - the Award of Excellence and the Award of Merit. Award of Excellence is awarded to the entries that are judged to be the best in their Arts Category and Grade Division. These entries move on to National for judging. Award of Merit recipients are the runners-up. National and NYS PTA encourage Local Unit PTAs to similarly recognize winners and/or hold an event of some sort that recognizes not only the students who receive awards, but all students who participate. If this is done and how it is handled is up to the Local Unit PTAs and Regions. Check out Shop PTA for Reflections awards ideas.

18. What are the different National PTA awards given in Reflections?

Of the national-level submissions, over 200 student Reflections participants will receive the following awards from National PTA:

- Merit Award: Bronze Medal; Certificate of Merit; Work featured in the traveling exhibition
- Award of Excellence: \$200 Young Artist Scholarship; Silver Medal; Certificate of Excellence; Work featured in the traveling exhibition
- Outstanding Interpretation Award: \$800 Young Artist Scholarship; Gold Medal; Certificate of Outstanding Interpretation; Work featured in the traveling exhibition; \$200 Prize for Local PTA Unit

National PTA celebrates the national Reflections winners and their artwork starting May 1 through the following calendar year. Outstanding Interpretation winners are featured during National PTA's Convention in June and select artists are featured at the Reflections Student Arts Showcase in January.

19. How does a Local Unit PTA celebrate student artists?

Plan, promote, and communicate with your school community about your celebration events early and often to get everyone excited. Here are some ideas:

- Create and post celebratory videos and online exhibits on social media. Consider creating a PowerPoint presentation of the artwork. Check out National PTA's virtual exhibit [here](#).
- Host a live, virtual event to announce and award your winners and/or to celebrate your young artists. Try Facebook Live or YouTube.
- Order or create certificates and awards as a keepsake. Consider sending medallions or trophies—whatever makes sense for your budget. Check out Shop PTA for Reflections awards ideas.
- Host a socially distanced award pick-up day for participants. In winner communications, clearly outline safe pick-up instructions to ensure health and avoid confusion.
- Ask students to send you photos and create a video compiling footage from winners holding or opening their awards, reading their artist statement, or reflecting on their creative process. Check out how National PTA incorporated student interviews in a celebration video [here](#).

20. What is the Special Artist Grade Division?

Students who identify as having a disability and/or who may receive services under IDEA or ADA Section 504 may enter *either* the Special Artist Grade Division *or* the Grade Division most closely aligned to their functional abilities. Special Artist entries are judged as a group per Art Category and are not further divided up or judged by grade level. For example, a 1st grade Special Artist Visual Arts entry will be judged alongside a 7th grade Special Artist Visual Arts entry.

21. Can two or more students create a piece together?

No. All Reflections entries must be the original work of one student only. However, other people may appear in the artwork of a student, such as performing in a Dance Choreography entry or acting in a Film Production entry or singing in a Music Composition entry or being in the picture of a Photography entry.

22. Can a student appear in their own Photography or Film Production or Dance Choreography entry?

Yes, but the student is required to be the photographer for their Photography entry; the camera operator, screenwriter, and editor of their Film Production entry; and/or the choreographer of their Dance Choreography entry. Students are not required to appear in their entries.

23. Can someone help a student write the notation for a Music Composition entry?

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, note this is separate and in addition to the Artist Statement required on the Entry Form). While notation software may be used to create a score/notation, use of the software must be done by the student.

24. Can students use Legos in their 3D Visual Arts or Film Production entries?

Yes. Legos may be used as a building material for a 3D Visual Arts entry. The entry needs to be an original creation rather than a kit. For a Film Production entry, Legos may be used, but use of copyrighted characters needs to be incidental rather than the focus of the film. A film about Batman using a Lego Batman would violate copyright laws.

25. How do I tell if a Visual Arts entry is 2D or 3D?

2D and 3D art are combined as Visual Arts. In NYS PTA, we loosely interpret 2D art as a picture/painting that you would hang on a wall and 3D as a kind of sculpture.

26. Does a 3D Visual Arts entry require digital images?

Yes. All advancing 3D Visual Arts entries must have three digital images from a combination of angles in JPEG, JPG or PNG format.

27. Do you have any tips on how to make ensure our Reflections entries are strong contenders?

Yes! The worst thing you can do is advance an entry that must be disqualified on a technicality. Here is a list of things to look out for:

- Read the rules for the Arts Categories and make sure they are followed.
- Ensure artwork is original and not copied from somebody else.
- Ensure the Student Entry Form is filled out in its entirety. Every section must be filled out, including parent contact information, Artist Statement, Title of Work, and signatures.
- Only one student may create each entry.
- VERY IMPORTANT: make sure all art files are in **the correct file format!**
 - Dance and Film: mp4, mov, or avi file formats ONLY
 - Literature: pdf file format ONLY (No image files, screen shots, or camera uploads!)
 - Music Composition: mp3 or wav file formats ONLY (no videos!) for the audio piece; pdf ONLY for the notation/statement
 - Photography and Visual Arts: jpeg, jpg or png file formats ONLY (no pdf!)

27. Who should I contact with questions about Reflections?

You should first reach out to your Region Director or Region Reflections Chair for Region, especially for due dates and submission instructions. For all other inquiries, contact arts@nyspta.org. You can find more information here: <https://nyspta.org/home/programs/reflections/>.

SECTION 3

FAQ FOR REGIONS

REGIONS' DEADLINE TO NYS PTA: JANUARY 12, 2024 4:00PM VIA GOOGLE FORM

1. What is the PTA Reflections Program?

Reflections is a National PTA arts recognition program for students in grades pre-K through 12. Students submit their completed works of art in one or all of the available arts categories: Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography, Visual Arts. Students participate in the appropriate division for their grade: Primary (Pre-K - Grade 2), Intermediate (Grades 3-5), Middle School (Grades 6-8), High School (Grades 9-12), Special Artist (All grades welcome). Submitted works of art could result in state and national level awards and recognition opportunities.

2. What is the Reflections Theme Search?

Each year, National PTA challenges students from across the country to submit theme ideas for the Reflections program. The student who submits the winning entry receives a cash award and their theme is used as the foundation for the Reflections program in a following year.

This year, any student can enter the contest by entering their information directly into the NYS PTA Theme Search Online Submission Form.

Click [here](#) for NYS PTA Reflections Theme Search Information.

3. Who is eligible to participate in the PTA Reflections Program?

PTAs/PTSAs **in good standing** (i.e., bylaws, membership dues, tax filing, and insurance are all up to date) may sponsor a Reflections program. Students may only submit entries through a PTA/PTSA. Parent groups not affiliated with the National PTA are not eligible to sponsor this program.

4. Do students or their caregivers need to be a PTA member to enter?

Not necessarily. A student at a school with a PTA is eligible to enter Reflections whether they or their caregivers are members of that PTA or not. If a student is homeschooled, however, they need to be a member of either the Empire State PTSA, the NYS Pride PTSA, or a community PTA, to enter. You can find out more information about the Empire State PTSA here: <https://nyspta.org/home/about/empire-state-ptsa/>, and the NYS Pride PTSA here: <https://nyspta.org/2022/03/03/new-york-state-pride-ptsa/>.

5. Can a school that doesn't belong to the PTA participate in Reflections?

No. Reflections is a PTA program, and only PTA schools may participate.

6. How does a student participate in Reflections?

Students may enter by submitting an entry form through their school's Local PTA Unit; or 2) if their school does not have a Reflections program, through a willing PTA in the area. Local PTA Units decide how and when student entries are collected and judged. As a Region, you decide how and when Local PTA Units may advance their winning entries to you.

If you are contacted by a parent or student from a school not running Reflections, or from a homeschooled student/caregiver who is a member of the Empire State PTSA or NYS Pride PTSA, please help them find a Local Unit PTA that will accept their entry.

7. Where are the Entry Form and rules located?

The Entry Form and rules can be found here: <https://nyspta.org/home/programs/reflections/>.

8. How do Regions help promote Reflections?

Use our theme and program materials to get started and try some of these ideas to get the word out:

- Reach out to Local Unit PTA leaders to encourage them to run a Reflections program.
- Create email campaigns to make a call for submissions and communicate key program details through social media. Don't be hesitant to repeat information on multiple platforms. The more references people have, the more likely they are to connect with the program.
- Consider tailoring your messaging to today's world by highlighting the importance of the arts for students' social-emotional needs.
- Promote the program during virtual meetings. Use technology platforms your community is already using to insert Reflections announcements, promotions, and deadlines. Consider sharing links to materials and websites in the chat function.

9. How do Regions collect entries?

National and NYS PTA support and encourage Regions to run their Reflections programs virtually. However, all Regions may fashion their programs in ways that best serve their communities.

****Regardless of whether Regions collect entries electronically or manually, all entries advancing to NYS PTA must be entered into the Student Entry Portal as well as through whatever means Regions require.****

Google Form Collection

It is recommended that Regions set up a Google Form to collect all the Student Entry Form information and have units upload artwork in the correct file format through the Google Form. This way all the information is automatically gathered and filed by Google and a spreadsheet can be easily generated. A sample Google Form can be found here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_LVocrDa2kL2TfDVj-u4LTdH26MV5H4d1aqi89gsj8/edit?usp=sharing

If collecting entries via Google Form, Regions should require all the information requested on the Student Entry Form. Here are links to:

- [How to set up a Google Form](#)
- [How to add file upload question on Google Form](#)

You will likely not need to increase the storage capacity of Google Drive, but if you do, check out your options [here](#).

Email Collection

Another option Regions have used is requiring entries (the Student Entry Form and the artwork) to be emailed to a Region email address. Select the method that works best for your Region. When collecting electronic files/artwork by email, Regions should consider naming files in the following format:

ArtsCategory GradeDivision RegionName Student'sLastnameFirstname
Ex: Literature SpecialArtist Suffolk PerezNicole

Create different folders for the arts categories and label files consistently to stay organized. Typed signatures on the Student Entry Form will be accepted if submitted electronically.

Other Collection Options

Offer a socially distanced art drop-off option if you do not wish to collect pieces online or choose a hybrid model. Use CDC and local guidelines to ensure the health and safety of your community.

- Set up a mailbox or central location for drop off (e.g., PTA leader home, central library, or other public location).
- Host a socially distanced and touch-free drop-off event. Provide a large window of time when artwork can be dropped off.
- Encourage saving artwork onto jump drives to avoid storing larger physical pieces.

10. When are entries due to Region?

Regions set their own due dates. Check NYS PTA’s deadline and set the Region deadline accordingly (typically early to mid-December).

11. When are entries due to NYS PTA?

JANUARY 12, 2024 4pm via Google Form.

12. How do we review and judge student entries?

Regions may accept entries electronically or manually (please note that National and NYS PTA are accepting entries electronically).

An electronic review process will require some creative thinking due to the important step of anonymizing the student submissions and providing judges with “blinded” pieces for review. If you used Google Forms or Google Drive for collection, consider creating an anonymized Google Sheet that includes the student’s Title of Work, Artist Statement, and a link to Google Drive storage place. You can add a column for scores and send a copy of the sheet to your judges.

- [How to use Google Sheets](#)

A virtual judging event could be hosted via Go to Webinar or Zoom, where reviewers can learn more about the program and are trained to judge remotely. These platforms may be used for live judging with breakout rooms to provide judges with a private “space” to review the pieces in their respective categories.

If you choose to collect physical pieces, host a socially distanced review event with your judges at school or in a public location. Use CDC and local guidelines to ensure the health and safety of your community. Display works at a distance to ensure no-touch judging. Provide a sufficient window of time when artwork can be reviewed.

13. How are entries advanced?

NYS PTA is divided into 12 Regions. The top two entries from each Local Unit PTA per Grade Division per Arts Category can be advanced to the Region level in accordance with the Region’s submission instructions. Region level winners will be advanced to NYS PTA based on the chart below.

Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester-East Putnam, which are large Regions, can submit a maximum of 6 entries per Arts Category per Grade Division. The other NYS Regions can submit a maximum of 3 entries for each Arts Category per Grade division. While a Region may submit fewer than the maximum number of entries per Arts Category per Grade Division, a Region **may not** submit more than the maximum number allowed.

Maximum Number of Reflections Entries Per Region

Membership	Region	Number of Entries
1 – 30,000	Central Hudson Genesee Valley Leatherstocking Niagara Northeastern South Central Southeastern Taconic Western	3 entries from each <i>Grade Division*</i> for each <i>Arts Category**</i> <u>Maximum Total = 90 entries</u>
30,001 - 60,000 +	Nassau Suffolk Westchester-East Putnam	6 entries from each <i>Grade Division*</i> for each <i>Arts Category**</i> Maximum Total = 180 entries

Regions must ensure all advancing entries are uploaded into the Student Entry Portal. Instructions may be found [here](#).

14. Is NYS PTA collecting original submissions?

No.

15. What are the different NYS PTA awards given in Reflections?

There are two Reflections awards given by NYS PTA - the Award of Excellence and the Award of Merit. Award of Excellence is awarded to the entries that are judged to be the best in their Arts Category and Grade Division. These entries move on to the next level of judging. Award of Merit recipients are the runners-up. National and NYS PTA encourage Regions to similarly recognize winners and/or hold an event of some sort that recognizes not only the students who receive awards. If this is done and how it is handled is up to each Region.

16. What are the different National PTA awards given in Reflections?

Of the national-level submissions, over 200 student Reflections participants will receive the following awards from National PTA:

- Merit Award: Bronze Medal; Certificate of Merit; Work featured in the traveling exhibition
- Award of Excellence: \$200 Young Artist Scholarship; Silver Medal; Certificate of Excellence; Work featured in the traveling exhibition
- Outstanding Interpretation Award: \$800 Young Artist Scholarship; Gold Medal; Certificate of Outstanding Interpretation; Work featured in the traveling exhibition; \$200 Prize for Local PTA Unit

National PTA celebrates the national Reflections winners and their artwork starting May 1 through the following calendar year. Outstanding Interpretation winners are featured during National PTA's Convention in June and select artists are featured at the Reflections Student Arts Showcase in January.

17. How do we celebrate our student artists?

Plan, promote, and communicate with your school community about your celebration events early and often to get everyone excited. Here are some ideas:

- Create and post celebratory videos and online exhibits on social media. Consider creating a PowerPoint presentation of the artwork. Check out National PTA's virtual exhibit [here](#).
- Host a live, virtual event to announce and award your winners and/or to celebrate your young artists. Try Facebook Live or YouTube.
- Order or create certificates and awards as a keepsake. Consider sending medallions or trophies—whatever makes sense for your budget. Check out Shop PTA for Reflections awards ideas.
- Host a socially distanced award pick-up day for participants. In winner communications, clearly outline safe pick-up instructions to ensure health and avoid confusion.
- Ask students to send you photos and create a video compiling footage from winners holding or opening their awards, reading their artist statement, or reflecting on their creative process. Check out how National PTA incorporated student interviews in a celebration video [here](#).

18. What is the Special Artist Grade Division?

Students who identify as having a disability and/or who may receive services under IDEA or ADA Section 504 may enter *either* the Special Artist Grade Division *or* the Grade Division most closely aligned to their functional abilities. Special Artist entries are judged as a group per Art Category and are not further divided up or judged by grade level. For example, a 1st grade Special Artist Visual Arts entry will be judged alongside a 7th grade Special Artist Visual Arts entry.

19. Can two or more students create a piece together?

No. All Reflections entries must be the original work of one student only. However, other people may appear in the artwork of a student, such as performing in a Dance Choreography entry or acting in a Film Production entry or singing in a Music Composition entry or being in the picture of a Photography entry.

20. Can a student appear in their own Photography or Film Production or Dance Choreography entry?

Yes, but the student is required to be the photographer for their Photography entry; the camera operator, screenwriter, and editor of the Film Production entry; and/or the choreographer of the Dance Choreography entry. Students are not required to appear in their entries.

21. Can someone help a student write the notation for a Music Composition entry?

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, note this is separate and in addition to the Artist Statement required on the Entry Form). While notation software may be used to create a score/notation, use of the software must be done by the student.

22. Can students use Legos in their 3D Visual Arts or Film Production entries?

Yes. Legos may be used as a building material for a 3D Visual Arts entry. The entry needs to be an original creation rather than a kit. For a Film Production entry, Legos may be used, but use of copyrighted characters needs to be incidental rather than the focus of the film. A film about Batman using a Lego Batman would violate copyright laws.

23. How do I tell if a Visual Arts entry is 2D or 3D?

2D and 3D art are combined as Visual Arts. In NYS PTA, we loosely interpret 2D art as a picture/painting that you would hang on a wall and 3D as a kind of sculpture.

24. Does a 3D Visual Arts entry require digital images?

Yes. All advancing 3D Visual Arts entries must have *three* digital images from a combination of angles in JPEG, JPG or PNG format.

25. Do you have any tips on how to make ensure our Reflections entries are strong contenders?

Yes! The worst thing you can do is advance an entry that must be disqualified on a technicality. Here is a list of things to look out for:

- Read the rules for the Arts Categories and make sure they are followed.
- Ensure artwork is original and not copied from somebody else.
- Ensure the Student Entry Form is filled out in its entirety. Every section must be filled out, including parent contact information, Artist Statement, Title of Work, and signatures.
- Only one student may create each entry.
- VERY IMPORTANT: make sure all art files are in **the correct file format!**
 - Dance and Film: mp4, mov, or avi file formats ONLY
 - Literature: pdf file format ONLY (No image files, screen shots, or camera uploads!)
 - Music Composition: mp3 or wav file formats ONLY (no videos!) for the audio piece; pdf ONLY for the notation/statement
 - Photography and Visual Arts: jpeg, jpg or png file formats ONLY (no pdf!)

26. Who should I contact with questions about Reflections?

Contact arts@nyspta.org. You can find more information here: <https://nyspta.org/home/programs/reflections/>.

QUESTIONS?

Contact

Nicole Cuda Pérez

NYS PTA Arts Specialist

arts@nyspta.org

Shining the Light on Every Child with One Voice

everychild.onevoice.org