New York State

PTA®

every child. *one* voice.®

2020-2021 Theme: "I Matter Because…"

Thank you for volunteering to host a Reflections® program!

Deadline: January 14, 2021 4:00pm - NYS PTA Office

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

Please review the questions below. Many of your concerns or questions could be addressed.

1. What is PTA Reflections Program?

Reflections® is a National arts recognition program for students in grades pre-K through 12. The program is structured for PTAs to celebrate and recognize students at the local, council, state, and national levels. All PTAs/PTSAs in good standing (Good Standing= Bylaws, Membership Dues and Insurance up to date) may sponsor the 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.

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 his/her 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](#)

[Click Here to go Directly to the Theme Search Google Form](#)

2. Who Is Eligible to Participate in Reflections?

Reflections is a program offered to students who are enrolled in a PTA school. For questions, please contact arts@nyspta.org

3. How do I enter online?

Given the impact of COVID-19, student participation in the arts, particularly in arts programs like [Reflections](#), is now more important than ever to help them process their thoughts and feelings. As many school communities will be learning remotely, National and NYS PTA supports and encourages our PTAs to run their Reflections programs virtually.

4. How do we collect Student Information and Entries during our current climate?

National and NYS PTA will be accepting electronic entries from all PTAs. Artwork can be submitted and reviewed electronically, and typed signatures on the Student Entry Form will be accepted at all levels.

When submitting the electronic files/artwork please name the file in the following format:

Student's LastnameFirstnameUnitCodeCategoryDivision

Example: McCormackJensuh05-123LiteratureIntermediate.jpg

Consider using Google Forms to collect student information and have students upload pieces to [Google Drive](). Many PTAs, including NYS PTA are choosing this method and creating their own Google Form for the collection of pieces by finding a platform that is user-friendly and robust, with plenty of storage. NYS PTA will be using Google Forms to allow online and manual entries.

Create different folders for the arts categories, age and Special Artist divisions and label files consistently to stay organized.

When setting up the Google Form make sure to pre-populate the following PTA information to avoid any confusion or disqualification.

> Local PTA Name
>
> Local PTA unit code
>
> Local Program Chair
>
> Local Reflections Program Chair email address
>
> Council PTA
>
> Region PTA
>
> New York State PTA
>
> Membership Dues Paid Date
>
> Insurance Paid Date
>
> Bylaws approval Date

Please also add the following disclaimer to 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.

In addition to pre-populating the Unit/Local PTA information, please make the following information from the Manual Entry form Required:

Student Name, Grade, Age, Classroom, Parent/Guardian Name, Email, Phone #, Mailing address.

Here is a link 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, the options are affordable and found here.

If Google Drive isn't a good fit, try another online storage platform that you and your community are proficient in, such as:

- Dropbox

- OneDrive

- Box

- Amazon Cloud Drive

Share your name, email address and phone number with your Reflections participants to assist with the technology needs that may arise. Be flexible in allowing entries to come via email or flash drives for anyone having trouble with the technology.

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

- Set up a mailbox or central location for drop off (e.g., the school, 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 students to save and submit artwork onto jump drives in order 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.

5. 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 front office and they can put you in touch with him/her. If you are the chair at a school, you set your own deadline. If you still need help, send an email to arts@nyspta.org

6. When are entries due to the next level?

State PTA allows each level to set their own due dates. To find out when your entries are due to the next level, contact either your council president or region director if you live in a region without councils. Don't know who they are? Ask your PTA president. If you still need help, send an email to arts@nyspta.org

7. How do we review Student Entries?

Once collected, the online review process will also 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.

> o How to use Google Sheets

8. Why do the manual entries ALL have to have a manila envelope?

The manila envelope is used to hold optional comment cards from judges, awards, and certificates. This is especially useful for entries that advance beyond the local level when the student does not come to the award ceremony. The manila envelope ensures that nothing is lost as the entry makes its way back to the student. If your school is using online Reflections, you will not need a manila envelope. If the artwork is small enough to place inside of the manila envelope, please do so. If it is larger than the manila envelope, tape the envelope to the back of the artwork.

If you are entering online, you no longer need to turn in a paper entry form or use a manila envelope. If your school is not using online Reflections, you will need a manila envelope.

NYS PTA will be accepting online and manual submissions

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

No. All Reflections entries must be the original work on one student only. However, other people may appear in the artwork of a student such as performing in a dance or acting in a film.

10. A student appears in his/her photography or film entry? What do I do?

Students are required to be the photographers for the photography category and the cameraman for the film category. Before disqualifying an entry, ask the student to tell you about how he/she took the photo or filmed the film. Sometimes technology or clever techniques were used that allowed the student to photograph or film him/herself.

 11. Can someone help a student write the notation for a song?

Once a student is in 6th grade or higher, he/she can only enter the music category if he/she has the technical ability to notate the music. Programs exist where songs may be played on a digital keyboard and are then automatically transcribed into sheet music, but they are flawed to the extent that they must be reviewed and corrected by someone with the technical ability to have written it out by hand in the first place. The student must do the notating by his/herself.

12. How do I tell if an entry is 2D or 3D?

At the National level, 2D and 3D art are combined as Visual Arts. In NYS we loosely interpret 2D art as a picture that you would hang on the wall. There is some flexibility here. You may choose at your school to apply a stricter definition, but, if you do, tell the students BEFORE they create their artwork. If it is possible to leave artwork in the category it was submitted under, that is the best course of action.

13. Does 3D art require digital images?

Yes. All advancing 3D art will be judged by digital images ONLY.

14. Can students use Legos in their 3D art or Film entries?

Yes. As long as the legos are used as a building material for 3D art, it is fine to use them. The entry needs to be an original creation rather than a kit. For film, 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.

15. **When is the consent form required?**

Consent is required if the recognizable voice or image of a person, other than the entrant, is in the artwork. This applies to voice recordings, film, dance, photography, and visual art. Parents or guardians give consent for minors. Adults give consent for themselves.

16. How do students turn in their films, dance, and music submissions?

Online entries will be submitted by uploading files to the online entry form.

If your school is not using online Reflections, you will need to use a USB drive. CDs are not allowed.

 See the rules for each category for format details.

17. **Where are the entry forms on the website?**

Everything you need can be found in the links below. The entry forms are under General and Arts Categories Rules Pages and Forms.

18. Judging Process?

Host a virtual judging event via Go to Webinar or Zoom, where your reviewers can learn more about the program and are trained to judge remotely. You could even try live judging with breakout rooms to provide judges with a private "space" to review the pieces in their respective categories.

Consider creating a new form for the judges that has the student's Title of Work and Artist Statement but removes the student's personal information to ensure blind virtual judging. By using a fillable Student Entry Form, you can easily cut and paste this information. Give student entries a number or code to easily keep track of blinded forms.

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 guidelines to ensure the health and safety of your community. Display works at a distance to ensure no-touch judging. Provide a large window of time when artwork can be reviewed.

19. Why does it take so long to get winning artwork back from state or nationals?

Because PTA is run mostly by volunteers, artwork is usually returned in a way that saves money and the time of the volunteers. Artwork that makes it all the way to the national level of competition could be kept for as long as 2 years. A select number of state winners are also kept and displayed for the school year following the competition.

20. How is artwork returned?

At the state level, artwork is returned at the November Convention to a Region Director. He/she passes it on to the region Reflections chair who gives it to the council presidents at their monthly meetings. The council presidents then give the artwork to the local PTA presidents at their monthly meetings. The local presidents return the artwork at the school. In regions without councils, the artwork is given directly from region to local. Students with artwork that competed at the state level, but did not win, can expect to receive it back by the end of the calendar year in which state judging took place. Artwork that competed at the region level, but did not advance to state, should be returned by the end of the school year in which the competition took place.

21. How does artwork advance in NYS?

NYS PTA is divided into 12 regions. Top two entries from Unit PTA's in each Division, in each Category can be advanced to the Region level. Region level winners will be advanced to NY State level based on the chart below.

In NY State PTA, Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester-East Putnam, which are large regions, can submit 6 for each of the categories in each age division. The other NYS regions submit 3 for each category in each age division.

Maximum Number of Reflections Entries Per Region

Membership	Region	Number of Entries
1 – 30,000	Central Leatherstocking Mohawk Valley Niagara South Central Southeastern Southwestern Taconic Central Hudson Genesee Valley Northeastern Western	3 entries from each *division** for each *arts category*** **Maximum Total = 90 entries**
30,001 - 60,000 +	Westchester-East Putnam Suffolk Nassau	6 entries from each *division** for each *arts category*** **Maximum Total = 180 entries**

22. How do I know what region I'm in?

We have12 regions within NYS PTA. They are:

04 - Central Hudson

05 - Suffolk

06 - Leatherstocking

07 - Genesee Valley

10 - Nassau

12 - Northeastern

14 - South Central

15 - Southeastern

17 - Taconic

18 - Westchester-East Putnam

19 - Western

21. What are the different awards given in Reflections?

There are 2 Reflections awards given by 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 categories and age division. These entries move on to the next level of judging. Award of Merit recipients are the runners up and are recognized at the school, council and region level. If a school (council and region) desires, they can also offer additional awards such as Honorable Mention or Participation awards. National and NYS PTA encourage schools to hold an assembly or event of some sort that recognizes not only the students who receive awards, but all students that participate. If this is done and how it is handled is up to the school/council/region.

22. When is the NYS PTA Submission Deadline?

Deadline: January 14, 2021 4:00pm - NYS PTA Office

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

Are you an adult? If not, show this to your parent or guardian. This is the perfect opportunity for you to make a huge difference in the lives of children in your community. If your school isn't participating, offer to help out. If this sounds overwhelming, we can walk you through the process. Send an email to arts@nyspta.org.

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24. My school doesn't belong to the PTA? Can we still have Reflections?

Reflections is a PTA program. If your school is not a PTA school, but would like to start a PTA, go to https://www.NYSpta.org/form/start-begin-here and we'll help you join! Belonging to PTA is inexpensive and comes with enormous benefits, including a powerful voice of advocacy for children at our state legislature.

23. Where can I find more information?

 [Click Here For More information and to Get Started!](#)

[Click here](#) to see National PTA's 2021 Reflections Call for Entries video.

Additional Information

Try these tips, from PTAs across the State, on how to host a Reflections program online.

Program Promotion

Without a physical school building, you'll have to get creative to 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 and PTA 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 due to COVID-19, so don't miss out on communicating with them. Work with your state 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.

Celebrating

A remote program opens new opportunities to celebrate your amazing artists, and celebration events (even virtual ones!) give communities something fun to look forward to during these difficult times.

Plan, promote and communicate with your school community about your celebration events early and often to get everyone excited.

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. Check out how Georgia PTA celebrates winners online here.

Order or create certificates and awards as a keepsake. Consider sending medallions instead of trophies to curb the celebration budget. Use Shop PTA to buy and ship awards directly to winning students and participants.

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 our celebration video here.

QUESTIONS?

Contact
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