

The National PTA Reflections Program is an arts recognition and achievement program for students. The Reflections Program provides opportunities for students to express themselves creatively and to receive positive recognition for original works of art inspired by a pre-selected theme while increasing community awareness of the importance of the arts in education.

The Reflections Program was established in 1969 by National PTA board member Mary Lou Anderson. Since that time, more than 10 million students have participated in the program. The program's longevity and participation figures attest to its strength. The excitement and enthusiasm that the program generates for children, parents, guardians, caregivers, schools and communities is unmatched.

Participation in, and appreciation for the arts is the Reflections Program's goal. Although the Reflections Program follows a "contest" format, winning should not be the emphasis. Participation in the Reflections Program is a great way for students to explore and learn about various art forms. Creating art is a valuable learning process that challenges students to use their critical thinking skills as well as their creative talents to create art that supports a specific theme.

Students may submit an entry in any of the six arts areas listed below. Only original works of art are accepted. Depending on state and local PTA guidelines, students may enter more than one work of art. The six arts areas are as follows.

- **Literature**
- **Music Composition**
- **Photography**
- **Visual Arts**
- **Dance Choreography**
- **Film Production**

Participation in the Reflections Program is organized by school grade. Student works are critiqued against others in the same grade division. This allows recognition and judging of artwork taking into appropriate developmental age and skill levels. The five grade divisions are as follows:

- **Primary** – Preschool – Grade 2 or up to age 7
- **Intermediate** – Grades 3-5 or ages 8-10
- **Middle School** – Grades 6-8 or ages 11-13
- **High School** – Grades 9-12 or ages 14+
- **Special Artist** – Ungraded

The Reflections Program is structured for PTAs to recognize students at the local unit, council, district,

state and national levels. Entries are first judged at the local unit level, where selected works are chosen to represent the PTA at each subsequent level, depending on each state PTA structure. Once entries reach the state level, the state PTA may select entries to submit to the National PTA. Awards of Excellence and Awards of Merit are recognized at the annual National PTA convention and are displayed as part of the program's traveling exhibit.

Participation in the California Reflections Program is open to all students in attendance **at PTA schools** where the program is sponsored. Entries are forwarded through channels. Each unit, council and district PTA sets its own due dates, allowing adequate time for displaying and judging of entries. Units should acquire due dates from their council and district PTA. Only district PTAs may submit entries to California State PTA.

Please remember that:

- Students may submit entries only through a PTA or PTSA in good standing.
- All entries submitted must be original works and must relate to the annual Reflections Program theme.
- Each entry must be the work of only one student. Assistance from teachers, parents, guardians, caregivers, or friends is not permitted, except in special cases (such as for those with visual or physical disabilities).
- Participation encourages creativity and exploration. Students should do their best, but crooked lines, incorrect musical notes, or misspelled words do not disqualify anyone.

Future Reflections Program Theme

The National PTA is looking for a theme for its next Reflections Program. A student's suggestion(s) for the theme ideas may be sent to the state office by the individual student or by a local PTA. The theme may include a wide variety of subjects that will appeal to students in preschool through grade 12. The winning student will receive \$100 and recognition at the National PTA Convention held in June. See capta.org for more information.

Responsibility

- Become familiar with the materials on the California State PTA website at capta.org, the National PTA website at pta.org and the Reflections flyer sent to presidents in the service mailing.
- Develop a Reflections Program planning calendar using council and district PTA due dates; identify key steps to meet the calendar due dates. (Note that this program runs early in the school year for local units.

Therefore athletic events may need to be taken into consideration when planning the calendar.)

- Submit a Reflections Program budget to the Budget Committee for approval.
- Explain the Reflections Program to the principal and school staff; encourage their support and participation. Inform parents, guardians, caregivers, and community members. Share information about the Reflections Program at a PTA meeting, - share examples of last year's entries and have current entry forms and rules available for distribution.
- Publicize the Reflections Program, theme and due dates in the school or PTA newsletter. The local newspaper or cable TV station also could be contacted for publicity.
- Select impartial, qualified judges. Inform judges of the criteria to be used in evaluating/judging Reflections Program entries. (Refer to the rules for each art category.) Remember to accept the judges' selections of winning entries.

Offer sample judging rubric:

Interpretation of Theme:	5 points
Artistic Merit/Creativity:	3 points
Mastery of Medium:	2 points

IMPORTANT: Do not show student information (name, address, etc.) on entries displayed for judging.

- Follow guidelines from council and district PTA regarding the number of entries that may be submitted. Adhere to council and district PTA due dates!
- Make certain each entry meets all judging criteria with regard to size, mounting, etc.
- Be sure the Official Entry Form is completely filled out, signed by both student and parent, and attached securely to each entry, according to the National PTA rules and instructions from your district/council chair.
- Complete and send Participation Form A (Reflections Program Packet, Service Mailing; capta.org) with entries, according to National PTA rules.
- Keep a copy of all Official Entry Forms and Participation Form A.
- Keep a copy of all CDs and DVDs.
- After the program, give each participant a certificate of participation.
- Return entries to students whose work was not selected for the next level of judging.
- Update the Reflections Program procedure book.
- Announce the new Reflections Program theme as soon as it is available. The theme is announced at the annual California State PTA convention.
- Publicize any awards given to local students at other levels of judging.

Recommended Activities

- Hold a Reflections Program workshop or a Family Arts Night on Saturday, after school or at lunch for students to work on their projects, and provide supplies.
- Enlist support of local businesses for supplies and awards and to display Reflections Program entries.
- Ask stores in the area to print student artwork on their bags.
- Inquire with local businesses that print calendars about possible use of student artwork.
- Plan a local traveling art show.
- Print a Reflections Program Awards booklet, listing the program participants as well as the award recipients. Acknowledge those who supported the program, including parents, staff and community members.
- Display local entries in school (e.g., hallways, display case, library), at PTA functions, in local community buildings (e.g., libraries, museums, banks, hospitals, nursing homes).
- Publish student entries in a special Reflections Program booklet or calendar, award it to Reflections Program participants and give as a gift or as a thank you to judges, teachers and volunteers.
- Tape musical compositions, and play them at PTA functions and school events. Give a copy to a local radio station to play.
- Organize a special program/reception/assembly where Reflections Program photography and visual arts entries can be displayed, musical composition entries can be performed and literature entries read aloud.
- Make all Reflections Program entrants feel special. Consider awarding students with certificates, ribbons, medallions, buttons, plaques, trophies, art supplies, film, music supplies, gift certificates, books and bookmarks. Send congratulatory letters to students.

Additional Resources

- National PTA website, pta.org
- California PTA website, capta.org
- California State PTA *Insurance* (English and Spanish), mailed annually to PTA presidents

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