



# REFLECTIONS

## HANDBOOK

### **Abstract**

The National PTA Reflections® program is PTA's cornerstone arts program. Each year, students in Pre-K through grade 12 are recognized for bringing the theme to life through dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography and visual arts.

### **Audience**

All PTA leaders

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## 1. Introduction: start the arts!

Participation in arts programs—like PTA Reflections—plays a critical role in students’ success, in school and beyond. All children deserve opportunities to explore and be involved in the arts. Consider the following from [ArtsEdSearch.org](https://www.ArtsEdSearch.org):

- Participation in the arts can level the playing field for underserved students.
- Participation in the arts develops the whole child.
- Participation in the arts connects families and schools to one another and to their communities.

## 2. About PTA Reflections

The National PTA Reflections® program is PTA’s cornerstone arts program. It was developed in 1969 by Colorado’s PTA President Mary Lou Anderson to encourage students to explore their talents and express themselves. Since then, the Reflections program has inspired millions of students to reflect on a specific theme and create original artwork. Each year, students in Pre-K through grade 12 are recognized for bringing the theme to life through dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography and visual arts.

All current year information including theme, deadline, address, and any program changes can be found in the “Key Reflections Program Information” document on the WSPTA website.

The Reflections program has multiple steps, and it begins with students submitting their artwork to local PTAs for initial judging.

- If a local PTA is a member of a council, then advancing entries move to the council level for judging. See the local council Reflections chair for information on the council Reflections deadline and where to submit advancing entries.
- Councils and local PTAs not part of a council (non-council PTA) send their advancing entries directly to the WSPTA Reflections Chair. Please refer to the “Key Reflections Program Information” document for address and deadline.
- Top entries from the Washington State PTA (WSPTA) Reflections contest advance to National PTA for the final round of judging. National PTA awards are announced each May.

The arts—and the National PTA Reflections program, in particular—can be a valuable tool for building stronger partnerships in school communities. National PTA developed the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships to serve as a framework for thinking about, structuring, and assessing family engagement throughout a Reflections program. Visit [PTA.org/FamilyEngagement](https://www.PTA.org/FamilyEngagement) to learn more.

## Additional Opportunities

### Reflections Theme Search Contest

National PTA Reflections sponsors a student-focused Theme Search Contest annually to determine a theme for the next year. The winner will be selected in January of each year and will receive \$100 from National PTA and recognition at the National PTA Convention. The theme search student entry form and a list of past themes is located with Reflections information on the WSPTA website.

### Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grants

The National PTA Mary Lou Anderson Grant program provides matching-dollar funding to local PTAs to support in-school and after-school arts enhancement programs in local communities. PTAs serving at-risk student populations are particularly encouraged to apply. Applications will be available at

## 3. Organize and plan your program

Below are some basic steps for a successful Reflections program.

### 3.1 Reflections Program At-A-Glance

The “Reflections Program At-A-Glance” is available on the WSPTA website. This simple one-page document is a quick step-by-step guide to running a successful Reflections program.

#### Where to go for help

Local: A council Reflections chair (if applicable) or the region programs chair (contact your PTA president)  
State: WSPTA Reflections Chair – [reflections@wastatepta.org](mailto:reflections@wastatepta.org)  
WSPTA Programs Chair – [ptaprogridir@wastatepta.org](mailto:ptaprogridir@wastatepta.org)

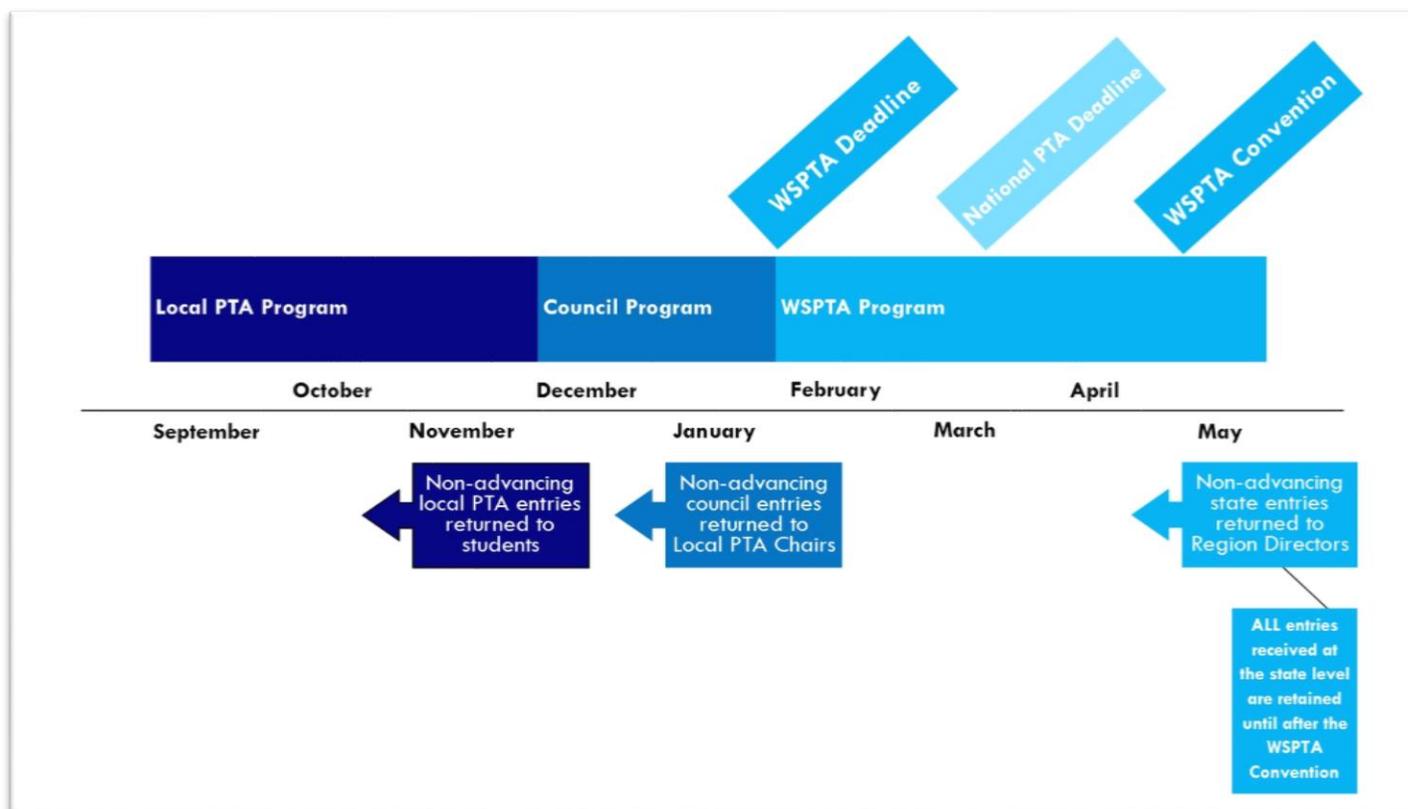
### 3.2 Establish a timeline

This year’s Washington State PTA deadline can be found in the “Key Reflections Program Information” document on the WSPTA website.

The first step of this process is to determine a deadline for students to submit their work. Expect to need at least two weeks to facilitate the judging process and another two weeks to prepare entries and complete the registration process so they may advance to the next round. Therefore, set local PTA deadlines approximately one month before submissions are due to the next round.

**Based on the WSPTA timeline:**

<b>Local PTA Reflections Chairs</b> (part of a council)	<b>Local PTA Reflections Chairs</b> (not in a council)	<b>Council Reflections Chairs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out the council turn-in deadline and location.</li> <li>• Set a local PTA turn-in deadline.</li> <li>• Based on that date, chairs need to schedule:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Program launch</li> <li>○ Judging date(s)</li> <li>○ Meeting(s) to review entry eligibility and submission checklist</li> <li>○ Recognition date(s)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program launch</li> <li>• Judging date(s)</li> <li>• Meeting(s) to review entry eligibility and submission checklist</li> <li>• Recognition date(s)</li> <li>• Submit all advancing entries directly to the WSPTA Reflections Chair. Please refer to the “Key Reflections Program Information” document for address and deadline.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council deadline</li> <li>• Program launch and/or local PTA training opportunity</li> <li>• Judging date(s)</li> <li>• Meeting(s) to review entry eligibility and submission checklist</li> <li>• Recognition date(s)</li> <li>• Submit all advancing entries directly to the WSPTA Reflections Chair. Please refer to the “Key Reflections Program Information” document for address and deadline.</li> </ul>



*WSPTA Reflections Timeline – Where does your art go and when do you get it back?*

### 3.3 Organize a team

Reflections chairs are responsible for overseeing the administration of the PTA Reflections program in their communities.

We strongly recommend recruiting a committee of volunteers to help. Volunteers will enrich the program by bringing a variety of ideas, talents, and skills and they will make the job much easier and more enjoyable by ensuring that program tasks don't fall on the shoulders of just one or two people.

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

PTA Reflections chairs are responsible for the following tasks:

- Recruit Reflections committee members.
- Oversee the committee's planning and implementation of the Reflections program.
- Establish a program timeline, including a turn-in deadline.

Additional tasks:

- Recruit other committee members, Reflections judges and volunteers as needed.
- Distribute and answer questions about the rules, deadlines and student entry forms.
- Promote the Reflections theme search and program to local students, teachers, parents and the community as a whole.
- Collect student entries and verify they meet all eligibility requirements.
- Coordinate the local judging process.
- Host recognition activities for participants and winners.
- Register the local PTA and prepare advancing artwork for submission to the next round of judging.
- Return entries to students.
- Evaluate the process at the end of the year and make recommendations for improvements.

#### 3.3.1 Recruiting volunteers

- Announce planning meetings widely using all communication methods (website, social media, newsletter, email, in person, flier, etc.), rather than relying on the same small circle of volunteers. It may be surprising who steps up!

- Invite a representative of the student council or student government to participate on the planning team—or ask the student council to promote the program and host events, with PTA support.
- Consider recruiting school staff for the committee who have a natural interest in arts education. These might include choir or band directors or teachers of other art, music, media, technology, journalism or creative writing classes. School administrative staff might be willing to help, too—for example, by collecting and organizing student entries.
- People who don't want to attend planning committee meetings might still be willing to help with a specific role. These might include promoting the program through social or traditional media, creating a flier or banners or making phone calls to solicit community support.

### **3.3.2 Recruiting judges**

Inviting professionals in the arts and community leaders who serve as trustees, donors and patrons of arts or organizations to participate as Reflections judges increases the credibility of the program and exposure for PTA. All judges should have a working knowledge of their assigned arts area. Sources of judges might include:

- School and community teachers of music, art, dance, theatre, language arts, writing, graphic design and media arts.
- Working professionals in organizations or companies such as museums directors, curators, symphony and choral directors, musicians, librarians, editors of newspapers, photographers and local television personalities.
- Avoid judges who may have even the appearance of a conflict of interest (i.e. parents or teachers of participants, family friends, etc.).

## **4. Promote Reflections**

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

### **4.1 Program messages**

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

- PTA Reflections welcomes students of all grades and all abilities to explore their inner artist.
- Students may explore one or all six arts disciplines, including: Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography and Visual Arts.

- Students reflect on the annual theme in school or at home and are recognized for their participation and achievement in the arts.
- Every student is recognized for his or her accomplishments with the opportunity for state and national awards and recognition.
- The love of art and celebration of students can bring people together – families, teachers, and friends in the community.
- New academic standards require more critical thinking and problem solving, which translates into more creativity and deeper reflection. That’s why Reflections isn’t just for arts classes.
- Families can support their children’s participation by creating time and space for students to work on their entries, providing encouragement and needed materials and volunteering to support the Reflections program.
- Entries should represent students’ unique creativity. Adults are welcome to encourage students but are asked not to assist in any way with their interpretation of the theme or artistic expression.

## 4.2 Student recruitment messages

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

### Sample Student Recruitment Message

*Let your imagination fly and unleash your inner artist! Choreograph a dance, produce a film, write a poem or story, compose a song, take a picture or create a piece of visual art and tell us what the theme: "<INSERT THEME>" means to you. Pick up a PTA Reflections Entry Form today from <INSERT NAME> and return by <INSERT DUE DATE>.*

## 4.3 Ideas for promoting Reflections

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

- Host a school-wide assembly to introduce the program. Feature examples of artwork from last year’s winners at the local, state and national levels.
- Include messages in students’ morning announcements.
- Hang posters and fliers in visible locations, and send copies of fliers home to parents. Sample fliers are available at [PTA.org/ReflectionsToolkit](https://www.pta.org/ReflectionsToolkit) or on the WSPTA website.
- Post the deadline and reminders on signs near student drop-off and pick-up locations.

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

## 5. WSPTA program rules

Each state has a unique set of rules for its PTA Reflections program. ***When launching your program, please make sure to ONLY use the rules and forms for Washington State.*** For general participation rules and detailed category rules, please visit the WSPTA website.

### 5.1 Student eligibility and entry guidelines

Students must participate in the National PTA Reflections program through a local PTA/PTSA in good standing, as determined by the state PTA. It is the responsibility of the local PTA Reflections committee to confirm that their PTA is in good standing and to determine each student's eligibility. If it is not clear whether the PTA is in good standing, chairs should speak with their local PTA president.

The following additional guidelines apply to student entries:

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

### 5.2 Students with disabilities

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

**Option 1:** The special artist division is an optional division of the Reflections program, accepting students in all grades, for students whose physical, cognitive or mental health challenges meet guidelines set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act. Qualifying students create their own artwork but may receive non-

artistic accommodation and assistance from an adult. National PTA will honor one special artist from across all arts categories to receive an Outstanding Interpretation award. Up to five additional special artists will receive a National PTA Award of Excellence. Special artists receiving awards from Washington State PTA will be recognized at the annual WSPTA convention.

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

See the flier promoting the special artist division available on the WSPTA website.

### 5.3 Originality

Specific rules for each arts category can be found on the WSPTA website.

In general:

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

#### **Use of copyrighted materials**

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

Film productions, photography and visual art may include public places, well-known products, trademarks or other copyrighted material, as long as that

copyrighted material is incidental to the subject matter of the piece and is a smaller element of the whole. Visual arts collages may include portions of existing copyrighted works, such as portions of photos, magazine clippings, Internet images and type cut out of a newspaper, as long as those pieces of copyrighted works are used to create a completely new and different work of art. A collage should be judged for its whole—not its parts—and its creativity as an original work of art. Misuse of the above materials constitutes plagiarism—taking and using another’s words, ideas or inventions as one’s own.

## **5.4 Addressing student ineligibility**

Occasionally, entries submitted to the Reflections program are ineligible. One reason for ineligibility is that the local PTA is not in good standing. It is very important that you check with your PTA president to ensure your PTA is in good standing with the state.

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

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

## **6. Collect entries and record participation data**

It is time to collect the entries! Make sure students and staff are aware of the designated turn-in location. Entries may be turned in before the deadline, so have a Reflections committee member assigned to check regularly.

### **6.1 Sorting the entries**

Schedule a committee “sorting party” to review all entries. The following supplies may be needed:

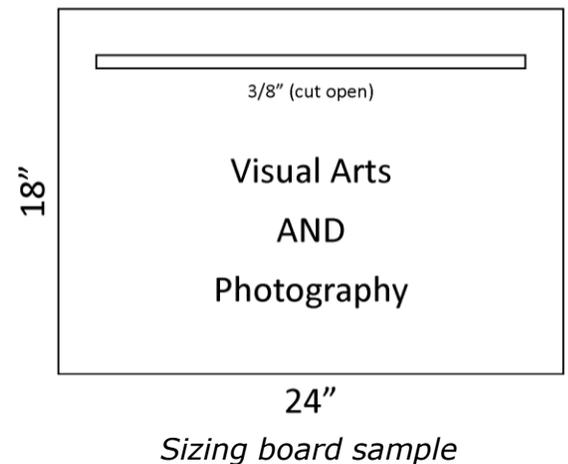
- Category rules
- Sizing board (example available on the WSPTA website)
- Painter’s tape/masking tape
- Pens

- Stickers or Post-It notes (for numbering entries)
- Computer

Verify all entries meet the category rules (size, thickness, word count, length, file type, etc.) and compare to the “Reflections Submission Checklist” available on the WSPTA website. All entries must have an original, signed and completed student entry form.

The Reflections committee should decide ahead of time if all entries received must meet the mounting and wrapping requirements before they are judged, or if the committee will properly mount and wrap advancing entries before moving them to the next level.

Entries will need to be sorted by category and division for judging. Judges will need access to the title and artist statement, either on judging forms created by the committee or from the student entry form (with personal information concealed).



## 6.2 Record participation data

Participation data from local PTAs must be gathered to complete the online process, including:

- Total enrollment at the school.
- By grade division, the number of students participating in each category. Record this data on the Local PTA Participation Form, available on the WSPTA website.

## 7. Judge and identify advancing entries

The process of judging and identifying advancing entries has three goals:

1. To determine which student entries will advance to the next round of judging.
2. To ensure quality entries advance to the next round of judging.
3. To award other prizes and recognition as determined by the local or council Reflections committee.

Every entry received should be judged; only the best entries should advance to the next round.

### 7.1 Judging process

To facilitate the judging process, judges should receive the title and artist statement for each entry and the rules specific to their arts category. It is

important to conduct blind judging - where judges do not see the artists' names - to ensure unbiased results.

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

Theme interpretation is weighted more heavily at the Washington State PTA and National PTA levels. It is recommended that all local PTAs and councils use the same judging rubric. The following is a simple judging rubric your PTA may find helpful in evaluating entries and assigning awards. Notice that interpretation of the theme is weighted more heavily than the other considerations.

<b>Sample Judging Rubric</b>		
Interpretation of theme	How closely the entry relates to the theme, based on the artwork itself and the artist statement	20 pts
Artistic merit/creativity	How creative and original the entry is in its conception of the theme and its presentation	10 pts
Mastery of medium	The level of skill demonstrated in the basic principles/techniques of the arts area	10 pts

With this rubric, each entry may receive a total of no more than 40 points from each judge. Have judges record their points for each entry on a score card. Add the points from each judge and rank the entries accordingly. If two entries are tied, the entry with the higher score for interpretation of theme receives more recognition. Having multiple judges score each entry reduces the opportunity for ties and improves the diversity of entries moving forward.

A sample scorecard for judges can be found on the WSPTA website.

## 7.2 Judging tips

- Find a variety of judges with knowledge/expertise of the various categories.
- Tell them the process of what happens after the current level (i.e. entries will advance to council or move to state level, etc.).
- Discuss judging forms, rubric (particularly interpretation of theme), and expectations with judges.
- If judges have access to the student entry forms, make sure all personal information is concealed.

- Make sure judges have no conflict of interest (i.e. a parent or teacher of the participant, family friend, etc.).
- Have multiple judges score each entry.
- Have judges score an entire division to keep scoring fair (apples to apples). They do not have to do the entire category, but an entire division within the category is important.
- Provide plenty of time for judges to work; they will work at different speeds.
- Have copies of the rules available.
- Have plenty of space for them to work.
- Consider having them judge younger divisions first so their expectations are grade-level appropriate.
- All entries can be judged, but make sure entries that do not comply with all rules and eligibility are not moved forward.

### 7.3 Rank entries

Prior to judging entries, the Reflections committee should agree upon a method to determine advancing entries (total score, average score, weighted rank, etc.). When reviewing judging results and determining advancing entries, it is important to make sure to rank the entries by category (visual arts, photography, etc.) and division (primary, intermediate, etc.). The best primary visual arts entry is often going to score lower than a high school entry, and should be ranked only with other primary visual arts entries. Take care to move forward the BEST entries from each group.

Sample Judging Results for Primary Visual Arts											
Piece #	Title	Judge 1				Judge 2				Total Score	Total Theme
		Theme	Merit	Medium	Total	Theme	Merit	Medium	Total		
13	Entry C	19	9	9	37	20	9	10	39	76	39
9	Entry A	15	6	7	28	18	8	7	33	61	33
6	Entry D	17	8	7	32	15	8	6	29	61	32
11	Entry B	11	7	4	22	14	6	4	24	46	25

In the example above, the entries are ranked by total score. Entries A and D have a Total Score tie, which was broken by the interpretation of the theme total. Based on the number of entries that may be advanced from this category and division, entries would advance in this order: Entry C, Entry A, Entry D, Entry B.

### 7.4 Identify advancing entries

To ensure that all categories are well represented at the state competition, WSPTA has established a limit to the number of entries that can be submitted at the state level from each category. Consider these guidelines when moving entries on from the local PTA and council level:

<b>Category Guidelines</b>	
<b>Local (council) PTA, Local (non-council) PTA, and Council PTA</b>	
Visual Arts	No more than 30%
Photography	No more than 20%
Literature	No more than 20%
Dance, Film, and Music	No more than 30%

### **Local PTA (part of a council)**

Each council PTA sets its own limit for the number of pieces the local PTAs may advance to the council level. Please check with your council Reflections chair to determine the number of pieces to advance.

### **Local PTA (not part of a council)**

Non-council local PTAs may submit eight entries or 10% of the total entries received (whichever is greater) directly to WSPTA competition. Six additional special artist entries may also advance.

### **Council PTA**

The number of entries councils may forward to WSPTA depends on the number of local PTAs participating in the Reflections program. Use the table below to determine the number of entries a council may advance.

# PTAs Participating in Reflections	# entries accepted at WSPTA
1-3	15 + 6 Special Artist
4-9	22 + 6 Special Artist
10-14	30 + 6 Special Artist
15-19	36 + 6 Special Artist
20-24	48 + 6 Special Artist
25-29	54 + 6 Special Artist
30+	62 + 6 Special Artist
or 20% of entries (not including special artist), whichever is greater	
All council PTAs may submit six additional special artist entries to WSPTA	

WSPTA encourages PTAs to submit six special artist entries from their local (non-council) PTA or council PTA. Special artist entries are not included in the category limits; the special artist division includes all categories.

## **8. Advance entries**

### **8.1 Reflections submission checklist**

The Reflections submission checklist is a simple, two-page document used to review all entries prior to advancing them to the next level. Comparing each

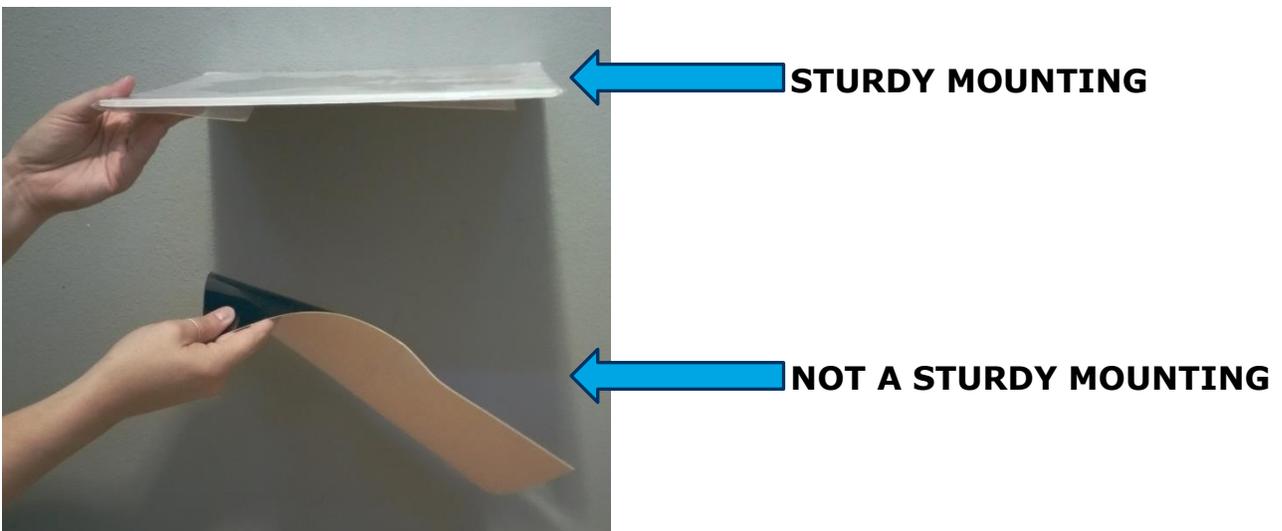
advancing entry to this document ensures that they meet all category-specific rules and guidelines. The Reflections submission checklist is available on the WSPTA website.

## 8.2 Helpful hints and common disqualifications

At the WSPTA level, we prefer to avoid disqualifying entries. In order to give every student the best chance of success, we have compiled a list of helpful hints and common disqualifications from local PTA and council levels. While we do our best to protect all entries, once they leave the local PTA or council level they are handled numerous times. They are stacked and sorted, moved, displayed, possibly exposed to inclement weather, and loaded and unloaded.

Helpful hints:

- The student entry form **MUST** be complete. This includes all PTA information, all student information, title, artist statement, parent **AND** student signature.
- Encourage students *not* to write their name on the front of visual arts, photography, and literature entries.
- Compare all entries to the Reflections submission checklist.
- Mount all visual arts and photography on rigid backing. If the entry bends when it is held by the corner, it is not rigid (see picture below).
  - Rigid mounting examples:
    - Foam core
    - Pressboard
    - Canvas board
    - Cardboard (solid piece, no seams or folds)



- After mounting on rigid backing, make sure to wrap entries securely with cellophane wrap or art sleeves. This protects each entry (and the entries around it) from damage.

- Large entries created directly on mat board are often not rigid enough for display. Test each piece!
- Place the sheet protector/plastic sleeve with the original signed and completed student entry form on the OUTSIDE of the wrapping. The form needs to be accessible!
- Mark the orientation on the back of visual art and photography entries to make sure that they are displayed and judged properly.
- Use re-closable manila envelopes for literature, music composition, dance choreography, and film production. The student entry form should be in a sheet protector/plastic sleeve on the outside of the re-closable manila envelope. Do not put the literature, CD, or DVDs in anything with an open top.
- Use USB drives whenever possible. This ensures that the files are there and easy to access.
- Remove stickers, labels, Velcro, signage, etc. used during local PTA or council events.

Common disqualifications:

- Postmarked after the deadline. These entries will not be accepted.
- Missing or incomplete student entry form. This includes title, artist statement, and parent signature.
- Artist statement over 100 words, or missing artist statement. When entering an artist statement into the online system, do NOT type: "See attached."
- Visual arts and photography mounted improperly – this is the most frequent disqualification by far.
- Visual arts and photography over the size limit
- Framed artwork
- Lettering on photography – should be visual arts
- Literature exceeding the word count
- Literature that is mounted or bound
- Music composition, dance choreography, and film production:
  - Incorrect file type
  - File size over 1GB
  - Entry is over time limit
  - Entry cannot be played
  - Entry saved as DVD or CD instead of file

- Improper mounting examples:
- No mounting
  - Paper
  - Construction paper
  - Cardstock
  - Poster board
  - Scrapbooking paper
  - Wood-framed canvas
  - Glass

If you have any questions about eligibility, please contact the WSPTA Reflections chair at [reflections@wastatepta.org](mailto:reflections@wastatepta.org) before advancing entries.

## 8.3 Online process

National PTA offers an online tracking system to support registration of PTAs and advancement of student entries along the path to the National PTA round.

- Make sure to register your PTA to participate as soon as you launch your program!
- In our state, all local PTAs and councils are required to register and advance student entries through the online process.
- Any waivers of the online requirement must have prior approval of the WSPTA Reflections chair.
- Original signed and completed student entry forms and the local PTA or council participation form must accompany entries submitted for advancement.
- It is not necessary to include a printed copy of the online student entry form with advancing entries.

For the most current online process instructions, see the “Online Process – Step by Step” guide, available on the WSPTA website.

## 9. Celebrate and recognize participants

Be creative with student recognition! Follow PTA and school traditions or add new ways to celebrate student participation in the arts. Recognition helps all students recognize themselves as artists, encourages family engagement and provides opportunities to connect with the community.

### 9.1 Local recognition

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

- Awarding certificates, ribbons, or prizes to participants and/or winners.
- Displaying all entries in your school (library, display cases, office, etc.).
- Finding a way to show music composition, dance choreography, and film production entries.
- Presentations at PTA and school board meetings.
- School awards nights, assemblies, banquets, luncheons, art walks, or other events.
- Announcements over the PA system, in the school newsletter, e-blasts, or on the website.
- Sharing photos, links, quotes or anecdotes about the Reflections program or related events through social media channels such as Twitter or Facebook
- Invite the media to the celebration! Customize the media advisory template available on the WSPTA website with local details and local PTA logo. Email it to the hometown media and follow up with a phone call to encourage their presence or post-event coverage.

## 9.2 WSPTA recognition

WSPTA award recipients are typically announced by mail in March and are notified by the WSPTA Reflections committee. Councils and local PTAs will be subsequently notified via email, and the WSPTA website. Award recipients are recognized at the annual WSPTA convention.

Washington State PTA award categories include the following:

**Outstanding  
Interpretation**

**Awards of Excellence**

**Awards of Merit**

## 9.3 National PTA recognition

WSPTA Outstanding Interpretation award entries are advanced to the National PTA level of competition. Awards of Excellence and Awards of Merit are returned to the region directors after convention.

National PTA award categories include the following:

- Outstanding Interpretation: Seven Outstanding Interpretation awards are given—one to the submission in each arts category, including the special artist division, that best interprets the theme.
- Awards of Excellence: These are given to the top three scores for each arts category in each division.
- Awards of Merit: These are given to the next five highest scores for each arts category in each division.

National PTA award recipients are typically announced via news release and on PTA.org at the end of May. State PTA presidents and state PTA chairs are notified via email. Each state PTA contacts the students who receive national recognition (except for the Outstanding Interpretation award recipients—see below).

The National PTA notifies Outstanding Interpretation Award recipients directly and coordinates their travel to the National PTA convention, where they are recognized. National PTA mails certificates to students who received Awards of Excellence and Awards of Merit following the National PTA convention, at the end of July. For more details on national awards and recognition, see “National Awards and Recognition” available on the WSPTA website.

## 10. Wrap up

The program is almost done!

### 10.1 Recognize volunteers

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

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

- Volunteers
- School personnel
- Judges
- Community partners that provided donations, such as prizes, supplies, or exhibit space

Use the acknowledgment letter available on the WSPTA website as a guide to thank volunteers and community partners for any donated goods/services.

## 10.2 Return student entries

National PTA recommends that non-advancing photography and visual arts entries be returned to student artists as soon as possible after judging and/or recognition. Literature, music composition, dance choreography, and film production entries typically are *not* returned. National PTA recommends that entries be returned by the end of the school year. Please be sensitive to secondary students needing their artwork for college admission. If student artwork advances, it will be returned according to state and/or national policy.

**Note:** *If a local PTA is holding on to entries for a later event (Art Walk, Student Assembly, etc.), please notify the student and/or parents so that they don't think an entry is lost.*

### WSPTA policy

Washington State PTA may display, copy, sell, sublicense, publish, and create and sell derivative works from entries submitted to the Reflections program.

Only visual art and photography entries are returned. All entries received at the state level are retained until after the WSPTA convention. Entries are distributed to their respective WSPTA region directors during convention to be returned to the local PTAs and/or councils following the event. WSPTA retains entries that have been advanced to National PTA level until winners are announced. Remaining entries that do not place at National PTA are given to the WSPTA region directors to return to local PTAs and/or councils.

### National PTA Policy

National PTA's award-winning entries are featured online at [www.PTA.org/ReflectionsGallery](http://www.PTA.org/ReflectionsGallery). Visual artworks and photographs are displayed throughout the National PTA headquarters, exhibited at National PTA special events and returned within three years following their submission to National PTA.

## 10.3 Evaluation

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

- Survey Reflections students, parents, and volunteers. Share quotes in a newsletter, blog or at PTA and school meetings. With permission, use these quotes to further recognize student achievement on the school or PTA website or share them when seeking funding for PTA. Visit the WSPTA website for a sample survey evaluation.
- Meet with the Reflections committee and other team members to reflect on the program, gather feedback and document successes and areas needing improvement. Sharing this information with next year's team will provide a smooth transition from one Reflections chair to another.

## 11. Online resources

There are numerous resources available to Reflections chairs on the WSPTA website, including logos, promotional resources, and documents and forms in Spanish. Reflections chairs are encouraged to become familiar with and utilize these resources. Some examples of available resources are listed below.

### Forms

- Student Entry Form
- Theme Search Entry Form
- Local PTA Participation Form
- Council Participation Form

### Rules

- Key Reflections Program Information
- Dance Choreography Rules
- Film Production Rules
- General Rules for Participation
- Literature Rules
- Music Composition Rules
- Photography Rules
- Special Artist Rules
- Summary of Rules for Participation
- Visual Arts Rules

### Program resources

- Donation Request Letter
- Helpful Hints and Common Disqualifications
- Information for Judges
- Judging Rubric
- Judging Score Card
- National Awards
- NPTA Reflections Webinar Training and Registration
- Online Registration and Process
- Program Evaluation
- Reflections-at-a-Glance
- Reflections Celebration Guide
- Reflections Committee Volunteer Job Descriptions
- Reflections Submission Checklist
- Reflections Visual Standards
- Size Verification Board
- Template - Certificate
- Thank You Letter for Volunteers
- Timeline