



## Conducting a *Reflections Program*

**Deadline to submit entries  
to Iowa PTA: January 22**

Dear Reflections Chairperson,

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 on 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, schools and communities is unmatched. Participation and appreciation for the arts is the goal of the *Reflections Program*. 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 the theme.

Only original works of art are accepted. Depending on local PTA guidelines, students may enter more than one work of art. The arts areas are Literature, Musical Composition, Photography, Visual Arts, Dance Choreography, and Film/Video 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 artworks by appropriate developmental age and skill levels. The four grade divisions are as follows:

Primary; Preschool - Grade 2	Intermediate; Grades 3-5
Middle/Junior; Grades 6-8	Senior; Grades 9-12

The Iowa PTA website ([www.iowapta.org](http://www.iowapta.org)) contains the rules and forms you will need to run a successful program. There is a checklist, duties of the *Reflections Program* chairperson, pointers on mailing entries to the state level, ways to encourage participation, things to budget for, hints for your judges, and ways to showcase the Reflections Art. Entry forms and rules are also on the website. **Please fill in the box (clearly) on the bottom of the National PTA Official Entry Form before you start to copy it for students.** The Local PTA Participation Form and FORM B are also necessary for submitting entries to the next level (council or state).

Students are often so excited about submitting their projects and showing them off. Make sure students have a copy of and understand the rules of the program. Parents, friends, and teachers may **not** assist a student in the creation of the work. Artwork must be the original creation of **one** student. You can get additional information from the National PTA website at: <http://www.pta.org/2032.asp>

**Entries must be in the Iowa PTA office by the deadline!!**

If you have any questions please contact the Iowa PTA:

(800) 475-4782  
(515) 225-4197  
[ia\\_office@pta.org](mailto:ia_office@pta.org)

# Check List

## Phase 1

- Read all information
- **Fill in chairperson's box on the Official Entry Form** (before copying!)

## Phase 2

- Set time table - All entries must be in the Iowa PTA office by the deadline!!
- Set budget (see "Planning your Budget" in the packet)
- Recruit help
- Encourage participation (see "Encouraging Participation" section)

## Phase 3

- Allow students to create works; be prepared to answer questions
- Make copies of rules and entry form and place in office or where students can easily pick them up
- Recruit judges
- Set judging dates
- Identify a location to showcase works
- Determine recognition and awards for participants

## Phase 4

- Collect works and organize for judging
- Make sure that all entry form are taped or stapled across the top and folded under on the fold line before you take them to be judged!

## Phase 5

- Judge art
- Complete the Local Unit Participation Form **and** FORM B
- Organize and send up to 24 pieces of artwork to next level for judging

## Phase 6

- Showcase works not advancing to the next level in the library or school
- Plan awards ceremony
- Awards ceremony

## **Duties of the *Reflections Program* Chairperson**

1. Enlist support from the school and parents
2. Determine costs of program and funds available
3. Communicate the rules and deadlines, and develop a *Reflections Program* calendar that includes the following:
  - entry deadlines
  - potential judging dates and locations
  - exhibit sites
  - awards ceremony date
  - date to contact local paper
  - date to send selected entries to the next level (state)
4. Locate judges and set artwork judging dates. Arrange a lunch and/or small thank-you gift for the judges
5. Publicize and promote the program
6. Determine deadlines and how to return artwork to students
7. Establish recognition for participants such as an exhibit and awards ceremony
8. Package and mail artwork onto the next level

## **What you need to know for mailing to state**

Entries must be in the Iowa PTA office by the deadline.

Complete the Local Unit Participation Form **and** FORM B

Organize and send up to 24 pieces of artwork to next level for judging

Carefully pack your selected works, making them as immobile as possible. Newspaper is not recommended as a packing material because it flattens and gets crushed easily. Bubble wrap or foam peanuts are a good idea.

**Literature:** Make sure pages are secure before packing.

**Musical Composition:** Each score and cassette tape or CD should be placed in an envelope and labeled with the student's name and grade division.

**Photography:** Mount or mat each photography entry. Photographs can be shrink-wrapped. Otherwise, separate with a piece of paper so the photos don't stick or get smudged in transit.

**Visual Arts:** Visual artwork should be shrink-wrapped or covered in paper when packed. Laminating artwork is discouraged, as lamination is almost impossible to remove. Mount or mat the works and shrink-wrap if possible.

**Dance Choreography:** Place the videotape or DVD in an envelope labeled with the student's name and grade division.

**Film/Video Production:** Submit the videotape, DVD, or computer disk in a large envelope with the student's name and grade division.

Send or deliver your art. If you are sending them, investigate the best mailing option. You should have a courier who can track the package if it gets lost in route. Mail to Iowa PTA at:

Iowa PTA  
5619 N.W. 86<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 600  
Johnston, IA 50131-2955

## Encouraging Participation

Following is a list of activities that can help your *Reflections Program* be more successful:

- Request the National PTA Reflections Program video (10-15 minutes) from the Iowa PTA office. Although the videos are not for sale, each state has a few that can be loaned to local PTAs.
- Send a flyer home (attach rules and entry form).
- Set up an orientation/information meeting or a Family Art Night. Distribute informational handouts and show the National PTA video. Ask a representative from another area PTA who has worked with the program to speak. Hand out the rules and announce the deadline.
- Set up a “get started” workshop for participants. You may want to discuss the theme, but always leave room for individual interpretation. Provide basic art supplies and rules.
- Set up a lunch recess art table with a variety of art supplies to encourage students to participate.
- Give your teachers copies of rules, and tell them about the *Reflections Program*. Works can be created at home or in the classroom, if desired, but artwork must be an individual project (no groups).
- Put a copy of the rules in the office for anyone who is interested
- Send letters to parents explaining the program.
- Use community and school bulletin boards to promote the program.
- If possible, display entries from previous year’s program.
- Print literature entries from the previous year’s program to encourage participation.
- Show film/video productions and perform musical composition or dance choreography entries at a school function.
- Promote the *Reflections Program* at your PTA meetings.
- Talk to teachers and staff at an all-school meeting.
- Hang posters throughout the school with deadlines clearly stated.
- Have students who have participated in the past speak to classes or have them decorate sidewalks with chalk.
- Provide a press release to the local paper.
- Invite visiting artists to the classrooms to share their talents and encourage students.
- Set up a table in the high school cafeteria during lunch so that students may pick up rules and entry forms.
- Have articles in the school newspaper reminding participants about the Reflections Program, theme, and deadline dates.
- Show students the Reflections Gallery found at: <http://pta.browsermedia.com/>
- Send a reminder home before winter break to give students something to work on during vacation.
- Arrange to have the computer lab open one evening so that students can type their literature entries (note: entries are not required to be typed)

## Planning Your Budget

The following are some of the costs your program may incur:

- copies of rules and entry form for students to take home
- supplies for students to use
- prizes, ribbons or certificates
- treats for judges
- shrink-wrapping of visual art or photography works
- mailing to the next level
- treats for a reception to honor winners and/or participants
- promotional materials

# Reflections at a Glance

## All entries

Tape entry form along the top on the back and fold under on fold line. Do not put students' names on the front of art. This is not a poster contest, bigger is not always better.

**Entries must be in the PTA office by the deadline!!!**

Mail to: Iowa PTA

5619 N.W. 86<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 600  
Johnston, IA 50131-2955

## Helpful Hints

Complete the Local Unit Participation Form and FORM B.

**Fill in the bottom of the official Entry Form before you make copies for the students.**

**Please write clearly!**

Meet deadlines.

When in doubt, contact the Iowa PTA office:

Phone: (800) 475-4782 or (515) 225-4197

Email: [ia\\_office@pta.org](mailto:ia_office@pta.org)

Each unit may submit a maximum of 24 entries. Four in each of the six categories.

State winners and honorable mentions will be notified by mail. The Iowa PTA **Reflections Program Awards Ceremony** will be held in the spring. Artwork will be returned at the ceremony or mailed soon after.

**For rules and regulations, go to:** [http://pta.browsermedia.com/cs/rules\\_and\\_regulations](http://pta.browsermedia.com/cs/rules_and_regulations)

## Judging

Three judges is usually an adequate number for a panel. Look for people in your community with expertise and background in the arts. Judges are unpaid volunteers. Although teachers can be excellent judges, many times it is difficult for them to be away from school. Consider your staff at school, local university, or art museums as resources. Also consider retired teachers, librarians, private music teachers, local artists, and journalists.

Send a letter confirming the judging location, date, and time.

Confirm with a phone call close to the date.

Provide a treats, small gift, and parking or transportation reimbursement if possible.

Send thank-you letters.

The judges should **not** be teaching in the school where the program is held. Make sure the names of all the students are covered up during the judging. Inform the judges they are not to look under the folded entry at the personal information.

Determine if you will give formal awards such as places and honorable mentions, and whether or not you will allow a tie. However, you are only allowed to send 4 entries from each category on to the state level.

You will need to decide if you are going to divide the entries into the different levels and then have the judges pick 2 from each - that way Kindergarten students are not competing with 5th graders. You can look at the numbers and see if this would be fair. If you only have a few entries in the primary, maybe you would only pick one winner from there and then 3 in secondary.

If the students did not follow directions (ex. art too big, art too thick, music too long), you should take those entries out before giving them to the judges. That way judges are not wasting time deciding what to do. If non-qualifying entries are sent to the state level they will be eliminated, and you will have wasted an entry that could have been judged at state.

Separate the artwork by age divisions to make it easy for the judges

Have the rule sheet for them to review

Have paper for them to make notes

National PTA judges evaluate creativity, interpretation of theme, and artistic merit.

### **Ways to Showcase Your *Reflections Program***

- Display local entries in school hallways, in school display cases or in the school library where both students and parents can view them.
- Display entries at PTA functions or in local community buildings, libraries, museums, banks or other businesses open to the public.
- Display entries in local hospitals and nursing homes (residents are especially appreciative).
- Present the winners from your school district to your school board.
- Sponsor a ***Reflections Program*** Show-and-Tell Day where students can show off their entries.
- Include ***Reflections Program*** articles and acknowledgments in your school newsletter as well as in the local newspaper.
- Design a PTA calendar using students' artwork, music and lyrics, stories and poems.
- Publish student's literature in a special ***Reflections Program*** booklet. Distribute it to local libraries, award it to ***Reflections Program*** participants, give it as a gift or as a thank you to judges, teachers, PTA volunteers, etc.
- Tape music entries and play them at PTA functions and school events. Give a copy to a local radio station to play.
- Play dance and film/video productions at PTA functions and school events. Give a copy to a local television station to play.
- Organize a special program/reception where ***Reflections Program*** visual arts and photography entries can be displayed, music/dance/video entries can be played, and literature entries can be read aloud.
- Make all ***Reflections Program*** entrants feel special. Consider awarding students with certificates, ribbons, buttons, plaques, trophies, art supplies, film, music supplies, gift certificates, book and bookmarks – all make great awards.
- Recognize your school's participation and accomplishments in the ***Reflections Program*** by providing an assembly for the entire school ... another great way to promote the cultural arts.
- ***Reflections*** is a cultural arts program of the National PTA. The ***Reflections Program*** provides students with the opportunity to use their critical thinking and problem solving skills, as well as their creative talents, as they interpret the theme.