



September 18, 2023

Dear Reflections Committee Chairs:

Thank you so much for taking on this role in support of the arts for students in Howard County. We are excited to kick off another year! **This year's theme is "I Am Hopeful Because..."**.

The deadline to submit entries to PTA Council is December 15th. The PTA Council is accepting submissions electronically only and submission information will be forthcoming. The state deadline from PTACHC to Free State is around January 26, 2023 (The exact date is subject to change this year. It will be determined based on an announcement from the Free State PTA Reflections).

At this time, Free State PTA has not appointed a Reflections Chair. They are currently working on updating the forms, rules, and guidelines. More information will be forthcoming soon and PTACHC will send updates when we receive them. If you haven't had a chance to review all the information available on-line through National PTA, Free State PTA, or PTA Council, then this letter should help you get started. Local PTAs must meet all Free State PTA Standards of Affiliation to participate beyond your Local/Council level in the Reflections Program.

First, all participating schools must be registered. You can register your PTA on the National PTA website at <https://www.pta.org/home/programs/reflections>.

Second, understand the six (6) different art categories and guidelines: **dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography, and visual arts**. Students may enter in one or more categories. Each of the six art categories then has its own divisions: **Primary** includes preschool to 2nd grade; **intermediate** includes grades 3-5; **middle school** includes grades 6-8; **high school** includes grades 9-12.

There is also a **Special Artist Division**. This is a non-graded division limited to students whose physical, cognitive, or mental health challenges that meet the guidelines set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It is not grade specific.

PTA Council will accept three (3) entries per age division per arts category from each PTA for judging at the council level this year. A student may submit entries in more than one arts category but may only submit two entries per arts category and a total of five entries in total.

Third, recruit help. If there are other parents available to help, use them. You will definitely need to recruit judges to review student submissions. It's preferred that these judges have some experience in the arts, especially in the category they are judging. Judges are given a rubric on how to evaluate the entries; the time involved in the actual examination and review is minimal. Arts teachers at the schools or professionals known through students' extracurricular activities may be available to judge entries or know others who would be interested in participating.

Fourth, promote your program. Download and distribute student materials, including promotional flyers, the official guidelines, and entry forms found on either National, Free State PTA, or PTA Council websites.

The top portion of the entry form must be completed before it is distributed to the student. Entry forms are fillable online. Your Reflections committee can fill out the top portion of the entry form.

Fifth, coordinate the review of student submissions. Collect all qualifying student submissions.

Make sure all the entry forms are completed and submissions follow the program's guidelines and requirements. Entries to PTA Council that are missing the following will be disqualified automatically.

- **A TITLE is REQUIRED** (“Untitled” is not a title). **Avoid using the theme as a title.**
- **The ARTIST STATEMENT is MANDATORY** for all entries in all grade divisions. Each participant is required to submit an artist statement that describes what inspired him or her to create the work and how it relates to the theme. Each entry must be 10-100 words describing your work and how it relates to the theme. The Student Entry Form provides a space to type the artist statement; if the statement does not fit in the space given, it must be written on a separate page and labeled in the lower right corner according to the directions given for the rules of the specific art area.

It may be easier to first fill out the top portion and then make copies of the form for the students. The National PTA 8-digit ID number should be found on the front page of your by-laws, or your PTA president should know. If the number cannot be found, feel free to contact Sarah at Reflections@ptachc.org. The entry form can be found on the PTACHC website on the Reflections page.

Format Rules:

Dance Choreography and Film Production entries must be submitted in **MP4, MOV, or AVI format**.

Music Composition entries must be submitted in **MP3 or WAV format**.

Photography and Visual Arts entries must be submitted in **JPEG, JPG or PNG format**.

Literature and scores as required for Music Composition must be submitted in **PDF format**.

Once collected, **give each volunteer judge a welcome letter, instructions, a rubric, and score card. The students' interpretations of the theme to their artwork are weighed more heavily than other considerations.** Judges record their points for each submission on a score card. If there is a tie, the entry with the higher score for interpretation of theme receives more recognition. Judges should not see student's information during the evaluation. Judges should only see the title of the work and the artist statement.

Your school's submission deadline should be approximately 2-4 weeks prior to December 15th. This will give you time for organizing, qualifying, and scoring submissions. The PTA Council is accepting submissions electronically, as is Free State and National PTA. Make sure to follow the guidelines listed in the handbook for each category.

When entries are submitted to PTA Council, each chair must also submit the PTA Participation Summary Form. This form can be filled out online and submitted via email to Reflections@ptachc.org.

PTA Council will honor its winners as determined by the Reflections Committee and the PTA Council Board of Directors. Recognition for Outstanding Interpretation, Award of Excellence, and Award of Merit per arts category per age division will be awarded.

Local PTAs must meet all Free State PTA Standards of Affiliation to participate beyond your Local/Council level in the Reflections Program. The standards of affiliation for local units participating in the Reflections Program has been reduced to the following three requirements (subject to change when Free State appoints a Reflections Chair):

1. Adoption of the Free State PTA bylaws (with copy sent to PTA Council)
2. Submission of Dues to Free State PTA and to PTA Council
3. Submission of Local Contact Officers to Free State PTA and to PTA Council

Please check with your PTA President and Treasurer to see if these things have been completed. If you have any questions about these requirements, please contact Sarah Rehling at reflections@ptachc.org.

Finally, if you haven't done so already, be sure to join the Reflections Facebook group. It is another way to get information and to ask questions. When doing a search on Facebook, search for "PTACHC Reflections Group". There are lots of other Facebook Reflections group out there, so be sure to find the right one. There will be an email group that all members can utilize to ask questions, make comments, and receive information from PTACHC. If you do not want your email address shared with other local Reflections Chairs, please let us know at reflections@ptachc.org.

Thank you all again for your time and energy devoted to enriching our students' school experience. This should be a rewarding undertaking for all of us.

Kind regards,

Xue Li
Chair

Sarah Rehling
Co-Chair

PTA Council Reflections Program