Council and Area PTA Judging Procedures

How to Establish Your Timeline

Judging dates should be based on the date entries are due to your PTA, the deadline for submitting entries to the next level of judging, and the number of entries you expect to receive. Allow three to four weeks to judge, and prepare your artwork for the next level of judging.

Recruiting Your Judges

Judges may be any members of your community who have expertise or experience in the arts category(ies) they are selected to judge. Individuals who have taught in the arts category are often ideal judges. Sources of judges might include:

- Art, literature, dance, film, journalism, and music educators or college/university professors
- Teachers from other schools participating in the Reflections Program
- Art museum directors, docents, curators, or historians
- Professional photographers and local artists
- Local symphony orchestra or choral directors, musicians, conductors, or composers
- Local dance conservatories, dance studios, ballets, or theaters
- Local multimedia/video production companies
- Newspaper journalists, editors, or photographers
- Local television stations
- Arts advocacy organization presidents or directors

To determine the number of judges needed, consider the number of entries received, number of arts categories and type of entries being judged. A great way to judge visual arts and photography is to lay the work out so that an entire group is visible and have 2 or more judges flag the pieces they believe best represent the program criteria. Each group must be judged separately, but the same judges may judge multiple groups. Depending on which entries receive flags and how many flags they receive will give you an outline of your award structure (Most flags = award of excellence and advancement, fewer flags = award of merit, honorable mention and participation). Encourage the judges to read the titles and artist statements, and inform them ahead of time how many they must choose to advance in each group.

While visual arts and photography may be easily judged in bulk, no one person should have to review more than 25 to 30 dance, film, music or literature entries, as these could take much longer to judge. A good point of reference may be to offer a minimum of one judge per grade division per arts category. Judges may judge more than one arts category as long as they are qualified in all categories in which they judge.

Remember to recognize judges in promotions and thank them for their participation. Some PTAs provide each judge with a small gift or certificate of appreciation.

Conflicts of Interest and Blind Judging

It is important to conduct blind judging—where judges do not see the artists' names—in situations or settings where judges may know a student. If a judge is connected to a student participant, or would know a student's work despite blind judging, the judge should remove him- or herself from the judging process for the affected arts category(ies) to prevent a conflict of interest. Teachers from the host school may know student work and/or have a conflict of interest in judging, so it is better to invite teachers from another school that offers the Reflections Program. Beyond the Local PTA level, blind judging will need to occur only if there is a chance that the judges may know a student. In most situations, judges at the Council & Area PTA levels should be able to use the original materials for judging.

Procedure for Judging Entries

All arts categories and grade divisions must be judged separately, except for the special artist division. When selecting a special artist entry to advance, all grades should be grouped together within an arts category. Area and Council PTAs are to advance one entry per group for a total of 30 entries sent to Texas PTA. Substitutions may not be made when advancing entries. If an arts category does not have an entry to advance, it may not be compensated by sending an extra entry from another arts category.

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Please refer to the chart below when separating entries into groups for judging and advancing.

Dance Choreography	Film Production	Literature	Musical Composition	Photography	Visual Arts
Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate
Middle Junior	Middle Junior	Middle Junior	Middle Junior	Middle Junior	Middle Junior
Senior	Senior	Senior	Senior	Senior	Senior
Special Artist	Special Artist	Special Artist	Special Artist	Special Artist	Special Artist

Entries should be judged on artistic merit, creativity, mastery of the medium, and interpretation of the theme. Mastery of the medium in the context of the national Reflections Program pertains to the level of skill the student demonstrates in the basic principles/ techniques of the arts category. 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.

The charts below offer a basic judging rubric to use in evaluating entries and a chart for assigning awards.

Sample Judging Rubric

Interpretation of Theme	How closely the piece relates to the theme, based on the artwork itself and the artist statement	**20 pts**
Artistic Merit/ Creativity	How creative and original the piece is in its conception of the theme and its presentation	**12 pts**
Mastery of Medium	The level of skill demonstrated in the basic principles/techniques of the arts area	**8 pts**

With this rubric, each entry would have a total of no more than 40 possible points from each judge. Have judges record their points for each entry on a score card (see the template provided). Add the points from each judge and rank the artwork accordingly. If two entries are tied, the entry with the greater score for interpretation of theme receives higher recognition.

In addition to the judging rubric and score card, give all judges the general participation guidelines and the guidelines for the arts category they are judging.

Chart of Awards Levels

Overall Award of Excellence	These entries are the top entries in each arts category and grade division, and will be the entries that advance to Texas PTA.	**Maximum of 30 Entries**
Award of Excellence	These entries are excellent interpretations of the Reflections theme, exceptionally creative, and executed extremely well.	**Amount is up to you.**
Award of Merit	These entries are very good interpretations of the Reflections theme, very creative, and executed very well.	**Amount is up to you.**
Honorable Mention	These entries are good interpretations of the Reflections theme, are creative, and executed nicely.	**Amount is up to you.**
Participation Award	Every student entry should be recognized for the student having thought about the theme and trying their best to create an entry that interprets it.	**All students not awarded.**