

Local 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, college/university professors or high-level high school students
- 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
- Retired artists and educators

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 PTA & Region level should be able to use the original materials for judging.

Consider Hosting Your Judging Digitally

Once collected, the online review process will require some creative thinking due to the important step of anonymizing the student submissions and providing judges with "blinded" pieces for review.

- If you used Google Forms or Google Drive for collection, consider creating an anonymized Google Sheet that includes the student's Title of Work, Artist Statement and a link to Google Drive storage place.
- Host a virtual judging event via Google Drive where the judges utilize a digital scorecard and judge on their own time. Or, use a streaming service like Go To Webinar or Zoom to try live judging with breakout rooms to provide judges with a private "space" to review the pieces in their respective categories.

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Procedure for Judging Entries

All arts categories and grade divisions must be judged separately. Prior to the judging, the coordinator should calculate 20% of each group (20% primary dance, 20% intermediate dance, 20% primary film, etc.) and then inform the judge(s) of that number so the judge(s) can decide which entries should advance. When there is only one entry in the group, that entry can advance to the next level of judging without being judged. In the event a student did not stay within the category guidelines, work with the student to correct the errors rather than simply disqualifying the entry. Remember that Reflections is a participation program and not a contest.

In the event there are 1-5 entries in a group, the school may advance up to one entry to stay within the 20% rule. When there are 6+ entries, the percentage should be calculated and then always rounded up to the next whole number. (6-10 entries advance two; 11-15 entries advance three, etc.) While figuring the percentages this way may give an overall percentage of more than 20%, this will be the fairest way to decide which students advance.

Just as the standard grade divisions should be judged separately, the accessible arts division will be judged in the same fashion. The coordinator should calculate 20% of each arts category and grade division entered into the accessible arts division (20% accessible arts primary dance, 20% accessible arts intermediate dance, 20% accessible arts primary film, etc.).

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 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.

The chart below offers 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

Award of Excellence	These entries are excellent interpretations of the Reflections theme, exceptionally creative, and executed extremely well. These will advance to the next level.	Top 20%
Award of Merit	These entries are very good interpretations of the Reflections theme, very creative, and executed very well.	Amount is up to you, or traditionally 20%.
Honorable Mention	These entries are good interpretations of the Reflections theme, are creative, and executed nicely.	Amount is up to you, or traditionally 30%.
Participation	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. Your PTA can also choose to award every student with the top three awards and not use the participation designation.	All students not awarded.