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**HCCPTA Reflections Program**

**2024-2025**

*Guide for Local/Council Chairs*

Dear Reflections Chairs,

Welcome to the **2024–2025** Free State PTA Reflections Program and thank you for volunteering to chair this wonderful arts enrichment program! Enclosed you will find many resources to help you run a successful Reflections program at your local school.

**Please read all of the materials carefully.**

**We NEVER want to disqualify a student’s entry because the**

**instructions were unclear – read carefully and**

**contact your Council PTA if you have ANY questions.**

**Please note that local PTAs must be current on their dues, have submitted their officer roster to HCCPTA and FSPTA, and have up to date bylaws on the FSPTA template. Locals are further encouraged to follow all the Standards of Affiliation for FSPTA to keep their PTA fiscally healthy.**

**Important Deadlines:**

**Local Unit 2023-2024 Theme Search Contest Entries must be received at the Free State PTA by**

**Friday, Nov1, 2024.**

**Local Unit Artwork submissions Each PTA Council will set their own deadline.**

**in counties with an active PTA Council (Must be on or before Friday, January 3, 2025).**

**Harford Council Deadline is 20 December 2024**

**Local Unit Artwork submissions Entries must be received by**

**in counties without an active PTA Free State PTA by 4:30 PM on**

**Council Friday, January 3, 2025.**

**Council Artwork submissions to Entries must be received by**

**Free State PTA Free State PTA by 4:30pm**

**On Friday, January 24, 2025.**

**This year’s Reflections program for Free State PTA will be conducted virtually. Please note that National PTA has conducted this program electronically for some time. COVID prompted us to adopt this approach and for the foreseeable future we will continue on this path.**

**QUICK REFERENCE:**

This year’s theme is: **“Accepting Imperfection”**

**Local Unit entries are due to your PTA Council no later than 20 December 2024.**

**Council Reflections chairs are responsible for ensuring winning entries meet ALL REQUIREMENTS.** Please be sure your winning entries have met all Free State PTA and National PTA requirements plus all program requirements, **BEFORE you submit the entries**. Entries must be disqualified if they are incomplete or if the Free State PTA and National PTA requirements are not met, for example, Local unit not in good standing.

**Contacting HCCPTA:** To start the Reflections program year, read all of the information provided for the most up to date rules, deadlines and submission guidance. Please contact the Harford County Council of PTAs at [cae15@comcast.net](mailto:cae15@comcast.net) with any questions.

Free State PTA asks that each Local and Council register on the National PTA website at <https://pta.org/home/programs/reflections> is in blue print “Register Today”. Free State PTA recommends that no Local or Council use the National PTA website to submit student entries. Free State PTA will use the student entry portal to submit Free State PTA winners to National competition ONLY. This is consistent with Free State PTA efforts in advocacy for the protection and safety of children’s information. Unnecessary exposure of information electronically is a serious concern.

**Format Rules for 2023-2024—**

**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.**

**Changes for this year:**

The 2024–2025 PTA Reflections Arts Program has a new theme, "Accepting Imperfection", which is intended to inspire students to express their creativity while embracing their unique perspectives. The program also has some new rules, including:

Accessible Arts

Moving forward, the Special Artist division will be referred to as the Accessible Arts division. This change is in response to concern around the term “special," based on feedback gathered from participants, volunteers and partner non-profit organizations and recognizes the importance of evolving how we talk about disability to align with and be more inclusive of people with disabilities.

The division-specific guidelines and student entry forms include updated language and the new title. However, the competition process and structure of the division was not changed.

Stay tuned! This enhancement is part of larger, forthcoming updates to the division that will debut in the future.

Other Updates

Materials were updated to provide consistent and clearer guidance around the use of technology and copyright materials in entries:

Use of Copyright Materials: Guidelines were clarified to explain that, while permitted in certain categories, copyrighted material in an entry must be incidental and/or is a smaller element of a whole and used to create a completely new and different work of art.

Use of Technology: Guidelines were clarified to emphasize that digital technology may not provide the primary design and/or concept for an entry and to indicate that entrants must provide a brief description how they used the technology/software, including any generative elements (e.g., algorithmic techniques, artificial intelligence).

The category-specific guidelines and student entry packet/form reflect these changes. In addition, the category-specific guidelines also reflect language adjustments, especially the following:

Visual Arts: Category-specific guidelines now specify "digital art and graphics (drawings/paintings/ illustration)," rather than "computer-generated images."

Literature: Category-specific guidelines now specify dictation is permissible based on the student being able, rather than their age.

Special note for Free State PTA entrants: Submissions may not be created using artificial intelligence software (such as ChatGPT, DALL-E rotor, hotpot AI, deep AI, Craiyon, nightcafe, or other text-to-art software tools) to generate any part of the content or composition. Content generation, including composition and arrangement, must be the result of student exercise of skills and tools. This does not preclude the use of image painting and editing software such as photoshop, gimp, paint or similar software tools for any entries.

Students can participate in the following divisions: primary (pre-K–grade 2), intermediate (grades 3–5), middle school (grades 6–8), high school (grades 9–12), or accessible arts (all grades) through the PTA associated with their school.

The FSPTA 2024-2025 Reflections Handbook and appendices provide the information local leaders need to implement the Reflections program in Maryland. Please share this information with your community and others interested in learning more about the Reflections Program. Local Chairs--please also be in touch with your Council PTA chair and share contact information as soon as you can.

**Appendices**

**(Available on the HCCPTA website under Reflections)**

**Appendix 1 2024-2025 Reflections General Guidelines**

**Appendix 2 2024-2025 Reflections Student Interest Flyer**

**Appendix 3 2024-2025 Maryland Student Entry Form (.doc)**

**Appendix 4 2024-2025 Maryland Student Entry Form (.pdf)**

**Appendix 5 2024-2025 Rules Sheets for the Six Arts Areas**

**Appendix 6 2024-2025 Special Artist Division Rules**

**Appendix 7 2024-2025 Judging Information**

**Appendix 8 2024-2025 Local/Council Participation Form**

**Appendix 9 2024-2025 Local/Council Entrants List**

**Appendix 10 2024-2025 Theme Search Information**