

**NATIONAL PTA REFLECTIONS PROGRAM  
AND THE NATIONAL STANDARDS  
FOR FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**



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The arts—and the PTA Reflections Program, in particular—can be a valuable tool for building stronger partnerships in your school community. Consider the following ways to apply PTA’s National Standards for Family-School Partnerships to your Reflections activities.

**Standard 1: Welcoming All Families into the School Community**

*Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.*

Promote PTA Reflections to all families in the school. Emphasize that every child’s participation is valued, and offer tips on how parents can support their children’s artistic expression.

To reach everyone, translate program information into families’ native languages (materials are already available in Spanish at [Pta.org/reflections](http://Pta.org/reflections)). Depending on your resources, you could send out translated flyers, have translators at meetings, create a poster that highlights the year’s theme in different languages, or work with teachers to help explain the program to students and parents.

To get parents in the school doors, invite them to exhibits and performances of PTA Reflections entries.

**Standard 2: Communicating Effectively**

*Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.*

Share Reflections Program information and reminders through a variety of channels: school or PTA website, newsletters, and social media sites (e.g., Facebook), PTA meetings, promotions at community businesses, the backpack express, etc. Don’t expect parents and other caregivers will be able to attend PTA meetings or receive any one type of communication. Always provide contact information for questions and feedback.

Starting a PTA Reflections discussion group or blog can be another way to share information and engage families in the program. Communicate key dates and other information with a PTA Reflections calendar. Use an end-of-year survey to ask for feedback and help measure your successes and challenges.

**Standard 3: Supporting Student Success**

*Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students’ learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.*

Arts learning experiences promote reading and language skills, mathematics skills, thinking skills, social skills, and more.<sup>1</sup> Use PTA Reflections as an opportunity to educate parents and caregivers about the benefits of arts education for children’s academic, social, and lifelong success. Emphasize that PTA Reflections is designed to support students’ learning by enhancing quality arts education.

Work with your school’s classroom and arts teachers to coordinate efforts. PTA Reflections entries can be created in or outside of school, and the program can help support the curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> Sandra S. Ruppert, *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement* (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and Arts Education Partnership, 2006), [www.nasaa-arts.org/publications/critical-evidence.shtml](http://www.nasaa-arts.org/publications/critical-evidence.shtml) (accessed November 26, 2009).

#### **Standard 4: Speaking Up for Every Child**

*Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.*

Use PTA Reflections to rally families to speak up for the value of arts education—to reach out to teachers, school administrators, and legislators to fight to keep the arts in your school, despite budget cuts. Arts education is a fundamental part of learning for grades K–12 and allows students to hone the skills that will prepare them for the highly competitive labor market of the 21st century.

Showcase the benefits of the arts for students, and demonstrate your school community’s commitment to preserving arts education, by publicizing your PTA Reflections Program. Reach out to local media about the launch of the program, the selection of winners, and any exhibits of artwork. Invite community centers, libraries, and businesses to display artwork and program information.

#### **Standard 5: Sharing Power**

*Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.*

PTA Reflections gives students an opportunity to share their thoughts and perspectives on a given theme. It also gives students an opportunity to determine that theme. Each year’s national PTA Reflections theme is selected from hundreds of ideas submitted by students. Give your students a voice; encourage them to enter the annual the PTA Theme Search.

Give parents and caregivers a voice by inviting them to volunteer with the PTA Reflections Program. Ask people to contribute their skill sets to promoting the program, cataloging entries, arranging the judging, preparing exhibits, etc. Welcome new volunteers and new ideas.

#### **Standard 6: Collaborating with Community**

*Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.*

Seek community partners to support PTA Reflections with prizes, exhibit space, and more. Also, partner with the community on programs to enhance arts education in the classroom or other learning environments. Each year, National PTA awards a limited number of matching grants of up to \$1,000 to local PTAs for student-centered programs focused on arts education, with special consideration given to programs that reach large numbers of at-risk students. For more information about the Mary Lou Anderson Reflections Arts Enhancement Grants, go to [PTA.org/reflections](https://pta.org/reflections).

Learn more about the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships at  
**[PTA.org/Partnerships](https://pta.org/Partnerships).**

For all the tools you need to run the PTA Reflections Program, go to your  
**State PTA’s Reflections page and visit [pta.org/reflections](https://pta.org/reflections).**