

Special Artist Division Rules

The Special Artist division of the National PTA Reflections Program is optional at state and local levels. Maryland PTA makes the Special Artist division available to Maryland local PTAs.

Student Eligibility:

The National PTA Special Artist division is an option for students with disabilities who receive services under IDEA or Section 504 to have the opportunity and accommodations they may need in order to participate fully in the National PTA Reflections Program. The Special Artist division offers modified rules and guidelines to ensure that every student has the chance to be part of the National PTA Reflections program.

Who qualifies as a disabled individual under the law?

The ADA defines an individual with a disability as a person who:

- (1) Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of that person;
- (2) Has a record of such an impairment; or
- (3) Is regarded as having such an impairment.

Student Entry Process:

Students who identify as having a disability have two ways to enter the National PTA Reflections Program:

- Option 1. Enter in traditional grade divisions: Qualifying students follow all arts category rules, and may not receive assistance other than that which is allowed for all children, but do receive accommodation to submit Reflections entries in the grade division most closely aligned to their functional abilities. They are recognized and awarded prizes as part of the general student population without regard to special needs or challenges.
 - Grade Divisions: Regardless of age, students with special needs may enter the National PTA Reflections Program in the grade division most closely aligned to their functional abilities. The divisions are as follows:

Primary: preschool – grade 2	Middle School: grades 6 – 8
Intermediate: grades 3 – 5	High School: grades 9 – 12
- Option 2. Enter in Special Artist division: Qualifying students entering this non-graded division create their own artwork, but may receive non-artistic accommodation and assistance from an adult.
 - Parent or Guardian Signature: The student and family will complete a student entry form. A parent or guardian signature is required for all students entering the program in the Special Artist division, regardless of the student's age.
 - Judging Procedure and Awards: At the national level, Special Artist entries will be judged by expert judges in each arts category. The top Special Artist entry from each of the six arts categories will then be reviewed. One Special Artist from across all arts categories will be selected to receive an Outstanding Interpretation Award and will be recognized at National PTA's Annual Convention. Up to five additional Special Artists may be selected to receive national Awards of Excellence.

Special Artist Accommodations and Guidelines:

Special Artists should follow the general rules and guidelines outlined in the Arts Category Student Rules specific to their submissions, modified only by accommodations for individuals with disabilities. The accommodation, in general, should be both specific and limited to the student's disability.

- **Allowable Accommodations:** Given the diverse range of physical and mental disabilities that exist, it would be impossible to outline specific accommodations for each and every disability, but the following provides a non-exhaustive list of allowable accommodations:
 - The Special Artist Division will not be divided by age or traditional school grade level
 - Use of adaptive technology is allowed
 - All submissions must be solely created by the Special Artist. However, a parent, teacher, or other adult may assist the Special Artist with typing, holding a camera, etc.
- **Accommodations that are Not Allowed:** Individuals providing assistance to Special Artists may not, in any way, involve themselves in the actual artistic process by:
 - Selecting a title for artwork
 - Writing, editing, or interpreting a student's artist statement, story, poetry, or script
 - Choreographing a dance, composing music, or writing lyrics
 - Drawing, painting, or personally creating a visual arts submission; choosing a camera angle, etc.