

ALEXANDRIA, VA. — The artwork of students from across the country today will be recognized during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the U.S. Department of Education. National PTA and the Department of Education are hosting the event to honor the students and celebrate the opening of the art exhibit.

"As we see continued cuts in funding for the arts in education, it is important that we remind schools and families how the arts help children develop valuable skills that are essential to learning, resiliency and social and emotional development," said Betsy Landers, National PTA President. "That's why parents and teachers need to continue to encourage children to explore the arts."

All of the artworks are award winners from the 2011-2012 Reflections program, themed "Diversity means..." The special exhibit celebrates the students' achievements through National PTA's Reflections Program and its 43-year commitment to providing opportunities for children to receive recognition for their artistic ingenuity.

"We're proud to host so many outstanding pieces of artwork that demonstrate these students' creativity, dedication and passion," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "Art can inspire those who admire it as much as those who create it and these reflections of what diversity means to these young artists are shining examples of the importance of arts as part of a well-rounded curriculum."

Dozens of arts education advocates and leaders from across the country will attend. Student performers include:

- Polly Moser, Burleigh Manor Middle School PTA, Ellicott, MD, Musical Composition, "The Flow of Water"

National Outstanding Interpretation Winner

- Racquel Charles, accompanied by Tija Passley, Sequoyah High PTSA, Canton, GA, Dance Choreography, "True Colors"

Speakers include:

- Betsy Landers, President, National PTA
- Deborah Delisle, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education
- Jonathan Katz, Chief Executive Officer, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
- Cindy Dearing, Chairperson, National PTA Reflections Committee

The U.S. Department of Education's Student Art Exhibit Program, now in its 10th year, features artwork created by students in U.S. and American schools overseas.

To visit the "Diversity means..." Reflections exhibit at the U.S. Department of Education, contact Jacquelyn Zimmermann at 202-401-0762 or at [Jacquelyn.zimmermann@ed.gov](mailto:Jacquelyn.zimmermann@ed.gov). The individual artwork can be seen and downloaded, along with the entire gallery online, at <http://bit.ly/10mdadu>. Video pieces

can be seen at

<http://bit.ly/XqoZtP>

. The exhibit will be on display for public viewing through February 24.

## **About National PTA**

National PTA comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.

## **About the Reflections Program**

In its 43-year history, the Reflections Program has encouraged millions of students across the nation and in American schools overseas to explore their artistic talents. PTA believes that all children deserve a quality arts education and encourages students to pursue artistic expression through participation in its annual Reflections Program. For more information about the National Reflections program, please visit [www.PTArelections.org](http://www.PTArelections.org)

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