

BEST REFLECTIONS PRACTICES/TIPS/STATISTICS

The information in this document was compiled from a survey of 36 specialists in Utah at schools which received 100 or more Reflections entries in the 2023-2024 school year.

How many specialists did these schools have?

- 35% of these schools had one specialist.
- 17% of these schools had two specialists.
- 48% of these schools had 3-6 specialists.

How many years experience did these specialists have?

- 1st year-19.4%
- 2nd year-36.1%
- 3rd year-19.4%
- 4th year-25%

Budget

A couple of schools had fairly low budgets around \$150. One school had \$1,200 and another had \$3,000. On average, not counting the very low and very high budgets, schools had around \$450 in their budget. Many schools had around \$400 and many had between \$600-\$700. The majority of the schools also solicited donations.

Participation prizes offered

- Everyone who entered received a participation prize (prize bag included a tiny trophy from Target, menchie's voucher, Wendy's voucher, some candy, and either crayons/markers/colored pencils). Everyone who participated was into a "Reflections Raffle" where they could win clay, an art kit, tickets to UMFA, a journal, a digital camera, etc)

We had a "Virtuoso Lunch" (donated by chick fil a) for kids who entered 3+ categories. They did not need to place in anything. We were just trying to get more kids to try something new.

.Lastly, we had Rootbeer float parties for classes with the most participation in our school. Five classes won.

- We offer a participation prize for every entry, so some students get multiple prizes if they enter multiple categories. We get donations from local business (free ice creams, cookies, sandwiches, etc) and put them in a prize bag with some goodies/snacks, and other donations or small items we purchase (sunglasses, stickers, etc.) We also offered a Chickfila party for the class with the most entries. The PTA allowed us to use some of the Chickfila money to cover the party expense.
- Donated items from businesses, pizza lunch

- Certificate, small bag of candy, 2-3 corporate coupons for free or BOGO treats/activities ... plus recognition in front of parents and all their peers
- A gift bag with lots of coupons, small prize and treats
- We gave a pass to the Neighborhood Art Center to every kid who participated. It's important to us that we give prizes that don't require parents to spend more money in order to use it (ie. if we give a free ice cream cone from a local place, it's not a buy one get one, it's just free.)
- The gallery walk was a huge success. We held it in the library in the evening to showcase the students creations (regardless of advancement). We left it up for the next day for teachers to bring their classes through. It was very well attended. We also had a prize party for every kid who entered. I gave them "golden tickets" with their name on it, with the info on the back. For the prize party, we had solicited local businesses for small prizes, ranging from tickets to local plays to art kits to books signed by local authors to gift cards to cookie stores. We had about 50 prizes included in the drawing. Each students' name was entered into the drawing for each entry they created. They were given an ice cream sandwich to eat during the prize drawing. After the prize drawing, we had a glow in the dark dance party for the last 10 minutes.
- Each entry receives a Menchie's gift card, a certificate, and a Starburst full size candy
- We had a small prize bag with a pocket notebook, a crayon pen, a small container of butter slime, a ring pop, a couple stickers, and Menchie's and Artic Circle coupons. Everyone also received a certificate that we designed and printed at our district office copy center for an affordable price.
- Everyone who entered got a certificate, ribbon, sucker, and gift certificate to Menchies.
- We just told the kids that everyone who participated would get a small reward; we put that together once we knew how many we needed. This year we did certificates to Texas Roadhouse and little Lego animals. They also get entered into a drawing for art-related prizes during the award night. The more entries they had, the more tickets they got for that.
- Participation gift included a container of slime, an invisible pen, and bubble gum.
- Fidget toys, passed out once a week on Fridays
- Every student received a menchies gift cert and a small bag of candy (4 candy pieces). However, we didn't advertise that beforehand. What drove increased participation is that three teachers in our gifted program required their students to participate.
- Each person who entered received a goody bag with a few treats and small gifts in it (like halloween slinkys)
- Pizza party for class with the most entries; root beer float celebration for participants
- We gave each student who participated a coupon for a free ice cream at Menchies, a Reflections Participant ribbon and a certificate with their name on it.
- all participants received a chic-fil-a lunch
- Doughnut party at the assembly, gold dollar on each certificate, several certificates for free ice cream and meals.
- We gave donuts to the grade with the most entries.
- everyone got a participation certificate with a menchies coupon and a handful of candy
- I got local businesses to donate freebies (Lehi Bakery, Chili's, Fiiz Drinks, Artic Circle, Twisted Sugar, Little Caesar's, Hale Center Theater, & Chick-fil-a) and also had fidget toys & Certificate!
- Every entry gets a prize bag with coupons from local businesses (this year from Smoked Taco, Arctic Circle, and Crack Shack) and a few small toys (this year a mini paint palette, a make-your-own sticker sheet, and a pencil, pencil grip, and pencil sharpener)
- Every participant was invited to a pizza party with principal. They also received a certificate, smarties mega sucker, free bahama bucks coupon, free red Robin coupon, and a sticky hand toy. In the past I did more toys/treats. I scaled back this year cause there were so many participants.

- Menchie's gift card: first 5 oz free .Goody bag full of treats.If they enter more than one category they get as many gift cards and entries submitted. Class with the most entries gets a Popsicle party.

Prizes given to winners

- Gift cards, trophies, donated items from businesses
- Participation prizes plus The got the same prizes as well as -Award of Excellence - Trophy
Award of Merit - Medal ,Honorable Mention - Ribbon
- Trophy to awards of excellence, medal to awards of merit, ribbon to honorable mentions
- Trophies. We tried lego sets one year, but the kids love the trophies
- Award of Excellence received a trophy, certificate, cookie (twisted sugar), and goody bag (included uptown jungle voucher, gold candy, and small play dough)Award of Merit received a medal, certificate, cookie (twisted sugar), and goody bag (included uptown jungle voucher, gold candy, and small play dough,Honorable Mention received winning ribbon, certificate and goody bag (included uptown jungle voucher, gold candy, and small play dough)
- We gave out medals purchased from national PTA to the Award of Excellence winners. For Award of Merit and Honorable Mention, we gave out ribbons. We also had certificates printed for every entry.
- Lots of coupons from local business, gift cards, gift baskets, etc.
- Award of Excellence winners received trophies and Award of Merit winners received a ribbon
- Trophies with their names on it
- Pens and gift certificates to local businesses for all winners. Excellence got a large trophy, Merit got a small trophy, Honorable Mention got a medal
- Trophies and ribbons
- Excellence-trophy; merit-medal; honorable mention-medal (all ordered from The Trophy Corner in SLC)
- Random Dollarstore type stuff, coupons to local businesses for freebies, quantity over quality
- certificate, small bag of treats, ribbons.
- They all received the same thing-- certificate; ribbon, craft bag
- medals, certificates, gift bags with relevant art supplies, Bahama Bucks certificates
- Awards of excellence received a small trophy, awards of merit received a medal, this year we also gave out honorable mention ribbons.
- 1st place received a \$5 gift card to swig and trophy, 2nd & 3rd place received a soda
- Medals, certificates, coupons for free things from local businesses, and gold dollars
- Winners get medals, we also do a student choice award. We set up all projects in the Gym and allow teachers to sign up and bring their students down to look at all of the projects, then they all get to vote on their favorite. the top 3 student choice winners get a theater candy.
- Winners received trophies (excellence) or medals (merit) and a bag with a few pieces of candy, a tiny canvas and paints, and several coupons or gift certificates from local businesses (free pizza at Pizza Pie Cafe, Hale Theater tickets, etc.). All participants who did not win a prize still got a ribbon and a small bag of candy with 1-2 coupons in it.
- \$15 target gift card, medal, large candy bar
- Gift Card, Sketch Book, Watercolor Pen, Black Wood Rainbow Pencils, & Gum! Medals & Ribbons
- Award of Excellence- trophies, Award of Merit- medals, Honorable Mention- ribbons
- Trophy for Award of Excellence, medal for Award of Merit, certificate and ribbon for Honorable Mention
- Winners received a medal. And all the other prizes the other participants received.

- Prime drinks, puzzles squishmallows, stuffed animals, games, battleship, badminton set, laser gun set, nerf sling shots set, marvel stuffies, art kit, bubble makers, LOL dolls, barbies, play doh set, I can send you a picture of all our prizes

Celebration for entrants

- Most entries per class prize, pizza lunch, awards showcase
- In-school assemblies (we had to do 3 broken down by grade divisions due to logistics). Parents of participants were also invited to attend. We had power point presentations showing work of every participant (films, dances, & music were edited down to 10-15 sec clips). Each participant was given a participation prize pack and got photo taken in front of a cute balloon arch.
- Assembly
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- Awards Assembly - the Rootbeer float parties and virtuoso lunch were the same day
- The biggest thing was our gallery walk and prize party. Both events were a huge success!
- An awards night
- We have a bulletin board where we display the winners artwork. We did an assembly in each grade level announcing all of the participants and then announcing each of the winners in that grade.
- Awards assembly during school with all entrants. In past years our school has done an awards assembly with the entire school but this year we have a new principal who only allowed us to do students who entered the program. We were disappointed we couldn't celebrate the students who entered and the winners with the entire school, but we understood we have to defer to the principal's decision. Each format has pros and cons.
- Assembly at school and invited parents of the winners.
- We do a "display night." All entries are brought for display. Families come and view the art and enjoy refreshments. Winners pick up their awards, participants get their rewards, but there is no formal award ceremony.
- Assembly for all students during school.
- Awards night
- We had a school-wide assembly. The student council announced the winners. We also had a video showcasing the winning entries.
- We had a movie-themed awards night; they all also received goody bags at school during class time so they were recognized when we popped in to give it to them.
- We celebrated our participants with an in-school assembly (the whole school attended and parents of winners were also invited). We made a movie/slideshow which included all the entries and showed that at the beginning of the assembly, then gave out awards afterwards.
- The 2nd and 3rd place had their names listed and 1st place received a trophy at a combined award ceremony with other school awards
- We do an assembly where we hand out all participation certificates and invite the parents of the winners to come. we give medals and recognition at that time.
- We had an all school assembly, where we showed off the winners' entries and gave them their prizes, and also gave out all the participation prizes.
- We have a school assembly every year that lasts about 30 minutes. We invite parents of the winners as well. We talk about each category and what they had to do to enter then we talk about what they won. we have each category and the winners come up and we applaud them and take their pictures. At the end we have a video of each of the winners and highlight their art work. We

announce the theme for next year and encourage the kids to think about a way they could enter next year. We also have every participant stand up and we applaud them. Then we have them stay back after the assembly to receive their participation prize.

- Awards Assembly during school day- Reflections entrants and families were invited
- We hold an awards assembly during school for all of the students. We recognize every participant and the winners. We have a slideshow with picture of the entries. I feel like the kids watching the entrants get the participation prizes and awards helps more kids want to participate in the program. We had 182 entries and the assembly lasted right around 45 minutes.
- We did an after school open house. Invited parents to come and view all the entries. And then students took theirs home. It was pretty chaotic with 115 kids but we haven't ever done a sit down announce winners event. Just open houses.
- Assembly, separated by age group. We had a PowerPoint showing the entries of those with award of excellence and merit. They come up and get their certificate and goody bag and then go off to the prize table on the side and get to pick their prize. I email out to the parents before so if they aren't going to be there they let me know their top 3 prizes and we get one for them and give to their teacher. Then we read all the participants and they get their certificate, gift card and prize bag.

How did they promote Reflections?

- Emails, posters, kick off assembly
- Signs on front doors, go classroom to classroom (with trophies from previous years), email from principal, email from some teachers, PTA social, school website, flyers in office
- Posters hung at the school, quick video/promo at an assembly, announcement in our schools weekly emails, flyers sent home
- We had signage out front at the drop-off which I think really helped. We do a countdown the week before on those signs. We go around one morning with a flyer and announce it to each class individually. We show the Reflections video on the morning announcements a couple of times. We send out several emails leading up to the deadline and our principal also announced it on his school social media.
- Table at back to school night, Kick off Assembly, posters around the school, social media posts, reminders through school and PTA emails, student council announcements
- We started with posters around the school. Not only did we have the year specific ones, I also had a gal create some that had jokes on it for different categories that could be reused. The biggest thing (I know there may be better ways to do this, like an assembly) was I went from class to class in our school to tell them about Reflections. I had the principal let the teachers know that I would be coming in at some point that day. When I went in, I gave them the whole run down (many kids didn't even know what Reflections was), told them about the categories, prizes, rules and such, but mostly encouraged creative expression then gave the kids time for questions at the end. It took about 10 minutes per class (we have about 30 classrooms, so it is a labor of love, but well worth it.) I had the school send out emails and texts as the date got closer. I printed a yard sign that can be used year to year to put up outside the school to remind the students that Reflections entries are due soon. The week before the entries were due, I wrote up some silly announcements that the principal read during morning announcements to remind them about Reflections. I had a category specific one each day including a joke and something to remind them about what that category entry is.
- Lots of emails to parents, school announcements
- We visited each of the grade levels, introduced the theme, and answered questions.

- We had a lot of small posters around the school. We also hung up 5 large posters with a count down post it note that we changed each day. One lunch, about a week before entries were due, we went into the lunchroom and reminded the students to enter reflections and answered any questions they had. We sent home 3 different fliers advertising reflections.
- Table at back to school night, kickoff assembly, flyer home with all students, included in weekly school email during the time between kickoff assembly and deadline, table outside after school on Fridays for students to come ask questions and pick up copy of rules, posters around the school, posting on school PTA Instagram.
- We had Reflections Rex and Rita come visit the classes to introduce Reflections and then again a few weeks later at recess to remind. They are inflatable costumes that my teenagers dressed in and the kids love them! We also have posters up before first day of school, send our reminders to parents via flyer and emails, include it in the school newsletter, and show a video in each class about how to enter.
- Video for TV morning announcements, posters, digital flyer
- Kickoff assembly, posters, emails, Facebook page. Also, a few of our teachers require students to enter.
- 5 minutes at the opening assembly, then 5-10 minutes in each individual classroom to answer questions, then another 5 minutes at a following assembly a few weeks later. Every Friday all students that participated for that week were called to the office to pick a participation prize. Big trifold poster in the office with all of the handouts printed with the rules.
- Posters in the hall and at back to school night. Sent home a flyer with each "back to school" packet. Emailed all the teachers with the details. Promoted on PTA social media and in newsletter. We announced the theme at the end of the school year and posted a few times during the summer.
- We had a kickoff assembly, it was shared on morning announcements, our art teacher promoted it in her rotation, and we stopped into classes throughout the entry time to give prizes to entrants so others would want to enter to get prizes. We also had posters and bulletin boards around the school.
- Large posters in entryway, 11x17 posters in each classroom, flyers in back-to-school packets, color reminder flyers a month before final submission date, emails to teachers to promote inter-classroom competition and documented entry numbers on the bulletin board, asked principal to include in monthly parent emails, promised RB party for all participants and pizza party for winning class, BUT, the biggest help of all was going class to class and doing a skit: <https://youtu.be/en9ktEb6zPk>
- I printed the posters provided by the Reflections program and had them all over the school at Back to School Night, had a station at Back to School Night requesting volunteers to help judge, 2 volunteers and I visited each classroom and explained what Reflections is and tried to get students excited about participating, the Principal included the Reflections due date on her weekly emails, Reflections was included on the school-wide announcements each Monday morning, I sent two emails out to parents (the first being the same day as visiting the classrooms, the 2nd about 2 weeks prior to the due date) explaining what Reflections is and how to help their children to be successful in the program (ie: encouraging their children to think about the theme, also encouraging them to enter in categories which generally have fewer entries, etc).
- posters in common areas and in specific subject classes, as well as school announcements weekly and 2 parent squares, most importantly reaching out to specific teachers to get them to announce it (this led to one teacher making it part of their class and 2 other teachers having me come in and promote it in their art classes with a presentation)
- we hang a banner in the drop off area, go around to each classroom about 2 weeks before deadline and introduce the theme and send out a reminder flyer the weekend before the deadline.

- Flyers home, emails through the PTA, booth at the open house. We also had a big poster in the front hallway where we could show the number of entries per grade as they came in, so kids (and parents who visited the school) would have a visual. One of my helpers visited classrooms at the school to talk about Reflections, though not all teachers signed up for this.
- we had about 20 posters around the school, we also had a huge one in the cafeteria, we sent home a detailed flyer talking about how to enter, we also have the office sendout sky alerts and emails about when entries are due.
- Facebook, Emails from School Secretary, Intercom Announcements, and Video played during monthly assemblies.
- Posters around the school, bulletin board with copies of rules and FAQs, introduction in every class, flyers sent home. I also spent time at school during lunch answering questions and encouraging students to enter.
- We sent flyers home with the students. We hung lots of flyers and posters around the hallways with the theme and entry due date. We put the info up on the school website and posted a lot of info (including examples of projects for each category) on our PTA social media pages. We also had the info in the PTA newsletter. We sent teachers the info and rules for each category and asked them to send that out to parents. We also asked the teachers to play a short 5 min video in class that explains the program and different categories. This year we also set up a table during parent teacher conference with examples of past awards and info for all categories. We handed out flyers to all families who came past the table to remind them of the due date and answer any questions they had about the program or how to enter online. I felt like this was a wonderful way to connect with parents and answer questions. We plan to do this again next year, and maybe do something similar at back to school night as well.
- Yard signs in front of school, daily announcements over intercom from principal, flyers home and several emails sent out to parents. Also posters around the school.
- We put up 2 posters, handed out flyers and back to school night (the least helpful of the 3, but maybe it did more than I thought). The principal sent out the flyer once or twice in her weekly newsletter with the QR code. Had a table one day in September during lunch to show all the prizes they could choose from and handed out flyers. The week of fall break we make up a schedule with the office and take a cart around with the prizes and meet with each grade level at a time. Explaining Reflections, the theme, going over the rules, categories, prizes and encourage them to do it over the break.

Due dates compared to timing of promoting the program

Most schools started promoting about 6 weeks before their due dates, which varied. A few started promoting 2-3 weeks before the due date. Quite a few started promoting at the end of the school year and/or during the summer.

Did teachers require entries? Did teachers offer incentives to entrants? Did teachers support entries?

Three schools had some teachers who required entries. Many teachers were supportive with promoting the program, but only one offered an incentive. She gave classroom bucks to students who entered. In a few schools, there is a program where entering Reflections meets one of the requirements.

Additional thoughts these specialists wanted to share:

- It takes a village - supportive school administration & teachers; supportive PTA board; committee members who are happy to help and take leads in different aspects of the program
 - Having a council rep this year is helpful and would have been especially appreciated my first year. I know it's hard to keep those spots filled, but the first year I had so many questions, so support is helpful. Thanks for all you do!
 - Sometimes I read on the Facebook page how people struggle to find judges. We have had amazing judges who will follow up and tell me how much they loved the experience. We've worked really hard to find judges who are experts in their field and not connected to our school directly. I think that makes a huge difference in not feeling like we're inconveniencing people. These judges already value how creating art can impact the kids and they know to look for things the average parent (like me) would not know.
 - Let me share a few successes of our program this year. My whole reason for being in charge of Reflections is to encourage the kids to be creative. I want them to feel empowered to try new things. I got a lot of great feedback from parents, teachers, administration and kids. One mom told me that her 5th grader entered Reflections for the first time of any of her kids. She's the youngest of 6. Her entry was really beautiful and won an Award of Excellence for the 2D art age group. Another mom told me her son never thought he was an artist - his older sister was, but not him. He won a watercolor kit from our prize drawing and she said he's been experimenting ever since and how happy that made her. I had another kid make a stop motion film. He came into the library with his friends during the school gallery walk. We had all the digital entries (music, film, dance) playing on a projector. I asked him if he wanted to show his friends his creation. He, of course, said yes. His friends clapped after his entry and he was beaming. Another thing I did that I feel added value to our program is I asked the judges to leave positive feedback for the artists in the notes. I typed those up for each kid and put them in an envelope so they could read what the judges had to say about their artwork (all of the judges comments were anonymous). One girl's mom posted her entry and the judges feedback on her instagram. It obviously meant something to her and her daughter to hear how they loved her choreography and what she did well. A little encouragement goes a long way!
- This is my last year at this school, as my daughter is graduating elementary school, but I have 2 people who said they are willing to take over and I'll pass all my templates/info on to them with a list of everything I did to make the program a success. They were excited about the chance of helping the program next year after seeing the good we accomplished this year. Knowing it was my last year, I went for it 110%. It was a ton of work (over 100 hours just myself), but it was worth it to see the artwork created at our school. At the gallery walk, I was able to show kids where their artwork was and tell them why I thought it was so wonderful!

I really feel that if you want a great Reflections program, you have to have someone who is passionate about artistic expression in charge of it. Each and every child has creativity inside of them. It has to be unlocked and sometimes being in school with all the learning they have to do (which is also so important), they need extra opportunities to foster their imagination. I truly loved seeing what the kids chose to make. There was a lot of variety and I'm so proud of them. I let them know that it not only takes creativity, but also bravery to enter something in Reflections. It can be scary to be willing to put yourself out there for judging. But they did it and it's pretty amazing! With all that said, find someone at your school who wants to help kids explore their inner artist! It's less about the program and more about the individual student and helping them realize what they are capable of.

- I've had comments from parents and teachers that they like our open house-style awards night. No one likes to sit through a formal assembly. Everyone who entered gets recognition, while winning entries are clearly marked and rewarded as well.
- Next year, we are planning to do a kickoff assembly as well as an awards assembly. Hoping to partner with the school counselor, as I think the theme is a great opportunity to help kids really think about what it means to accept others and to be vulnerable. These are some big ideas, especially for our younger kids, that I think could use some discussion and explanation. We also want to show kids the variety of art/mediums they can use to express themselves.
- We started with very low participation and not much support from our school. This has been a long process! Also, I loved this email and shared it with our school. We thought it was so exciting and loved this great feedback. Thank you for sending this email-- it was very motivating to our school staff to help get more students to participate next year!
- I got the impression that at least some kids think of Reflections as being something for the extra-talented kids, and I wonder if seeing and celebrating the variety of contributions might help. One thing I have thought of for next year is displaying some of this year's artwork, and NOT just the winning artwork, at the Open House booth so kids and parents alike see Reflections as something that is accessible. I would love to hear what other schools have done!
- The most important thing is to promote it well and even promote that there will be prizes worth their while. Also, showing them a video helps too.
- Our lead is amazing and has been doing it for years
- I'm grateful for the state facebook group where we can share flyers, promotional videos, etc. We are all trying to promote the same theme and program, so I love getting ideas from others.
- Just that we also verbally praised kids when they turned in entries. The front staff was very sweet. And Mrs Nobis the principal was a huge support and encouraged the program. The schools support was big. Advertising wise the yard signs, pizza party and daily announcements were the only things we did different from other years. 109 entered online.