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Dear Guardian,

Congratulations! Your child has been recommended by his or her art teacher to participate in the New York Art Teachers' Association Portfolio Project. The Portfolio Project is an art assessment tool developed in 1997 by NYSATA in collaboration with the New York State Education Department.

The Portfolio Project provides opportunities for students at the elementary, middle, and secondary level to participate in a meaningful review of a collection of artifacts of their learning. The portfolio includes examples of artwork and written responses that reveal student growth.

The Portfolio Project is an example of NYSATA's work to build capacity for all students in the visual arts. Portfolios have a history as a component of instruction and evaluation in the visual arts. Student portfolios provide evidence that can promote understanding of the student learning in the visual arts for the student, teacher, guardian, school, and community.

The Portfolio Project is based on five important beliefs about portfolio assessment:

1. Portfolio assessment gives students a vehicle to demonstrate acquired skills and model what they have learned and can reveal student development and growth.
2. Portfolios empower students to develop commitment and to make informed choices about their work during creation and selection. It also provides evidence of student growth and documents sequential and cumulative learning in the visual arts.
3. Assessment is central to the process of learning and is inseparable from curriculum. Portfolio assessment is not an event for the last week of the school year. The ongoing use of the portfolio implies an atmosphere, a language, and a set of activities that play an important role in the art classroom.
4. Students are central to the process of portfolio assessment. As students share thoughts about their work through writing and speaking, the portfolio becomes a richer document. Processes of reflection and student self-assessment become an important opportunity for learning.
5. Professional development opportunities in each of NYSATA's ten regions encourage scoring reliability, validity and consistency, scoring rubrics and exemplars are made available to districts and teachers as they work to incorporate portfolios as a part of students and program assessments.

NYSATA representatives look forward to welcoming you and your artist at a local adjudication.

Sincerely,

Portfolio Project Chair and Region Portfolio Project Coordinator
for the New York State Art Teachers Association