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Dear Parent or Guardian,

Congratulations! Your student has been recommended by his or her art teacher to participate in the New York State Art Teacher's Association Portfolio Project. The Portfolio Project is an art assessment tool originally developed in 1997 by NYSATA in collaboration with the New York State Education Department. The program has been updated to reflect the National Standards for the Arts and twenty-first century skills.

The Portfolio Project provides opportunities for students at elementary, middle, and secondary 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 student learning in the visual arts for the student, parent, teacher, 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. The portfolio 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 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 part of student and program assessments.

NYSATA Representatives look forward to welcoming you and your artist at the local adjudication.

Sincerely,

Christine Attlesey-Steger
Portfolio Project Chair, New York State Art Teachers Association