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## DISCUSSION GUIDE

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**GRADE:** 6

**MONTH:** NOVEMBER

**THEME:** PLANNING FOR  
NEXT YEAR

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### **PATERSON PATHWAYS:**

CLEAR, CAREFUL, AND CREATIVE PLANNING FOR LIFE BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

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#### **USING THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE:**

Paterson Pathways is a life skills and planning curriculum for students in grades 6 through 8. This discussion guide is part of the Paterson Pathways series. It has been adapted to be taught in a weekly “advisory” class period.

This *Grade 6 November* packet includes:

- 3 weekly **Discussion Guides**,
- Ready-to-copy **student Reflection(s)**
- A **Resource Guide** with background information for advisors.

#### **DISCUSSION GOALS:**

Help students reflect on their academic plan.

Help students revise their plans as needed.

#### **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**

What are my academic goals?

How am I doing with my academic plan?



**WEEK 1:****REVIEW ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

At last month's advisory session, students were asked to think about how they could build on their strengths and address their weaknesses to improve academically.

- Ask students to bring their completed *ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN* to the discussion.
- Discuss what they've proposed to do and why.
- Ask how many have already taken steps to improve their academic performance.
- Discuss what you, the advisor, and your group (as a group) can do to help each student succeed in school.

Students were asked to use their standardized assessment results to guide them in completing an *ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN* about where they were doing well and where they needed help. Then they were asked to write several paragraphs on what they could do to improve.

As they reviewed their academic performance, students were asked not simply why they were not good at a certain subject area. They were also asked to think about WHY they didn't do well and WHAT they could do to improve. Students were asked to think about the following questions as they completed their academic improvement plans.

- Did they simply not understand the material and therefore got a low mark? If so, could they get help from a tutor or the teacher?
- Did they understand the material but not complete the homework or not do it well? If so, how could they do better next quarter?
- Were they finding the homework load at your school just too heavy? What strategies could they use to manage it? Could they get help from a teacher?
- Did they miss too many classes to do well on exams (or not take assessment exams seriously)? If so, how could they motivate themselves to attend class regularly?

Students were also asked to discuss and think about ways they could get academic help at school. Could they get help from a tutoring program at school? Could they get help from their teachers?

Let students know that **next week will be a "work sample roundup,"** and that they should bring work from first marking period to add to their portfolios.



**MATERIALS  
NEEDED:**

**Student portfolios.** Students will need access to their portfolios at each advisory session.

***ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN from October*** students should bring their completed academic improvement plans.

**First marking period progress reports/report cards.** Students should bring a copy of their grades up to this point in the school year.

**STUDENT  
PRODUCTS:**

Your students will be expected to create one product from this lesson.

**Updated portfolio.** Each student should update his or her portfolio by adding an ***ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN*** in the *Learner (Academic Development)* section.

**WEEK 2:****WORK SAMPLE ROUNDUP**

**Make today's DISCUSSION a "work sample roundup" from the first marking period.** Ask students to organize the samples of work from each of their classes to add to their portfolios today. Ask students to make sure they check each item on their checklists as it is added. Ask them to think about why they are adding each item: Is it good work? Does it show improvement? Does it show a new skill? What makes it worth saving?

If you have time, you might want to discuss or review students' choices of work to be saved.

Then ask them to review their portfolio checklists and see if they have anything else that should be added. Have they done any work for any of their classes over the last month that they'd like to add?

You might want to remind students to use their checklists (which should be kept with their portfolios) to keep track of items they're adding to their portfolios. Make sure students remember how to add items to their portfolios and that they are keeping their portfolio checklist handouts up-to-date.

Since students should be accustomed to keeping portfolios by now, you might want to use this opportunity to check in with them or follow up on their academic improvement plans.

Let students know to bring their progress report/report card to the next meeting.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

**Student portfolios.** Students will need access to their portfolios at each advisory session.

***ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN from October.***  
Students should bring work samples to this session.

**STUDENT PRODUCTS:**

Your students will be expected to create several products from this lesson:

**Updated portfolio.** Each student should update his or her portfolio by inserting work samples that they collected from the first marking period into their portfolios in the **LEARNER** section and checking off these items on their **PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST**.

**WEEK 3:****REVIEW HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

Distribute the *HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENT REFLECTION*. Discuss the requirements needed to graduate in NJ. As they talk, though, ask them how they'll get from where they are today – 6<sup>th</sup> grade students – to where they hope to be in three years (High School and Innovative Academies). What will it take to realize their dreams?

Discuss the types of classes students should take. How will their work now affect their future in high school and beyond? Let students discuss in pairs if you wish. Have them draw upon the plans they've created this year.

**WHAT COURSES WILL YOU NEED IN HIGH SCHOOL?**

Not all high schools have the same requirements, and not all colleges expect the same thing. The suggestions below are a baseline: what guidance counselors recommend you should take.

How will their work in middle school to prepare for these high school courses?

**LANGUAGE ARTS****Four years**

Being able to read well, write fluently, and communicate clearly is absolutely essential for college or for any job. Language arts (English) classes will help you do that and develop an appreciation for literature.

**MATHEMATICS****Three to four years**

A good understanding of math is needed in our high-tech, 21<sup>st</sup> century world. You should aim to take math every year. Math courses include Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Pre-calculus, and Calculus.

**SOCIAL STUDIES HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY****Three years**

Social studies courses help you learn more about the world around us. These courses include Geography, Government, Civics, World History, World Cultures, US History, and Political Science.

**SCIENCE****Three to four years**

Science is important for any career path, as the study of science teaches you to observe carefully and use logical reasoning to answer questions. Courses include Chemistry, Geology, Biology, and Physics.

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE****One to four years**

Most colleges require at least two years of study of a foreign language (such as Japanese, French, Spanish, Chinese, or Latin). Understanding the cultures and language of other countries is essential today. Most colleges require 2 or more years of the same language for acceptance.

**VISUAL and PERFORMING ARTS****One to two years**

Studying the arts helps you learn to express yourself creatively and find new ways to interpret your surroundings. Arts courses include Art, Music, Photography, Drama, and Dance.



**ELECTIVES****Three years**

The courses you take in addition to your school's requirements say a lot about you, and help show colleges and employers your interests. You might use your elective time to take an extra Science or Math class, or to take Computer Science, Creative Writing, Woodshop, or Psychology.

**MATERIALS  
NEEDED:**

**Student portfolios.** Students will need access to their portfolios at each advisory session.

***HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA REQUIREMENT REFLECTION***

**First marking period progress reports/report cards.**

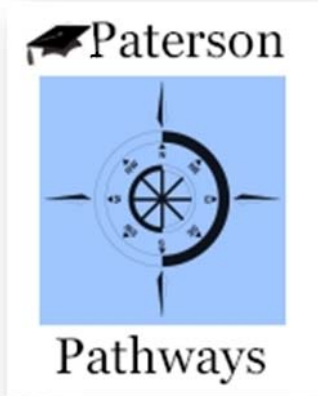
**STUDENT  
PRODUCTS:**

Your students will be expected to create one product from this lesson:

**Updated portfolio.** Ask students to add their ***HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA REQUIREMENT*** to their portfolios in the *Learner* (Academic Development) *Section* and check them off on their portfolio checklists

Make sure students remember how to add items to their portfolios and that they are keeping their portfolio checklists up to date





# REFLECTION

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## NJ HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

### NOVEMBER - 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

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#### NEW JERSEY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5)

##### Number of Classes for State-Endorsed High School Diploma:

Language Arts Literacy	4 years
Math	3 years
Science	3 years
Social Studies (Including 2 courses in US History)	3 years
Health and PE	4 years
Technology	Must be integrated throughout the curriculum.
Visual and Performing Arts (Art, Music, Theater, Dance)	1 year
Career Education and Consumer, Family, and Life Skills (Practical Arts)	1 year
World Languages	1 year or testing (2 or more of same language for college entrance)
Electives taken from CCCS areas	3 Electives classes

All New Jersey Students need to pass the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA).

High school students who do not demonstrate proficiency on one or more sections of the HSPA may participate in the Special Review Assessment process to demonstrate that they meet the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.



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## RESOURCE GUIDE

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR LEAD ADVISORS AND INTERESTED TEACHERS ON:

### GRADE 6 – NOVEMBER PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR

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#### USING THIS RESOURCE GUIDE:

Each Paterson Pathways discussion guide includes a *Resource Guide* for advisors. The *Resource Guide* has been prepared as a handy reference to give you more information on the following topics:

- **Essential Questions.** Each Paterson Pathways discussion guide is built around a theme, and each theme includes two Essential Questions. Focusing on these Essential Questions will help your students retain information from this discussion.
- **New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.** Each Paterson Pathways discussion guide has been adapted to NJCCCS from the relevant grade's Grade Level Expectations.
- **ASCA Standards.** Each Paterson Pathways discussion guide is based on American School Counselor Association (ASCA) standards.
- **Community-building Opportunities.** The *Resource Guide* suggests several community-building opportunities related to each discussion. You and your students can pursue them if you wish.
- **Additional Activities.** The *Resource Guide* also suggests supplemental activities for your group if you have more time, or if you want to devote more attention to a particular theme.

**ESSENTIAL  
QUESTIONS:**

Each Paterson Pathways discussion guide is built around a theme. Each theme repeats each year to help organize the curriculum and, through this annual repetition, to help students retain key points about the lessons they are learning.

Each month's theme includes several "Essential Questions." These questions inform the content of the discussion guide and the student assignments, building on the theme to help students remember the key points from the discussion. These essential questions will also be used later in the year to help students organize their presentations for their student-led conferences.

This month's theme is **Planning for Next Year**. The Essential Questions are:

- What are my academic goals?
- How am I doing with my academic plan?

**Over the course of the year, your students will have a number of opportunities to think about their goals and dreams for the future and to learn what they will need to do to achieve those dreams.**

This month's guide focuses on a tangible step your students can take to move toward their long-term goals.

**COMMUNITY-  
BUILDING  
OPPORTUNITIES:**

Part of the aim of the Paterson Pathways curriculum is to help students grow into a larger role in their community. Each lesson plan in the Paterson Pathways curriculum highlights opportunities to help students think about or actually take on a larger role in either the school community or the larger community in which they live.

**This guide has a somewhat introspective focus because it is about students' individual dreams for the future and then about their academic plans to realize those dreams.** By considering their dreams for the future – and then thinking carefully about what it will take each year to move toward those dreams – your students will have greater incentive to make good use of their time in middle and high school.

Although this discussion guide is based around an individual activity, there are many ways your group can help support your students.

- **Shared dreams.** Do your students have any goals or dreams in common? Can you think up any "advisory group goals" (such as all committing to register for at least one honors course)?



- **Common support.** One of the findings of districts that have implemented Paterson Pathways is that the support provided by the advisory group structure actually results in students doing better academically and registering for more challenging courses. How can the members of your group support each other in this way?

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

If you have accomplished all the activities outlined in this discussion guide and want additional activities for your students, you may wish to:

- **Ask students to discuss their academic improvement plans for next year with their families.** This will hopefully be just the beginning of ongoing discussions students will have with their parents and families about their long-term goals.

### PREPARING FOR NEXT MONTH:

Next month's Paterson Pathways session is focused on helping students explore career possibilities and assess their interests. Here's how you can plan ahead for next month:

- **Investigate your school's access to career planning resources.** Your school likely has access to an array of career planning and interest assessment resources. Investigate your school's resources (or ask your lead advisor or school guidance counselor to brief you) so that you can help your students use them. If your school does not have career planning resources available, you might want to turn to the free resources at [www.careervoyages.gov](http://www.careervoyages.gov). Arrange for computer access for the third session.
- **Obtain copies of *CAREER CLUSTERS INTEREST SURVEY* and *CAREERS INTEREST REFLECTION* for each student.**
- **Invite one or two community members to discuss their careers with your students (*OPTIONAL*).** *If you wish*, ask interested community members (perhaps parents or HSC members) to discuss their career choices – and educational needs – with your students.

### N.J.C.C.C.S LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

#### LISTENING

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|----------|---|
| 3.4.6.A1 | Listen actively for a variety of purposes such as enjoyment and obtaining information.  |
| 3.4.6.A2 | Listen attentively to a variety of speakers.  |
| 3.4.6.B2 | Demonstrate competence in active listening by interpreting and applying received information to new situations and in solving problems. |



**WRITING**

- 3.2.6.A2 Generate ideas for writing through reading and making connections across the curriculum and with current events.
- 3.2.6.B2 Write a range of grade appropriate essays across curricula (persuasive, personal, descriptive, issue-based)
- 3.2.6.D1 Write for different purposes (e.g., to express ideas inform, entertain, respond to literature, persuade, question, reflect, clarify, share) and a variety of audiences(e.g., self, peers, community)
- 3.2.6.D2 Gather, select and organize information appropriate to a topic, task and audience.

**CAREER EDUCATION AND CONSUMER, FAMILY AND LIFE SKILLS  
(grades 5-8)**

- 9.2.8.C1 Demonstrate respect and flexibility in interpersonal and group situations.

**ASCA  
STANDARDS:**

The Paterson Pathways curriculum is based on the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model, to provide teachers and students with a clear way to integrate school counseling and academic achievement. This discussion guide focuses on the following ASCA Standards:

**ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- A:A1 Improve academic self-concept (Display a positive interest in learning).
- A:A2 Acquire skills for improving learning (Demonstrate how effort and persistence positively affect learning).
- A:A3 Achieve school success (Demonstrate dependability, productivity, and initiative).

