



DISCUSSION GUIDE

GRADE: 6

MONTH: JANUARY

THEME: PLANNING FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

PATERSON PATHWAYS:

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

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 designed to be taught in a single, weekly “advisory” class period.

This *Grade 6 January* packet includes:

- A three-page **Discussion Guide**,
- Ready-to-copy **student Reflection(s)**, and
- A **Resource Guide** with background information for advisors.

DISCUSSION GOAL:

Help students review their dreams for life after high school.

Help students learn more about the types of education and training available after high school.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

What will I do after high school?

How can I prepare?

WEEK 1:

REVIEW CAREER INTERESTS

At last month's advisory session, students had the opportunity to take a personality, interest, or aptitude assessment, and then to link that information to potential careers of interest. Students were asked to complete a handout based on what they had learned.

- Ask students to bring their completed **CAREER INTERESTS REFLECTIONS** to the lesson.
- Discuss what they learned about themselves. Were they surprised? Did they think what they learned was accurate? What careers sound most interesting?
- Ask students which careers were suggested by the personality or interest tests they took. Do any of the careers they've identified sound interesting? Where could they learn more? What education would different career choices require? Can they imagine themselves in this career?
- You may need to help students broaden their ambitions as they search. Don't let them get pigeonholed by a computerized assessment test's sampling of careers. Take advantage of the opportunity to search among hundreds of career choices. What sounds like fun? Why? What would it take?
- Give students time to finalize their handouts if needed.

Ask students to add their **CAREER INTERESTS REFLECTIONS** to their portfolios (*Career Development Section*) and check them off on their portfolio checklists.

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?

Following your work sample roundup of last month, you might want to have students devote extra time to checking items on their checklists. Have them make sure their portfolios are organized.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

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

STUDENT PRODUCTS:

CAREER INTERESTS REFLECTIONS from December. Students should bring their completed academic improvement plans.

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 **CAREER INTEREST REFLECTION** (*Career Development section*) and checking it off on their **PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST REFLECTION**.



WEEK 2:

DISCUSS LONG-TERM GOALS

At the beginning of the school year, your students were asked to develop a set of goals for their 6th grade year.

But what do they want to accomplish over the long term? What do they want to do after middle school... and even after high school?

- Lead a discussion on this topic. You might want to have students talk in pairs first, and then convene the whole group. What do your students hope to do with their lives? How do they see their futures? Do they have ideas about careers, or travel, or where they'd like to live? Do they have hobbies or interests that they want to make part of their lives? Do they see education as a minor or major part of their futures?
- Some of your students may have very clear ideas of what they want to do, and they may have a very good sense of how to get through middle school and high school efficiently and productively. Other students may not have thought that far ahead, or may not even be sure what it would take to graduate from high school.
- Lead a discussion on students' long-term goals. Let them express both whimsical ideas and serious ones. As they talk, though, ask them how they'll get from where they are today – 6th grade students – to where they hope to be in seven or eight years. What will it take to realize their dreams? Will they need money? Talent? Education?
- Conclude the discussion by asking students how they will get from today to what they want for their futures. What do they need to do? What kind of education will they need to realize their dreams? What will they need to get out of high school? What will they need to do after high school? How does what they're doing today (and in school every day) help them get closer to their dreams?

MATERIALS NEEDED:

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

WEEK 3:

PATERSON COLLEGE GUIDE

Among our students' choices after high school is more learning, whether it is in college or technical schools. **The Paterson College Guide** written for Paterson students by Paterson students at John F. Kennedy High School, helps students explore their options. Paterson students are pictured throughout the guide. Your students may know some of them.

The Paterson College Guide can provide the basis for many discussions. The students have written many interesting articles about many different topics pertaining to preparing, applying and getting into college.

Ask students to peruse through the guide, read the various titles and choose an article they would like to explore further. Have students pair up or work independently to read the article they have chosen. Tell the students they will then report about the article to the rest of the group. Most articles require no more than 10 minutes to complete.

After the students finish reading the article, discuss what they have read.

Tell students they should take the guide home and continue to read the rest of the articles. They will obtain plenty of information from the students writing the guide specifically for Paterson students.

**MATERIALS
NEEDED:**

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

The Paterson College Guide Obtain copies from Paterson Education Fund through your Lead Advisor

WEEK 4:

DISCUSS POSTSECONDARY OPTIONS

If you've invited a college admissions officer, ask your guest to address the following issues:

- Why education after high school is important;
- What different options are available (community or technical college, four-year university, etc.); and
- What types of careers (nearly all!) require postsecondary education.

If you do not have a guest, lead a discussion on these issues yourself. Here are some facts to share with your students about the value of education beyond high school:

- In 1950, a full 80% of American jobs were classified as “unskilled” and didn't require any higher education. By 1997, only 15% of jobs in America were considered “unskilled.” (*Sources: Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Education Testing Service Report, 2002.*)
- In addition, 70% of the 30 fastest growing occupations in the U.S. today require an education beyond high school. (*Source: International Center for Leadership in Education.*)
- Over a lifetime, a college graduate earns nearly \$1 million more than a high school graduate. (*Measured over a 40-year career in 2000 dollars. Source: National Collaborative for Postsecondary Education Policy.*)
- In fact, the economic advantage of obtaining a college education today is more than four times as great as it was 50 years ago. (*Source: Northwest Regional Education Laboratory.*)

Students should realize that there are very few career opportunities that do not require some type of education beyond high school. Once you've made that point, you might want to talk about different types of postsecondary education, perhaps using their own life goals as examples of the types of credentials they might need:

Associate Degree. An Associate or Arts or Associate of Science degree is usually earned in two years at a community college. Students might earn an Associate degree to transfer into a four-year university and continue on toward a Bachelor's degree. Or they may choose an Associate degree for a career that requires that level of certification. Such careers include Cosmetology, Computer-aided Drafting and Design, Diesel and Heavy Equipment Tech, Medical Office Clerk, or Culinary Arts.

Bachelor's Degree. A Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree is usually earned in four years at a four-year college or university. Students might earn a Bachelor's degree to continue their studies with a graduate



or professional degree, or they might use it to prepare for a career. Students can earn a Bachelor's degree in nearly any subject imaginable, from Asian Literature to Viticulture (the cultivation of grapes).

Master's Degree. A Master of Arts or Master of Science degree (there are also Master's degrees in subjects such as Public Policy <MPP>, Business Administration <MBA>, or Architecture <M.Arch.> and others) allows a student to move directly into a professional career in a specialized field of interest. A Master's degree usually requires at least two years of study beyond a Bachelor's degree.

Doctorate Degree. Obtaining a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Medical Doctor (M.D.), Juris Doctor (attorney, or J.D.) degree usually requires at least three years of specialized study beyond a Bachelor's degree and sometimes many more. A Doctorate degree allows the holder to practice a highly skilled profession.

Military. Some of your students may be planning to join the military when they are older. If so, please make sure they understand that the military can be a vehicle for higher education and training, but it is not an educational or career choice in itself. Students will still need to make career and educational choices at many levels, even after joining the military.

After you discuss post-high school education options, **ask students to research the education their own dreams would require.**

Distribute a copy of the *POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION REFLECTION* to each student and have them complete it based on your discussion.

Ask them to use the library or Internet to answer the last question on the Reflection. To do that, they will need to research postsecondary programs that would meet their goals (tell students not to worry for now about tuition or geography!).

Students might find the College Board's "Majors and Careers Profiles" service helpful (http://www.collegeboard.com/csearch/majors_careers/profiles/). Using this function, a student can begin with a broad college major or career goal, then narrow it to learn more about that field, the education it requires, and even high school courses that would be good preparation for a career in that field. Students should complete the Reflection based on what they learn.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

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

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION REFLECTION Please make copies for each student.



College admissions officer from a local four-year or community or technical college (*OPTIONAL*). If you wish, invite an “expert” to discuss the offerings at a local college.

Internet or library access. Students will research college offerings.

**STUDENT
PRODUCTS:**

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

Postsecondary research. Each student should complete the *POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION REFLECTION* (Career Development section) and checking it off on their *PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST REFLECTION*.



REFLECTION

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION JANUARY - 6TH GRADE

Name: _____

Advisor: _____

WHAT WILL YOU DO AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?

And what education or training will you need to achieve your goals? Use the library or Internet to complete this Reflection and return it to your advisor.

FIRST, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?

What do you want to do? Write down at least one long-term goal for your life (such as *I want to be an engineer*, or *I want to be a musician*.)

NEXT, WHAT EDUCATION WILL YOU NEED TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL?

Using the library or Internet (the College Board's "Majors and Careers Profiles" may be helpful: http://www.collegeboard.com/csearch/majors_careers/profiles/) find out what type of education you'll need after high school to realize your goal (*for example, two-year degree, or Bachelor of Science degree, or music training at a conservatory, or medical school*).

To achieve my goals, I need:

- Two-year degree
- Four-year degree
- Post-graduate degree
- Other

Details: (*College major, something about your chosen field*)



RESOURCE GUIDE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR LEAD ADVISORS AND INTERESTED TEACHERS ON:

GRADE 6 – JANUARY PLANNING FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

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 is based on 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 Life After High School**. The Essential Questions are:

- What will I do after high school?
- How can I prepare?

Last month, students had the opportunity to research different career options and participate in a career interest survey. This month, students will explore their plans and dreams for life after high school and then **learn how to connect their dreams to what they are doing now**.

For 6th grade, that will mean learning about the opportunities beyond high school – and understanding both that they will need some level of postsecondary education to realize their dreams and also that they will need to work hard during high school to succeed.

Students will have the opportunity to dream big during this discussion, and then to explore where those dreams might take them.

Focus on the two essential questions as you lead students through the guide. What do they dream about doing? And what do they have to learn and do to realize their dreams?

The Paterson Pathways curriculum is fundamentally about planning for the future. And this guide, coming as it does in the middle of the school year, will help students balance their short-term plans and goals with their hopes and dreams for the longer term.

Your students are now in middle school. Their decisions are important. Their performance at school matters. This discussion guide will help them realize that.

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 discussion guide 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 to achieve 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 dreams” (such as all committing to graduate on time, or all committing to register for honors courses)?
- **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:

- **Obtain detailed information about a postsecondary educational program of interest.** Students will do preliminary research to complete their Reflections. As an additional assignment, you could ask them to prepare a detailed, one- to two-page essay on a specific academic program that interests them, based on what they discovered from the College Board site or another resource. Where is it located? What would they study? What could they do after completing it?
- **Share information about the Passaic County Community College College Bound/“Gear Up” program with students and their families.** Eligible students and schools may benefit from the program’s pre-college enrichment activities students can sign up for at the end of 8th grade and can continue to take part in throughout their high school years. Speak to your school guidance counselor to obtain more information.
- **Host a discussion for students and their parents or guardians with a guidance counselor or college admissions officer.** If you did not invite a college admissions officer to your advisory session, perhaps you could arrange for a lunch or after-school meeting between your students and their parents or guardians and a college admissions officer or guidance counselor to discuss educational options. It would be particularly helpful if students could volunteer their own interests



and then hear what type of education they should acquire.

PREPARING FOR NEXT MONTH:

Next month's Paterson Pathways session is focused on helping students become a part of the school community through sports, clubs, or other activities. Here's how you can plan ahead for next month:

- **Get a list of school clubs and activities.** Your school should have a list of all clubs, sports, and activities that are open to students. Get a copy or have your lead advisor work with school administrators to compile this information. This list will be used next month to help make your students aware of the opportunities open to them and encourage them to join.

NJCCCS: LANGUAGE ARTS

LISTENING

- 3.4.6A1 Listen actively for a variety of purposes such as enjoyment and obtaining information.
- 3.4.6A2 Listen attentively and critically to a variety of speakers.
- 3.4.6A3 Acknowledge the speaker through eye contact and use appropriate feedback and questions to clarify the speaker's message.

SPEAKING

- 3.3.6A5 Participate in class discussion appropriately.
- 3.3.6B5 Reflect and evaluate information learned as a result of the inquiry

WRITING

- 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.
- 3.2.6.D3 Develop and use knowledge of a variety of genres, including expository, narrative, persuasive, poetry, critiques, and everyday/ workplace writing.

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

- 9.2.6.B1 Develop and implement a personal growth plan that includes short- and long-term goals to enhance development.

ASCA

The Paterson Pathways curriculum is based on the American School



Paterson Public Schools Advisory Curriculum Framework

STANDARDS:

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:B2 Plan to achieve goals (Identify post-secondary options consistent with interests, achievement, aptitude, and abilities).

