



DISCUSSION GUIDE

GRADE: 6

MONTH: MAY

THEME: UPDATING THE FOUR-YEAR PLAN

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 May* packet includes:

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

DISCUSSION GOALS: Help students complete their portfolios for the year.

Help students reflect on the short- and long-term goals they set during 6th grade.

Develop four-year plans based on students' goals.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

What do I want to do in the future?
How can I prepare?

WEEK 1:**UPDATE PORTFOLIOS**

This will be students' last month of advisory for the school year. Have students check their portfolios using their portfolio checklists (if students need new copies, they can be found as part of the *Grade 6 October* Paterson Pathways discussion guide).

Ask students to review their checklists and see that they have added all needed materials (students will not yet have complete transcripts; those can be added next fall). Help students review their portfolios.

Practice for Student Led Conference: If your Students are still preparing for their Student Led Conferences, you may allow time for practice.

**MATERIALS
NEEDED:**

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

WEEK 2:**REFLECT ON ANNUAL GOALS**

Ask each student to retrieve the annual goals statement he or she created at the beginning of the school year. Ask students to read their goal statements from earlier this year. *(Please NOTE that these goal statements must be returned to the portfolios, as your students will review them one more time next September as a way to begin the new school year. If you are worried that students will misplace their goal statements, you may wish to copy them ahead of time so that your students are working from copies rather than originals.)*

Then lead them in a short discussion about what they wrote.

Reviewing one of the first documents your students wrote as middle school students – their goals for the year, which they wrote last September – will be a helpful way to assess what they’ve learned and how they’ve grown this year. That self-assessment will even more helpful because of the content of their goal statements, which looked ahead through the entire 6th grade year. Your students may find that they’ve accomplished all their goals; but, equally likely, they may not have. In fact, they might find that they’ve accomplished quite a bit this year, just not what they expected to accomplish.

This portion of the discussion helps students revisit the work they’ve done this year in setting goals, focusing on their goals for 6th grade. By reviewing what they said they wanted to achieve – and what they’ve actually accomplished – your students will be able to reflect on what they’ve learned and how they’ve grown this year, and that will set the stage for their work next year.

Ask students if they achieved their annual goals. How? If not, why not? Does the beginning of the year seem like a long time ago? How have they changed over the course of the year?

Students were told last September that their annual goals should be “*smart*, ” that is:

- **Specific** rather than general (*Such as: “I want above a 3.0 GPA ”*).
- **Measurable** by the types of classes taken, or grades, or attendance.
- **Achievable** or realistic for a 6th grade student.
- **Rewarding** or positive, rather than negative, and fun to achieve.
- **Time-oriented** and able to be finished by the end of the school year.

Ask students to look over their goals. Looking back at them now, do their goals fit the “*smart*” requirements? Does that make it easier to see if they’ve met their goals? Why or why not? For future goals – even for goals about the same thing – how would students write them? Would they change the way they express their goals?

Then ask students to think about their long-term goals and dreams for life beyond high school. (They discussed and wrote about these dreams during the December and January Paterson Pathways discussions). Have those dreams changed as a result of their experiences this year? How? Have students done anything (such as in their choices for 7th grade courses) to work toward those goals?

What have their Paterson Pathways advisories taught them? And how have these lessons influenced their goals for this year and life after high school?

**MATERIALS
NEEDED:**

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

***ANNUAL GOALS REFLECTIONS* from last September.** Students will review their annual goals during this discussion.

WEEK 3:

DEVELOP FOUR-YEAR PLANS

Over the course of the school year, your students have developed both short-term (one year) and long-term (postsecondary) goals. Now it's time to think about goals in a new way.



The four-year plan your students will develop during this discussion is based on necessary information required for High School and beyond. By revisiting and revising this plan each year, your students will be able to assess how they are doing, where they are going, and how they are changing as they move from middle school to high school and then to life beyond high school.

Setting these plans now will help bring closure to the school year, allowing students an opportunity to summarize and synthesize the work they've done during the year in Paterson Pathways – in their student-led conferences, in their academic improvement plans, and in their plans for postsecondary education and eventual careers. Setting four-year plans now will also help students look ahead, not just to next year, but to several years beyond, helping students see themselves as students and as learners (engaged and motivated at school) in each of those four years.

Distribute ***FOUR-YEAR PLAN REFLECTIONS*** to students. Review the reflections with students, asking them to focus on what they want to achieve during the next four years... and beyond:

- **Your Personal Story:** students shared their stories at their conferences; ask them to reiterate by writing several sentences about who they are and who they want to become over the next four years.
- **Your Learning Style:** students learned how they learn best and then developed academic improvement plans based on that knowledge. How do they want to continue to improve academically?
- **Your Goals For High School:** what do students hope to achieve when they reach high school? What classes, extracurricular activities, sports, or other activities do they want to pursue?
- **Your Goals For After High School:** how do students' goals for high school help prepare them for their long-term dreams?

Ask students to complete the reflections. Then ask students to add the completed reflections to their portfolios.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

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

FOUR-YEAR PLAN REFLECTION. Please make a copy for each student.

**STUDENT
PRODUCTS:**

Your students will be expected to create two products from this lesson.

Four-Year Plan. Each student should complete a *FOUR-YEAR PLAN REFLECTION*.

Updated portfolio. Each student should update his or her portfolio by checking portfolio contents and adding a completed *FOUR-YEAR PLAN REFLECTION* and checking it off on their *PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST*. This will be the last check for the school year.

WEEK 4:**CELEBRATE!**

Your students have nearly completed the first year of middle school. How did they do? What have they learned?

Celebrate the year and the community you've formed with your advisory group. Talk with students about their plans for the summer... and remind students that you expect to see them in the fall.

**MATERIALS
NEEDED:**

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

Pizza, balloons, cookies or other treats to celebrate the end of the year



REFLECTION

FOUR-YEAR PLAN

MAY – 6TH GRADE

Name: _____

Advisor: _____

WHAT WILL YOU ACCOMPLISH DURING THE NEXT FOUR YEARS?

The next four years of your life will cover 7th grade, 8th grade, 9th grade, and 10th grade.

What do you hope to accomplish during those years? What do you want to be doing by the time you're a sophomore in high school? Take a few minutes to answer the following questions, as you think about what you want for your life during the next four years... and beyond.

YOUR PERSONAL STORY: *you shared your story at your conference last month; today, write a sentence or two about who you are and who you want to become over the next four years*

YOUR LEARNING STYLE: *you've learned how you learn best and then developed an academic improvement plan based on that knowledge. How will you continue to improve academically?*

YOUR GOALS FOR HIGH SCHOOL: *what do you hope to achieve during your first two years in high school? What classes, extracurricular activities, sports, or other activities do you want to pursue?*

YOUR GOALS FOR AFTER HIGH SCHOOL: *how do your goals for high school help you prepare for your long-term dreams?*



Paterson Pathways

Paterson Public Schools Advisory Curriculum Framework





RESOURCE GUIDE

**BACKGROUND IN FORMATION FOR
LEAD ADVISORS AND INTERESTED
TEACHERS ON:**

**GRADE 6 – MAY
UPDATING THE FOUR-YEAR PLAN**

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.
- **Classroom Activities.** This *Resource Guide* provides more information and background resources on the activities outlined above in the discussion guide.
- **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 them

**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 **Updating the Four-Year Plan**. The Essential Questions are:

- What do I want to do in the future?
- How can I prepare?

Over the course of the year, your students have had a number of opportunities to think about both short-term and long-term goals and dreams. This month's guide asks students to harness those goals and dreams to outline a plan for the next four years.

The four-year plan is based on necessary information required for High School and beyond. By combining information about themselves and who they are with information from their academic improvement plans, annual goals, long-term dreams, and high school and post-high school plans, your students will have the opportunity to synthesize everything they've created during Paterson Pathways and turn it into a blueprint for the next several years of their lives.

Help students reflect on what they've learned this year. How have their goals and dreams changed as they've experienced a year of middle school? How has Paterson Pathways changed the way they think about school, or about their futures?

Make sure your students consider the essential questions for this lesson as they work: What do I want to do in the future? How can I prepare?



**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 plans to realize those dreams. By considering their goals for the next four years – and then synthesizing their academic, social, and personal plans into those goals – your students will be more likely to continue to think of themselves as learners and as students over the next four years.

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 graduate on time)? How many of your students will be coming back to school in the fall? How can you encourage them – and how can they encourage each other – to make the most of their summers and the most of 7th grade next year?
- **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:

- **Create a poster or slide show of your activities from the year.** What has your advisory group done this year? If you have time, collect photos or other mementos and create a poster, slide show, or video of your year together. Do you have photos of students at their student-led conferences? Photos from their meeting with the 8th graders last fall? Programs from assemblies or plays? Choose music and create a year in review to celebrate the end of 6th grade.
- **Host a graduation party for your 8th grade partner group.** The Paterson Pathways curriculum suggested last February that your 6th grade group partner with an 8th grade group for a discussion about school activities and traditions. Use this opportunity to invite your 8th grade partners to a celebration of their graduation.
- **Ask your students to share their four-year plans with their parents or guardians.** Ask your students to talk with their parents or guardians about what they want to be doing four years from now. What do the students hope to accomplish? What about their parents? What do they want to accomplish during the next four years? This could be an interesting way for students to realize that their parents' lives are not static, and for students to encourage their parents to reach goals, even as the students work toward their own.
- **Have lunch together as an advisory group.** As another way of celebrating the end of the year, order pizza or have students bring sack lunches, and have lunch together.

**WRAPPING UP
THE YEAR:**

To conclude your role as a Paterson Pathways advisor for the year, please **complete the survey on the next two pages** and return it to your lead advisor. Your comments will help your school (and de) adapt and adjust the Paterson Pathways curriculum and format.

Thanks for everything you've done to help your students succeed this year!

NJCCCS**LISTENING and SPEAKING**

- 3.4A2 Listen attentively and critically to a variety of speakers.
- 3.4B2 Demonstrate competence in active listening by interpreting and applying received information to new situations and in solving problems.
- Listen to determine a speaker's purpose, attitude, and perspective.
- 3.4A6 Participate in class discussion appropriately.
- 3.3 A5



WRITING

- 3.2 D1 Write for different purposes and a variety of audiences.
- 3.2 D11 Demonstrates higher-order thinking skills and writing clarity when answering open-ended and essay questions in content area or as responses to literature.
- 3.2 D 15 Develop a collection of writings(e.g. a literacy portfolio)

**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:B2 Plan to achieve goals (Apply knowledge of aptitudes and interests to goal setting).
- A:C1 Relate school to life experiences (Understand how school success and academic achievement enhance future career and vocational opportunities).

PERSONAL and SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- PS:B1 Self knowledge applications (Identify long and short term goals).





ADVISOR SURVEY

END-OF-YEAR EVALUATION

Name (OPTIONAL):

Advisory Group's Grade Level:

DEAR ADVISORS:

We depend on you! Thank you for everything you've done to help your students succeed this year.

HOW DID PATERSON PATHWAYS WORK FOR YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS?

The Paterson Pathways lesson format and schedule were effective:

Yes

No

Don't know

Please comment:

The discussion guides and reflections I was provided helped me organize advisory sessions:

Yes

No

Don't know

Please comment:

The background information in the Paterson Pathways *Resource Guides* was helpful:

Yes

No

Don't know

Please comment:

Paterson Pathways helped me organize community activities with my students:

Yes

No

Don't know

Please comment:

Please continue on the next page.

PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR SCHOOL'S LEAD ADVISOR

Paterson Pathways has helped my students do better academically:

Yes

No

Don't know

Please comment:

Paterson Pathways has helped my students do better socially as part of the life of our school or community:

Yes

No

Don't know

Please comment:

Paterson Pathways has helped my students make clear plans for the future:

Yes

No

Don't know

Please comment:

General comments or suggestions about Paterson Pathways: