



DISCUSSION GUIDE

GRADE: 7
MONTH: SEPTEMBER
THEME: SETTING GOALS

PATERSON PATHWAYS:

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

USING THIS 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 weekly “advisory” class period.

This *Grade 7 September* packet includes:

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

DISCUSSION GOALS:

Get acquainted with the students in your advisory group and help them get to know you and each other.

Help students understand the value of keeping a portfolio.

Help students set goals for the year.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

What do I want to do with my life?
What do I want to achieve this year?

WEEK 1:

GETTING ACQUAINTED

This first lesson helps re-introduce students to the advisory program and get re-acquainted with their advisor and with each other. This is an

important lesson because it helps continue the trusting relationships – between students and advisor and among the students in the advisory – that make advisory such a powerful learning tool. Students will also have the opportunity to review and update their portfolios for 7th grade.

- Ensure that you are familiar with the purpose of the portfolio and the contents students will be expected to file in their portfolios.
- Think up creative ways to break the ice with both continuing and new students and build trusting, nurturing relationships. (Please see “A Word on Icebreakers.”)

Getting Acquainted

Re-introduce yourself to the students in your advisory group. Introduce any new students. Welcome them back to school. As an icebreaker, you may wish to talk about your summer vacations and plans for the year or play a name game. You may wish to provide food for this first advisory. Nothing breaks the ice faster with middle school students! You can have students interview each other, or play name games, or have each student share interesting facts.

Check credits or grades. Help students review their transcripts or final grade reports from 6th grade and review the progress they made. Ensure they are progressing toward graduation. If you do not have computer access to check grades on-line, print a transcript for each student.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Access to **students’ transcripts or grade reports from 6th grade.**
Icebreaker Activities.

Students should also insert final report cards from last year in the **LEARNER** section.

WEEK 2:

SETTING GOALS AND UPDATING PORTFOLIOS

Setting goals and then being encouraged to follow up on them while they are in the familiar territory of middle school will help students approach the transition to high school. **Students will also have the opportunity to revisit their portfolios and reflect on last year goals.**

- Familiarize yourself with the 7th Grade portfolio checklist
- Ensure that you have students' portfolios ready. Advisors may want to discuss how well students have followed up on their goals since they set them.

You may wish to review your students' progress in their classes to date so that you can identify any students who are having trouble.

Remember advisors that even though students won't revisit their goals at every lesson, it's a good idea to regularly ask students how they're doing with respect to the goals they set at the beginning of the year.

Update portfolios. Distribute copies of the **7th Grade Portfolio Checklist**. Ask students to ensure that their portfolios are up-to-date and well-organized from 6th grade and then help them get their portfolios ready to enter new material from 7th grade.

Discuss students' Citizenship, Academic and Career Goals. Last year your students developed goals for (1) joining activities and volunteering at the school; (2) succeeding academically this year; and (3) following their interests to explore career pathways. Discuss these goals with them. Have they taken any steps to achieve their goals? What might help them achieve their goals?

**MATERIALS
NEEDED:**

PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST reflection

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

**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 inserting the *PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST* into the front of their portfolios.

WEEK 3: DEVELOP ANNUAL GOALS.

As students progress through middle school, they'll be encouraged to think about their goals for the future and, specifically, about what they can do during the school year to achieve those goals. Through their goal statements, students will be encouraged:

- To think about their interests and dreams for the future;
- To plan ways to do better academically;
- To become contributing citizens and take on active leadership roles at school and in the community; and
- To explore the skills and attributes that will help them identify their career interests and then secure the training and education they need to succeed in that career.

Setting goals and then being encouraged to follow up on them while they are in the familiar territory of middle school will help students approach the transition to high school. **Students will also have the opportunity to revisit their portfolios.**

Distribute a copy of the *ANNUAL GOALS* reflection to each student. Ask students to study the goals they have set so far this year and then decide how to combine them into a set of overall goals for the school year. You may want to have students discuss their goals in small groups or as a whole group.

Review portfolios. Have students retrieve their portfolios. Ask them to file their **Annual Goals** in the *LEARNER* section of their portfolios. Ask if any of them have any other work samples they'd like to file in their portfolios.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

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

ANNUAL GOAL reflection

STUDENT PRODUCTS:

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

ANNUAL GOALS reflection.

Updated portfolio. Each student should complete the *ANNUAL GOALS* reflection and file it in the *LEARNER* section.



REFLECTION

PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST SEPTEMBER – 7TH GRADE

Name: _____

You should add the following materials to your portfolio this year. Please **KEEP THIS CHECKLIST IN YOUR PORTFOLIO** and check off each item as you add it.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Annual Goals:** Your goal statement from 7th grade.
- High School & Beyond Plan:**
- Transcript:** Summarizing your grades and credits from 7th grade.
- Academic Inventory:** The plan you prepared in 7th grade.
- Work Samples:** Work samples (at least **one** from **each** of your core courses):
 - Science
 - Social Studies
 - Math
 - Language Arts
- Optional:*
 - Foreign Language
 - Other Elective: _____

CAREER DEVELOPMENT:

- Career Interests Worksheet:** Your reflections on your results on your career research.
- Postsecondary Worksheet:** Your worksheets on your plans for life after high school.
- Resume:** Your 7th grade version of your resume.

PERSONAL & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Service Worksheet:** A worksheet about any volunteer service projects you complete.
- Other Activity Information:** Work samples, certificates of accomplishment, awards, photos, or information about extracurricular activities you participated in during 7th grade



REFLECTION

ANNUAL GOALS

SEPTEMBER – 7TH GRADE

Name: _____

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH THIS YEAR?

You need to develop 3 goals for the 7th grade:

- **Academic** – how you will successfully manage your classes this year?
- **Career** – how you will learn more about your interests and explore a career pathway?
- **Citizen** – how you will participate and volunteer in school activities?

Are your goals realistic? What would help you accomplish your goals this year?

- Should you change your 6th Grade goals to make them more realistic?
- Should you set priorities, and organize your goals by how important they are?
- Should you rewrite your goals – in terms of small steps – that will be easier to accomplish?
- Can you think of people who can help you succeed?

Think about these questions. Then write at least three “Annual Goals” that you want to accomplish.

ANNUAL GOALS

GOAL 1 (Academic): This year I will _____

GOAL 2 (Career): This year I will _____

GOAL 3 (Citizen): This year I will _____

Additional notes:





RESOURCE GUIDE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR LEAD ADVISORS AND INTERESTED TEACHERS ON:

GRADE 7: GETTING ACQUAINTED AND SETTING GOALS

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 **Setting Goals**. The Essential Questions are:

- What do I want to do with my life?
- What do I want to achieve this year?

As students begin the school year, they'll be encouraged to think about their goals for the future and, specifically, about what they can do during the school year to achieve those goals. Through their goal statements, students will be encouraged:

- To think about their interests and dreams for the future;
- To plan ways to do better academically;
- To take on more active leadership roles at school and in the community;
- To become better citizens through active participation at school and volunteer service in the community; and
- To explore the skills and attributes that will help them identify their career interests and then secure the training and education they need to succeed in that career.

The goal-setting exercise in this discussion guide builds on the Essential Questions with more specific questions and instructions for the students.

However, feel free to weave these Essential Questions into every part of the guide, helping students see the start of a new school year (and a new school) as a chance to reassess and start fresh. What would make this year a success? What can they do to make sure they succeed? These questions are particularly important as your students adjust to middle school. How can they make the transition successfully?

As you discuss the guide think about how you can help students make the connection between their actions this year and their goals for the years ahead.

**COMMUNITY-
BUILDING**

Part of the aim of the Paterson Pathways curriculum is to help students grow into a larger role in their community.



OPPORTUNITIES:

“Community” here includes both the community of the school (in which students can join clubs, play sports, or take on a leadership role in student government) and also the larger community in which they live (in which students can perform volunteer service or join community organizations, such as select sports teams, music or drama ensembles, or other groups).

Each discussion in the Paterson Pathways curriculum highlights opportunities to help students think about or actually take on a larger role in one of these two communities.

In this guide, the main community-building opportunity is helping students in your advisory group get to know each other and you, their advisor. The students are new to the school and to middle school generally. They may not know many of their classmates. They may be nervous about the beginning of a new school year. By introducing yourself and helping them get to know you and each other, students will be able to become more comfortable at school. They will know that they have a group of people – an adult and other students – who know them and whom they’ll see every week until they graduate. Studies have shown that the presence of these types of connections, particularly with a trusted adult, can help keep students engaged and motivated at school and help keep them from dropping out. Hopefully you’ll be able to build these relationships over the next several years, making your advisory meetings a place where students feel safe, respected, and trusted.

In addition, if you have more time, you may wish to help students get to know the school and school community better. You might want to have students take a tour of the school (if they haven’t taken one already during a new student orientation). You might want to organize presentations on school clubs and sports (as preparation for next month’s lesson, which is specifically on this topic). Or you might want to go over rules and expectations at the school, by reviewing the student handbook, for instance. This could also be a time to go over school policies on computer and Internet use, use of cell phones and electronics on the school campus, and rules of behavior toward others.

In some schools, students in advisory groups take on group volunteer projects, either within the school or in the larger community. Volunteer service is covered later in the Paterson Pathways curriculum; however, if you have the time and inclination, you might want to engage your students in volunteer projects from the start as a way to help them build bonds with each other and with other people in their community.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

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

- **Invite older students to talk about their goals for the year.** The Paterson Pathways curriculum suggests inviting older students to talk with younger students next month. But, you could ask older students



to regularly “advise” younger students on their progress, or partner with an 8th grade group for regular meetings.

- **Ask your students to share their schedules with their parents or guardians.** Ask your students to introduce their parents or guardians to their new school by sharing their course schedule for the fall and discussing their classes. This could be good preparation for Back to School Night.
- **Have lunch together as an advisory group.** As another way of helping the students in your group get to know each other, order pizza or have students bring sack lunches, and have lunch together.
- **Take a walking/cleaning tour of the neighborhood.** Give each student a trash bag and pair of plastic gloves. Walk the perimeter of the school picking up garbage and talking about the school and the neighborhood.
- **Host a computer tutorial.** If your school is computer-oriented, host a tutorial to help 7th graders learn how to accomplish basic functions on your computer system.

PREPARING FOR NEXT MONTH:

Next month’s Paterson Pathways session is focused on helping students understand assessments and use information from their grades and test scores to improve their academic performance. Here’s how you can plan ahead for next month:

- **Obtain a copy of each student’s NJASK scores.** Students’ NJASK scores from spring of 6th grade should be available during October or early November. Students will need their NJASK scores for the October advisory session, and will then add their scores to their portfolios.
- **Obtain a copy of each student’s first progress report.** Students will also review their first progress report during the November session, and will then add their report to their portfolios.

N.J.C.C.C.S. LANGUAGE ARTS- Writing

- 3.2.7.D.1 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).
- 3.2.7.D.2 Gather, select, and organize information appropriate to a topic, task, and audience.
- 3.2.7.D.10 Use a variety of strategies to organize writing, including sequence, chronology, cause/effect, problem/solution,



and order of importance.

Speaking

- 3.3.7.A.2 Present ideas and opinions spontaneously in response to a topic or other speakers.
- 3.3.7.C.1 Paraphrase, illustrate, clarify, and/or expand on a topic or idea.
- 3.3.7.C.2. Develop and use advanced vocabulary related to a topic.
- 3.3.7.C.3 Use language that stimulates an audience's interest.

Listening

- 3.4.7.A.1 Listen actively for a variety of purposes such as enjoyment and obtaining information.
- 3.4.7.A.3 Acknowledge the speaker through eye contact and use appropriate feedback and question clarify the speaker's message.

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

9.1.B.2 Develop and employment package that includes a job application, letter of interest, and resume.

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:A2 Acquire skills for improvement learning (demonstrate how effort and persistence positively affect learning).
- A:B2 Plan to achieve goals (develop and implement an annual plan of study to maximize academic ability and achievement)

