



DISCUSSION GUIDE

GRADE: 8

MONTH: SEPTEMBER

THEME: SETTING GOALS

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 weekly “advisory” class period.

This *Grade 8 September* packet includes:

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

DISCUSSION GOALS:

Get re-acquainted with the students in your advisory group and meet new students.

Help students check and update their portfolios.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

What do I want to do with my life?

What do I want to achieve this year?

WEEK 1

GETTING Re-ACQUAINTED

Introduce yourself to any new student in your advisory group. Welcome the students back and let them know that you and they will continue meeting together in the same advisory group until they graduate.

As 8th graders, students in your advisory group may already know each other well. However, they are often still awkward and unsure of themselves when asked to share with one another. Use your get acquainted time to have a little fun, help them relax, and help them get to know each other and you, their advisor. Serve donuts or cookies, or play Pictionary or charades. Here are several additional suggestions for icebreakers, or feel free to use an icebreaker of your own.

Icebreaker Exercise Idea #1: Student Interviews

Divide students into pairs (if you have an uneven number of students, you can work with one student or you can create one group of three). Ask one student in each pair to interview the other to learn the major points of the other student's life: name, siblings, pets, summer vacation activities, favorite color, favorite food, etc. After about two minutes, have students switch roles and interview the other person in the pair. After another two minutes, have each student introduce his or her partner to the class. Who has learned the most fun facts?

Icebreaker Exercise Idea #2: Trivia Musical Chairs

Arrange chairs in a circle so that there are one fewer chairs than people. Have each student sit in a chair. You, the advisor, should be in the perimeter of the circle of chairs, but should remain standing. Call out a trivia fact and ask every student for whom that fact is true to quickly find a chair (you, too!) (For instance, you might call out, "Everyone with brown eyes, find a new chair!" Or "Everyone who's taking Spanish in school this year, find a new chair!") You should sit down during this first round, so that one of the students is standing. That student should introduce him- or herself, and then should call out a new trivia fact (you may prompt students if they need ideas – hair color, shirt color, take the bus vs. walk, etc.). Play for several rounds. Then, with the students seated and the advisor once again standing, go around the room again and have each student introduce him- or herself along with one piece of trivia (for example, "My name is Katie and I take the bus to school.")

Icebreaker Exercise Idea #3: Name Game

Have your students stand or sit in a circle. Introduce yourself again. ("Hi, my name is Mrs. Baker.") Then ask the student to your right to introduce him- or herself and also to repeat your name. ("Hi, my name is Reggie and her name is Mrs. Baker.")



Repeat, until each student has introduced him- or herself and repeated the name of the person ahead.

Icebreaker Exercise Idea #4: Name Game with Movement

Have your students stand or sit in a circle. Introduce yourself again and make a movement as you do so. (For instance, say “Hi, my name is Mrs. Baker,” while you hop on one foot.) Then have the students greet you while repeating your movement. (They respond, “Hi, Mrs. Baker!” while all hopping on one foot.) Go around the circle. Have each student introduce him- or herself while making a movement (flapping arms, jumping in place, etc.). For each introduction, have all the students repeat the name and the movement. After you’ve gone around the circle, you can point at individual students and see how many can remember their names and movements.

Next, explain advisory logistics for this year, such as how your school’s schedule will work on advisory days; and discuss your expectations for students’ behavior. See if students have questions.

**MATERIALS
NEEDED:**

Icebreaker supplies (if desired). Depending on the icebreaker exercise you select, you may need materials or props.



WEEK 2:

SETTING ANNUAL GOALS

Setting goals for the year is particularly important for 8th graders as they prepare for the crucial transition to high school next year.

Discuss students' Citizenship, Academic and Career Goals.

Last year, your students were asked to develop goals for (1) volunteering and showing leadership at 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?

Begin to Develop Annual Goals. Distribute a copy of the *ANNUAL GOALS* reflection. Have students retrieve their goals from 6th and 7th grade. Discuss what goals they have set so far in middle school, have they reached their goals. Decide how to develop a set of overall goals for this school year. Remember Goals should be S.M.A.R.T. You may want to have students discuss their goals in small groups or as a whole group. (This will be continued next week.)

Take a few minutes to review the *PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST* reflection with the students. Point out that in November the students will complete a **High School Plan** to better prepare for next year.

**MATERIALS
NEEDED:**

Student portfolios will need to be available at every session.
PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST reflection
8TH GRADE PRESENTATION INTRODUCTION reflection
ANNUAL GOALS reflection

**STUDENT
PRODUCTS:**

Students will be expected to create the following products during this lesson:

- **Updated Portfolio.** Each student should update his or her portfolio by doing the following:
 - Place the *PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST* reflection in the front of their binders before all tabs.
 - Place the *8TH GRADE ANNUAL GOALS* reflection in the beginning of the *LEARNER* section of their binders.



WEEK 3:**SETTING GOALS CONTINUED**

Develop Annual Goals. Revisit Annual Goals started last week. Have students finalize their annual goals for 8th grade. Discuss how they will achieve these goals.

Discuss what they have learned about goals. Do they understand the difference between long and short term goals? Explain the importance of setting goals each year in high school in order to meet all requirements for graduation.

**MATERIALS
NEEDED:**

ANNUAL GOALS reflection

**STUDENT
PRODUCTS:**

Students will be expected to create one product during this lesson:

ANNUAL GOALS reflection





REFLECTION

8TH GRADE HIGH SCHOOL PLAN INTRODUCTION

SEPTEMBER – 8TH GRADE

WHAT IS A HIGH SCHOOL PLAN?

To help you answer these three questions, you will work on a **High School Plan** during Paterson Pathways this year. The High School Plan will help you think about what you want to accomplish during high school:

- Your career goals and dreams for the future
- The career pathway you want during high school to achieve your dreams
- The courses you want to take during high school to achieve your dreams
- Your plans to get involved in activities during high school



REFLECTION PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

SEPTEMBER – 8TH 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 8th grade.
- High School & Beyond Plan.**
- Transcript:** Summarizing your grades and credits from 8th grade.
- Academic Inventory:** The plan you prepare in 8th 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 Pathways Worksheet:** Your reflections on your results on your career research.
- High School Plan:** Your plan for courses to take during high school and how you will succeed.

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 8th grade.



REFLECTION

ANNUAL GOALS

SEPTEMBER – 8TH GRADE

Name: _____

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH THIS YEAR?

You will develop three goals for 8th 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 and be a leader at school

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

- Should you change your 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 8 – SEPTEMBER 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

Each Paterson Pathways discussion guide is built around a

QUESTIONS:

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 guide. 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.

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

COMMUNITY-BUILDING

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. They may be nervous about the beginning of a new school year. By reintroducing yourself and helping them to get reacquainted with each other, the students will be able to become more comfortable at school. Hopefully you have been able to build these relationships over the past several years, making your advisory meetings a place where students feel safe, respected, and trusted.

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 graduates of your school to return and talk to students about their high school and college experiences.** You may have former students whose schedule will permit for these types of visits.
- **Ask your students to share their schedules with their parents or guardians.** Ask your students to introduce their parents or guardians to their 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 reacquainted with 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 6th 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 7th grade should be available during October. 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 October session, and will then add their report to their portfolios.
- **Make copies of *ANNUAL GOALS REFLECTION*, *PROTFOLIO CHECKLIST REFLECTION*, and *LEARNING STYLES REFLECTION* for each student.**

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

Writing

- 3.2.8.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).
- 3.2.8.D.2 Gather, select, and organize information appropriate to a topic, task, and audience.
- 3.2.8.D.10 Use a variety of strategies to organize writing, including sequence, chronology, cause/effect, problem/solution, and order of importance.

Speaking

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

Listening

- 3.4.8.A.1 Listen actively for a variety of purposes such as enjoyment and obtaining information.
- 3.4.8.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)

