



DISCUSSION GUIDE

GRADE: 8

MONTH: MAY

THEME: MAKING THE TRANSITION

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, once a week “advisory” class period.

This *Grade 8 May* packet includes:

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

DISCUSSION GOALS:

- Review student experiences in 8th grade.
- Help students prepare for next year.
- Celebrate!

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

What do I want to do next year?

How can I succeed?



WEEK 1:**UPDATE PORTFOLIOS**

This will be students' last month of advisory in middle school! At the end of this session, students will be expected to add completed ***FOUR-YEAR PLAN*** reflection (from January) to their portfolios. Do they want to update their plan? This is the time to do so.

COMPLETE THE CONFERENCE EVALUATION RUBRIC this month after conferences are held. Give the students time to complete the rubric. Discuss their impressions of the student led conference

Most students have now completed their third student led conference. Review the results of the Student-Led Conferences. How did they go? What were the families' reactions? What would you have improved? What did you learn in the conferences that you can use in oral presentations in the future? How do you think the conferences you participated in throughout middle school will benefit you in high school?

**MATERIALS
NEEDED:**

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

FOUR-YEAR PLAN reflection (from January)

THE CONFERENCE EVALUATION RUBRIC reflection (from April)

WEEK 2:**REVIEW THE YEAR**

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. Evaluate if these goals were met. If so, what did you do to keep yourself on track? If not, where did you go wrong? What can you improve to make sure you keep your goals in the future? How do you think your goals will change, now that you are close to entering high school?

This portion of the discussion helps students revisit the work they've done this year in setting goals, and focusing on their goals for 8th 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

Review the year. Look back at the middle school years. Discuss with students what they thought was best – and worst – about middle school. Did advisory help? Why or why not? What advice would they give to incoming 6th graders about succeeding in middle school? What did they learn this year? Where did they make progress? If you have been taking photos of advisory activities, you may want to show a slide show documenting the last three years. If you will be sending their portfolios home, you may want to formally present them to each student.

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 lesson.

WEEK 3:**PLAN FOR NEXT YEAR**

What challenges and opportunities will next year bring? Discuss what your students can expect next year when they are 9th graders. Are there clubs, activities, or leadership positions they can take on as 9th graders? Are there activities they didn't pursue this year that they want to try next year? What about their courses? How many will be taking advanced or honors courses?

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. Planning for next year will also help students look ahead several years beyond, helping students see themselves as students and as learners (engaged and motivated at school) in each of those four years.

**MATERIALS
NEEDED:**

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

**STUDENT
PRODUCTS:**

Your students will be expected to complete their portfolio for middle school.

Completed portfolios. Each student's portfolio should be either: (a) passed along to the high school; or (b) presented to students to take home and save if going to high school out of district.



WEEK 4:**CELEBRATE!**

Your students have completed their middle school experience! How did they do? What have they learned? How does this compare to 6th and 7th grades?

Celebrate the year and the community you've formed with your advisory group. Talk with students about their plans for the summer and high school. Celebrate the accomplishments and the growth of your students and wish them well with their future endeavors!

**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.





RESOURCE GUIDE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR LEAD ADVISORS AND INTERESTED TEACHERS ON:

GRADE 8 – MAY MAKING THE TRANSITION

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 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 **Making the Transition**. The Essential Questions are:

- What do I want to do next year?
- How can I succeed?

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 plan for the next year.

Help students reflect on what they've learned this year. How have their goals and dreams changed as they've experienced their last year of middle school? How has Paterson Pathways changed the way they think about school, or about their futures? How has Paterson Pathways helped their future high school careers? Make sure your students consider the essential questions for this discussion as they work: What do I want to do next year? How can I succeed?

**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 year – 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 for the years to come.

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)? Where are your students going next year? Who is going to what Academy? What courses and perspective careers will be followed? How do they plan to make the most of their high school careers?
- **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? What kind of connections and communication can be continued next year or for years to come?

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? Programs from assemblies or plays? Choose music and create a year in review to celebrate the end of 8th grade.
- **Host a graduation party for your 8th grade advisory groups.** The Paterson Pathways curriculum suggested that your 8th grade group get together for a celebration of their graduation.
- **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 at the end of this guide** and return it to your lead advisor. Your comments will help your school adapt and adjust the Paterson Pathways curriculum and format.

After spending three years with your advisory group, the hope is you will continue to be an advisor for the next incoming 6th grade class.

Thanks for everything you’ve done to help your students succeed this year! You have certainly made a difference in their lives.

NJCCCS:

LANGUAGE ARTS**LISTENING and SPEAKING**

- 3.4.8 A7 Participate in class discussion appropriately.
- 3.4.8 B3 Integrate relevant information regarding issues and problems from a group discussions and interviews for reports, issues, projects, debates, and oral presentations.
- 3.3.8B4 Solve a problem or understand a task through group cooperation.

WRITING

- 3.2.8D1 Gather, select, and organize information appropriate to a topic, task, and audience.
- 3.2.8D3 Write responses to literature and develop insights into interpretations by connecting to personal experiences and referring to textual information.
- 3.2D14 Maintain a collection of writings

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).



PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR SCHOOL'S LEAD ADVISOR



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:



Paterson Public Schools Advisory Curriculum Framework

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:



Paterson Pathways



Paterson Public Schools Advisory Curriculum Framework