

## **ESCALATOR**

**Overview:** Meeting goals can be challenging when there are no concrete strategies to obtain them, and just as important is being able to tackle potential setbacks. This lesson helps students chart a course for goal attainment in a visual manner.

**SD Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success:  
K-12 College, Career, and Life-Ready Competencies for Every Student:**

- M 4. Self-confidence in ability to succeed
- B-LS 2. Creative approach to learning, tasks, and problem solving
- B-SMS 6. Ability to identify and overcome barriers

**Estimated time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**

- Escalator PowerPoint
- Escalator Handout

**Instructions:**

1. Ask students about why it is important to have goals for the future. Possible discussion prompts: What are some of your goals for this school year? When you're in the next grade range (either middle school or high school)? Beyond high school? etc.
2. Tell students that we will be considering what is important to us when creating goals.
3. Distribute a copy of the Escalator Handout to each student.
4. Side 1 of Escalator Handout:
  - a. Use the PowerPoint to have students complete this side of the handout. Below are prompts for each slide.
    - i. In the #1 blank, write down a goal you have. As we discussed a few minutes earlier, goals can be anything from something you want to accomplish this school year, the next grade, in high school, for a career, and more.
      1. We call this your "future self."
    - ii. In the #2 blank, consider where you are now in relation to obtaining your goal. This is based on the goal you wrote for your "future self." For example, it might be a skillset you don't currently have that you want to obtain.
      1. This is called your "current self."
    - iii. In the #3 blank, write down what would be the result of the worst-case scenario happening in not meeting your goal (your "future self").
      1. This is called your "feared self."

5. Tell students to think about the information they've written so far and imagine they are riding an escalator.
  - a. As some students – especially those living in rural areas – may not have experienced an escalator before, it will be useful to describe how we simply just stand on the escalator and it takes us either up or down, rather than having to take the stairs.
6. Side 2 of the Escalator Handout:
  - a. Tell the students to draw or write their "future self" (what they put in #1 on the other side of the handout) at the top of the escalator, their "current self" (#2 on the other side of the handout), and their "feared self" (item #3 on the other side of the handout) at the bottom of the escalator.
    - i. Ask students the following:
      1. When you visualize your escalator, what images are at the top, representing your "future self"?
        - a. Draw or write these at the top of your escalator.
      2. What images are at the bottom of the escalator, representing your "feared self"?
        - a. Draw or write these at the bottom of your escalator.
      3. What challenges would you anticipate would make it difficult to reach your goal ("future self")?
        - a. Draw or write these on the track towards the bottom of the escalator.
7. Tell students to picture an escalator moving downwards, while they are trying to walk up it.
  - a. Ask students what will happen if they do nothing and just stand on the escalator? (They will be pulled down to the bottom.)
  - b. Tell students that if they don't continue to step upward on the escalator, they will be pulled like a magnet down toward what they fear becoming (their "feared self").
    - i. Explain that even if they stand still, they will move down the escalator. Non-movement is the same as not moving fast enough.
8. Ask the students to consider what it would take for them to reach their "future self" from their "current self." What would it take to make forward motion up that escalator?
  - a. Using side 2 of the Escalator Handout, have students write or draw ways they can get up the escalator to meet their goal (or "future self").
9. Show an example of an escalator with someone's goal of living somewhere they can work with horses. (The Notes section of the Escalator PowerPoint explain the "future self," "current self," and "feared self," and what it would take to achieve that goal, as well as not.)
10. What does it all mean? Tell the students they did this activity so they can see how they can reach their goal, and also what could happen if they do not. Tell them they have the power to reach their goals!

### **Processing/Application Questions:**

- What is it like putting your "future self," "current self," and "feared self" on paper? What does it do to help you consider how to reach your goal?
- Why is it important to have a plan or strategies to achieve a goal?
- What can you do to navigate through potential setbacks in achieving a goal?
- If you did not put this on your own escalator, consider who could help you reach your goal. Who are some supporters to help you?

Adapted from:

Hayden, S.C.W., Friday, A.R., Morgan, L.M., & Storlie, C.S. (2017). *Intersection of career and self concept [PowerPoint slides]*. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/SCandCareer>.