**Student-Driven Learning Playlist Guide**

**Getting Started**

Welcome to the Student-Driven Learning Playlist! When we allow students to take ownership over their learning, engagement increases and magic happens. Teachers who leave the traditional, "sage on the stage" role love to share the magic that happens when they give students more control and become a learning partner. This sounds scary to many teachers. We understand! Today's virtual environment already provides students with more control. It's a great time to try this approach, and there are easy, proven steps you can take to test the waters. Give it a try!

**Navigating this Playlist**

The Tracks in this Playlist are arranged in a loosely increasing order of complexity. We recommend that you view all of them in the order presented, but each Play stands on its own. Explore what is here, and we're confident that you will find something of value to aid in your work.

To help with your exploration, we've included a brief description of each Track, along with suggestions for use. As you move through the Playlist and the individual pages where the Tracks reside, you'll find more details and supports, including suggested modifications for the pandemic's virtual world.

**The Tracks**

1) [Curiosity Time](#).  What if you could increase engagement while simultaneously teaching your students to ask great questions, investigate issues, and share their findings? What if we told you it only takes a few minutes? Curiosity Time is an easy Track that pays huge dividends. Teachers love using this activity at the beginning of a unit of study, where student-generated questions build enthusiasm and inform planning and delivery.

2) [What Do Students Want to Learn](#)?  Why not ask them? Virginia's Former State Superintendent for Public Instruction shares how schools can begin with small, innovative practices that will spark larger changes over time. He shares a simple but powerful activity that transformed a middle school. This Track is a great way to introduce classrooms, grades, or an entire school to the benefits of student-driven learning.

3) [Genius Time](#).  You can't go wrong if it's called "Genius Time." This Track based on Google's "Genius Hour" concept dedicates classroom time for students to plan and conduct individual projects on topics they choose. Later, students share their work with an audience. Along the way, they learn questioning, project management, research, and presentation skills that bridge disciplines and satisfy standards. Begin with a small time

commitment that fits your schedule, and we're betting you'll soon be finding more time for this activity.

4) [Socratic Seminar](#). Socratic Seminar is a well-known activity employing structured, student-led discussion around a common text. Used unimaginatively, it becomes a stilted, boring series of robotic recitations by students on a teacher-selected article, with check-box assessments. In an innovator's hands, it transforms into a vibrant, student-led discussion spanning art, film, and music, conducted enthusiastically by younger students using technology. This Track walks you through the basics of Socratic Seminar and gives you ideas to breathe life into discussion again.

5) [Students Manage Their Learning](#). When we give students the opportunity to own and direct their education, they develop career and life skills and ignite a passion for learning. The pandemic highlighted the value of this approach, as students with experience managing their own learning successfully navigated virtual environments and related challenges. This Track is full of tips for shifting your role from director to learning partner.

6) [Student-led Progress Conferences](#). We've placed this Track at the end of the sequence because it's the culmination of student-driven learning and can serve as an umbrella structure for the other Tracks in this series. In this twist on the traditional parent-teacher conference, we encourage you to put students in charge. Students lead preparation for the conference and guide the discussion of learning, drawing on evidence from projects completed. They identify what is working, what challenges exist, and how all parties will address the challenges. This practice builds reflection skills and gives teachers greater insight into student experiences. It also allows for celebration of successes and energizes future work.

**The Promise**

Thank you for your vision and your mission. We believe in you. We believe in the urgency of this work and in your desire and ability to innovate and make change happen. You know that life-ready is not an outcome on a standardized test. It is what happens when we prioritize student agency, voice, creativity, and engagement. We are here to support your efforts to prepare your students for their futures, not our past. We want to hear from you. Contact us at WeCare@whatschoolcouldbe.org.