

# Richmond's Future: A STEM Initiative in the Making

Presentation to the Governor's Commission on Higher  
Education Reform, Innovation and Investment

Bob Holsworth, Managing Partner,  
DecideSmart

December 16, 2011

# Richmond's Future

- A regional think tank started in 2010 by Dr. Gene Trani, former president of VCU
- Initially supported by pledges of 3-4 year contributions by major private sector companies, local foundations, colleges and universities and individuals.
- Focused on the key drivers of long-term regional success (with an expansive view of the “region.”)
- [www.Richmondfuture.org](http://www.Richmondfuture.org)

# Projects and Initiatives

- Initial projects were baseline regional assessments
  - Dr. Ann Macheras of the Richmond Federal Reserve compared the region's major economic indicators to 10 similarly sized peer regions.
  - Dr. Michela Zonta of VCU compared the region's demographically to the same 10 similarly sized peers.
- Planned initiatives will include a focus on :
  - Logistics
  - Advanced manufacturing
  - STEM education and workforce development
  - Capitalizing on the region's locational assets and arts/cultural institutions.
  - Utilizing non/profit and philanthropic assets most effectively for the benefit of all citizens.

# STEM Initiative

- STEM is clearly one of the region's long-term challenges
- Exists at every educational level
  - The K-12 Pipeline
  - In STEM-based workforce development
  - In degree attainment at the college and university level
- Richmond's Future intends to catalyze a regional, public-private STEM Partnership that will bring together leaders from throughout the community to develop a coordinated strategy for meeting the STEM challenge and positioning the region to be globally competitive.

# STEM Initiative: Outreach and Collaboration

- Creating a region-wide task force
  - Educational leaders from all levels and from both formal and informal institutions ( 3 superintendents, math/science director, a community college president, director of the Science Museum, former state Superintendent of Schools....,)
  - Representatives from leading businesses with a presence in the region (Dominion, Rolls Royce, BI Chemical, Bon Secours, Capital One....,)
  - Scientists and health professionals from businesses and universities
- Defining a set of tasks
  - Expanding the pipeline, enhancing workforce development, increasing degree attainment
  - Identifying best/next practices
  - Establishing the metrics that can measure regional success
  - Linking with statewide initiatives
  - Branding the region as STEM-advanced

# STEM Initiative: Best Practices and Metrics

- McGuireWoods Consulting developed a catalog of leading practices by states and regions
- Richmond's Future will also identify global best practices
- Richmond's Future Task Force will focus initially on developing **regional metrics** on STEM preparation, workforce development, and degree attainment that can both guide activity and serve to measure success beyond the anecdotal.

# STEM Initiative:

## Partnering on a Statewide Conference

- Richmond's Future intends to link its efforts with the Commission's output and initiatives from the Governor's administration.
- Plans underway for a statewide conference in late spring, 2012, that will:
  - Identify national and global best practices
  - Identify the most useful metrics
  - Present templates for effective regional public-private partnerships.