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For immediate release

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## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Careers Project to Benefit Fairfax Middle Schoolers

The Fairfax Education Foundation today announced the launch of a model technology innovation program, in partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia, to benefit middle schoolers in Fairfax County. The three-year program titled **Technology and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Careers: Preparing Students for the Future** will premier this winter at Glasgow Middle School. The focus of the project is to start bringing more sophisticated, career-oriented technology applications into the classroom at an earlier stage in order to help deepen and sustain student's interest in science, math, and technology. The particular technology solution at the hub of this project is GIS software that helps students learn geospatial awareness and ultimately how to use this software in career-type settings. The skills used in GIS or GPS pop up frequently in help wanted ads for positions especially in the government contracting environment of the Washington DC area.

"But there is more to this than just future jobs, we want students to become deeply engaged in the more sophisticated uses of technology at the middle school level when their use of basic technology is already well-grounded and when their interest in science, math and engineering may begin to wane," said James Rosebush, Foundation CEO. "Our hope is" continued Rosebush, "to reverse this trend and sustain a student's interest in and commitment to further studies in technology and the sciences in order to equip them for 21 Century careers." Underwriters of the project to date, in addition to the Commonwealth of Virginia include **Intel Corporation, Exxon Mobil, and Northrop Grumman**. These leading firms will be joined by others leading businesses as the program grows.

The project involves developing special curriculum, teacher training, the use of well-equipped lap top computers and in addition the state-donated licenses for GIS software. The project is being rolled out first at Glasgow Middle school within the next few weeks. The ultimate goal is to introduce this program to all middle schools in Fairfax County over a period of three years.

"Our Foundation has" said Marty Irving, longtime Foundation Board Chair, "for many years funded and helped to manage extraordinary technology innovation projects in Fairfax Schools and as a result of these projects we have helped to make this region more and more attractive to companies and families many of

whom are engaged, in some, way in the technology industry. This new project fits right in with our current focus on the impact of technology on life skills. Technology is ubiquitous, now we want to make sure it is relevant to careers.” The Fairfax Education Foundation was established over twenty years ago to initially create Thomas Jefferson High School, now the top-ranked public high school in the US. This business community Foundation has continued its legacy of creating and funding, to the tune of millions of dollars over the years, innovative technology projects in the schools. For more information on its Board of directors and related programs visit its website at [www.FairfaxEducation.org](http://www.FairfaxEducation.org).

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