# Superintendent’s Memo #281-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: October 16, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Data to Support Student Academic and Career Planning

Pursuant to Superintendent’s Memo [#258-20](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/258-20.docx), which identified 2020 General Assembly revisions to the Standards of Quality (SOQ), § [22.1-253.13:1](https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter13.2/section22.1-253.13%3A1/) requires the Department of Education to annually compile a list of (i) the top 100 professions in the Commonwealth by median pay and the education, training, and skills required for each such profession and (ii) the top 10 degree programs at institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth by median pay of program graduates. Such lists shall be provided to each local school board.

The University of Virginia’s Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service in collaboration with the department has researched and compiled this data for the 2020-2021 school year. The information is based on occupational employment statistics and educational attainment data produced by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as well as longitudinal wage data produced by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. The information reflects median annual wages for graduates of various educational programs within Virginia and for high-wage occupations throughout the state. It also outlines typical entry-level educational requirements, entry-level work experience, and on-the-job training for each of these occupations.

While individual situations are unique and occupational and wage patterns may vary across the Commonwealth, this information provides a context for students planning courses of study as well as for educational leaders building curricular programs and partnerships with employers. Median earnings, combined with typical educational and work experience attainment, can help students and their families map educational decisions and evaluate anticipated costs in light of potential earnings.

Please direct questions about this information to the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education at cte@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2052.

JFL/GRW/aar

### Attachments

1. [Top 100 professions in the Commonwealth by median pay and the education, training, and skills required for each such profession](http://doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/281-20a.docx) (WORD)
2. [Top 10 degree programs at institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth by median pay of program graduates](http://doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/281-20b.docx) (WORD)