



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2120
RICHMOND, VA 23218-2120

December 19, 2023

Members of the General Assembly
General Assembly Building
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Members of the 2023 General Assembly:

I am pleased to submit the enclosed report titled, Annual Report on the Distribution of Information Concerning Post-Graduate Opportunities for High School Students.

House Bill 1299 from the 2020 session of the Virginia General Assembly required that the Virginia Department of Education issue a report each year describing the dissemination of specific information regarding post-graduate opportunities, as identified in *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-206.1.

Please direct questions to Rebecca Askew, Director of Policy, by email at Rebecca.Askew@doe.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Coons", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lisa Coons



**ANNUAL REPORT ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION
CONCERNING POST-GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS**

2023

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION CONCERNING POST-GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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LEGISLATIVE DIRECTIVE

The 2022 General Assembly passed [House Bill 1299](#) and [Senate Bill 738](#), which require the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to collect and distribute to school boards, and publicly post on its website information that assists high school students in making more informed decisions about their futures after graduating from high school, and in doing so ensure that such students are aware of the costs and benefits of different educational and certificate programs.

These bills direct the VDOE to consult with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to collect and compile such information annually and update its distribution materials accordingly. The bills further require the VDOE to post and distribute the information to school boards, with any relevant updates, no later than October 1 each year, and provide an annual update to the General Assembly on how such information was distributed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The benefits and positive outcomes for earning a postsecondary degree or credential have been well researched. Graduates with postsecondary education (degree or credential) have higher average earnings for each level of college degree, are more likely to have health insurance, pay taxes, vote, and volunteer, and are less likely to receive unemployment benefits or need public assistance benefits. Out of the 11.6 million jobs created in the post-recession economy, 11.5 million went to workers with at least some college education, according to new research from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. Of these jobs, 8.4 million went to workers with a bachelor's degree or higher.

While Virginia offers a robust suite of college-going information and financial resources, the disparity in the average college-going rate between metropolitan areas (85 percent) and rural regions (34 percent) highlight the need to improve accessibility and postsecondary educational opportunities and increase the availability of financial resources and overall support for students and families to confront rising college costs. Regardless of locale and socioeconomic status, the process of exploring, preparing, applying, and executing a postsecondary plan is complicated and time-consuming. Through HB1299/SB738, students and families will have additional context on the postsecondary options available to students, including costs and benefits, allowing them to make informed decisions on investing in higher education. Additionally, parents and students will have access to information on the several different career options and opportunities available after graduation from high school.

STATE AGENCY COLLABORATION

The VDOE has partnered with SCHEV to gather data pertaining to HB1299/SB738 to provide students and families with college-going options and support. Using the Virginia Longitudinal Data System and reports released by SCHEV, including the Virginia Student Loan Help resource, stakeholders are provided information and data on the average cost of institutions, student success indicators, financial aid debt information, postgraduate wages, and federal and state programs for financing higher education. Students and families have the option to view much of this information for individual institutions in addition to across types of institutions. The Virginia Student Loan Help resource offers the additional benefit of learning modules to educate students on financing higher education.

In addition to the collaboration to meet the requirements of HB1299 and SB738, the VDOE and SCHEV have also partnered to jointly support a cross-agency position, the Postsecondary Access and Success Specialist (PASS), that will facilitate postsecondary access between PreK-12 and postsecondary, and create school environments, education policies, staff expectations, resources, and technical assistance that support *all* students' pursuit of a postsecondary education, including supporting students who have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education. The position, which is currently funded by the 2022 General Assembly budget and the Guidance to Postsecondary Success (GPS) program, will be funded and shared jointly by VDOE and SCHEV beginning in Fiscal Year 2024. The PASS position will lead the efforts around HB1299/SB738 in the future.

DISTRIBUTION OF POST-GRADUATE INFORMATION

The VDOE has distributed the information on post-graduate opportunities detailed in HB1299 in two ways for the 2023-2024 school year: 1) Virginia's Education Update [#2023-16](#), which announced the new [Level Up Website](#), and 2) [Postsecondary Opportunities for High Schools Students webpage](#). Appendix A contains the resource links contained on the new webpage separated by the required items listed in HB1299 and SB738.

VDOE and SCHEV have also distributed the information in a variety of additional methods, including agency newsletters, presentations to school personnel, school counseling state organizations, Virginia college access programs, and the state Career and Technical Education (CTE) Association. The information will be shared with other stakeholders as often as possible.

CONCLUSION

The process of preparing, applying, and paying for postsecondary education is often confusing for students, including students who are under-represented in postsecondary programs in the Commonwealth. With information constantly changing it is important to have a resource available that students can access with relevant information that has been analyzed and updated annually. HB1299 and SB738 have provided that vehicle for students.

Annual updates to the required items will be coordinated between VDOE and SCHEV with new and additional information added as needed. Coordination efforts will continue that will align HB1299/SB738 information on the VDOE website with Level-Up Virginia, the new statewide college access campaign. The VDOE and SCHEV will continue to coordinate efforts to provide information on postsecondary pathways that meet students where they are, serving to guide students to best-fit postsecondary opportunities, careers, and meaningful lives.

APPENDIX A

The following resources have been shared with school boards and publicly posted on VDOE's website. Applicable resource links are under each of the required items listed in HB1299/SB738.

1. To the extent available from the Council or other entities or sources, the most in-demand occupations in the Commonwealth, including entry wages and common degree levels required or encouraged for entering such occupations, and lists of offerings at institutions of higher education that offer such programs.

- [Virginia Career Works](#)

(<https://viriniacareerworks.com/workforce-credential-grant/>)

- [Virginia Job Outlook](#)

(<https://www.vec.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-Jobs-Outlook.pdf>)

- [Virginia Student Loan Help](#)

(<https://www.viriniastudentloanhelp.org/home/exercises/career-sort.cfm?calcs&ucode=SCHEVHS&&firstlogin=1>)

2. The average cost of institutions of higher education, set out by type of institution.

- [Key Facts About Higher Education](#)

(<https://www.schev.edu/about/key-facts-about-higher-education/key-facts-accessible-version>)

- [Virginia Education Wizard](#)

(<https://www.vawizard.org/wizard/home>)

- [Virginia Student Loan Help's College Explorer](#)

(<https://www.viriniastudentloanhelp.org/home/exercises/colleges.cfm?calcs&ucode=SCHEV&firstlogin=1>)

3. The federal and state scholarship, merit, and need-based aid programs available to students for attending institutions of higher education.

- [SCHEV: Paying for College](#)

(<https://schev.prod.govaccess.org/students/paying-for-college>)

- [Virginia Student Loan Help](#)

(<https://www.viriniastudentloanhelp.org/home/index.cfm?firstlogin=1>)

- [Level Up Virginia: Finance](#)

(<https://www.levelupvirginia.org/finance>)

4. To the extent available from the Council or other entities or sources, the average monthly student loan payment and the average total amount of student loans for individuals who attend institutions of higher education, with such information distinguished by type of institution, to the extent that the Department and the Council can determine such information.

- [SCHEV Institution Profiles](#)

(<https://research.schev.edu/Institutions>)

- [Virginia Student Loan Help](#)

(<https://www.virginiastudentloanhelp.org/home/index.cfm?firstlogin=1>)

5. To the extent available from the Council or other entities or sources, the average student loan default rate for students who attend institutions of higher education, to the extent that the Department and the Council can determine such information.

- [SCHEV's Institution Profiles](#)

(<https://research.schev.edu/Institutions>)

- [Virginia Student Loan Help](#)

(<https://www.virginiastudentloanhelp.org/home/index.cfm?firstlogin=1>)

6. To the extent available from the Council or other entities or sources, information relating to the availability of paid internship and externship opportunities for students attending institutions of higher education with such information distinguished by major or area of study.

- [State Corporation Commission](#)

(<https://scc.virginia.gov/pages/College-Recruitment-and-Internship-Program>)

- [Virginia Talent and Opportunity Partnership \(Virginia TOP\)](#)

(<https://virginiatop.org/>)

7. The average time that it takes to complete degrees offered by institutions of higher education.

- [Commonwealth Degree & Certificate Completion Scorecard](#)

(https://research.schev.edu//completions/completion_scorecard.asp)

- [SCHEV's Institution Profiles](#)

(<https://research.schev.edu/Institutions>)

- [Virginia Student Loan Help](https://www.virginiastudentloanhelp.org/home/index.cfm?firstlogin=1)
(<https://www.virginiastudentloanhelp.org/home/index.cfm?firstlogin=1>)
8. Median annual wages for individuals who graduate from institutions of higher education, distinguished by degree level.
- [Guide to the Post-Completion Wages of Graduates](https://research.schev.edu/info/Reports.Guide-to-the-Post-Completion-Wages-of-Graduates)
(<https://research.schev.edu/info/Reports.Guide-to-the-Post-Completion-Wages-of-Graduates>)
 - [SCHEV's Institution Profiles](https://research.schev.edu/Institutions)
(<https://research.schev.edu/Institutions>)
 - [Virginia Student Loan Help](https://www.virginiastudentloanhelp.org/home/index.cfm?firstlogin=1)
(<https://www.virginiastudentloanhelp.org/home/index.cfm?firstlogin=1>)
9. To the extent available from the Council or other entities or sources, the average starting salary for individuals who complete career and technical education programs in the Commonwealth.
- [VDOE: Career and Technical Education Student Profiles](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/instruction/career-and-technical-education-cte)
(<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching-learning-assessment/instruction/career-and-technical-education-cte>)
10. The contact information for each institution of higher education.
- [SCHEV's Institution Profiles](https://research.schev.edu/Institutions)
(<https://research.schev.edu/Institutions>)
11. To the extent available from the Council or other entities or sources, information regarding the degree to which any institutions of higher education that accept public funding align their curricula or programs with the state job market, including the degree to which they contribute to filling the most in-demand jobs in the Commonwealth. The information in this subdivision shall also be included in the annual report sent to the General Assembly described in this subsection.
- [Academic Programs at Public Institutions: Policies and Procedures for Program Approvals and Change](https://www.schev.edu/institutions/policies-guidelines/academic-affairs-policy/approval-of-program-actions-at-public-institutions)
(<https://www.schev.edu/institutions/policies-guidelines/academic-affairs-policy/approval-of-program-actions-at-public-institutions>)

12. Any other information that the Department or the Council deems appropriate to assist high school students in weighing the costs and benefits of post-high-school training and education.

- [College Match and Fit Toolkit](#)

(https://drive.google.com/open?id=1bC4vAzT76D11YPK8yE2XiqA7_K6DVJum)

- [Key Facts About Higher Education](#)

(<https://www.schev.edu/about/key-facts-about-higher-education/key-facts-accessible-version>)

- [Virginia Education Wizard](#)

(<https://www.vawizard.org/wizard/home>)

- [Level Up Virginia: Decide](#)

(<https://www.levelupvirginia.org/decide>)