

Highlights from the *Information Technology in Virginia* Career Cluster Brief

Occupations in Information Technology—such as data modeling, geospatial analysis, software engineering, IT consulting, or technical support, among many others—make up nearly 5 percent of employment opportunities in the Commonwealth. This, along with other information, may be found in the recently-released Career Cluster Brief, *Information Technology in Virginia*. The brief not only provides address the crucial role of IT in Virginia, but also reveals important statistics about IT employment, and addresses ways to engage students in this rapidly growing and changing industry.

IT IN VIRGINIA: VIBRANT AND GROWING

- Initiatives to support and encourage growth in Information Technology were prominently featured in Governor McAuliffe's *100 Days of Action*.
- Governor McAuliffe has also launched the Virginia Cyber Security Commission which, among other goals, is charged with providing recommendations to develop a cybersecurity-trained workforce.
- Virginia is home to approximately 650 data processing and hosting locations that employ more than 10,000 workers.

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

- Information Technology is a rapidly growing industry, with strong job growth across all pathways.
- Most careers in Information Technology require college or advanced academic degrees.
- The area of programming and software development has the greatest number of prospective employment opportunities per year.

BROADENING STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING

- The diversity of careers in information technology may not be apparent to all students, underscoring the importance of emphasizing real-world job opportunities and work-based learning experiences.
- As with STEM education, IT education also requires strong problem solving, creative thinking, and logic skills, which may encouraged in the classroom through applied, collaborative, and problem-solving-based learning.

As mentioned in our report on STEM, technology instruction remains a high priority for all high school CTE programs in Virginia. Technological competence and confidence will only become increasingly important for today's young job-seekers, whether the pursue careers directly aligned with the IT Career Cluster, or in other fields.