The next time your kids gripe about their homework and ask why is it so important to get good grades, tell them to consider this: new information from the U.S. Census Bureau finds that a college degree nearly doubles annual earnings. According to the newest data, workers with high school diplomas earn an average of just over $27,000 annually. Add a bachelor's degree, and workers 18 and over earn an average of more than $51,000 a year. And those workers with advanced degrees make an average of almost $75,000 yearly. Those without a high school diploma average about $19,000 a year (Bergman 2005).

The good news is that according to the new tables, 85% of those aged 25 or older reported they had completed at least high school, and 28% had attained at least a bachelor's degree—both record highs. States with the highest proportions of people with at least a high school diploma included Minnesota, Montana, Wyoming, and Nebraska, each with around 91%. The District of Columbia claims the highest proportion of graduates with a bachelor's degree or higher, at nearly 46%. High school graduation rates for women continued to exceed those of men. However, more men are completing their bachelor's degrees or higher (Bergman 2005).

This doesn't mean you have to be a man in the District of Columbia to make a great living. However, these are interesting points to ponder as we place a literal value on education.
Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life. “Family Album” is a co-production of University of Florida IFAS Extension, the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, and of WUFT-FM. If you'd like to learn more, please visit our website at http://www.familyalbumradio.org.

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Additional Facts

• The District of Columbia’s population had the highest proportion of respondents with a bachelor’s degree or higher at 45.7%, followed by Massachusetts at 36.7%, Colorado at 35.5%, New Hampshire with 35.4%, and Maryland coming in with a close fourth 35.2%.

• At the regional level, the Midwest had the highest proportion of high school graduates with 88.3%, followed by the Northeast at 86.5%, the West at 84.3%, and the South with 83.0%.

• The Northeast had the highest proportion of college graduates at 30.9%, followed by the West with 30.2%, the Midwest at 26.0% and the South reporting 25.5%.

Reference