

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

SREB

Southern Regional Education Board



FROM GOALS TO RESULTS

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About SREB

SREB is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that assists 16 member states in improving all levels of education. SREB is governed by a Board that consists of the governor of each member state and four other individuals from the state, at least one of whom must be a state legislator and at least one an educator. All appointments are made by the governors for four-year, staggered terms.

The Year at a Glance

In this new century, the Southern Regional Education Board is working with its member states to raise the region's educational levels to heights never deemed possible when governors and legislators founded it in 1948. From prekindergarten through graduate school — and from state capitals to rural classrooms — SREB's policy research, programs and services are helping member states lead the nation in educational progress. SREB's *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education are a powerful guide for this work.

Governors and legislators look to SREB for policy guidance and recommendations. Hundreds of the region's leaders gather each year to share ideas for educational improvement at SREB-sponsored events. Educators across the nation seek professional development and best practices through SREB's *High Schools That Work* and *Making Middle Grades Work* school improvement networks, the nation's largest. Some 10,000 educators attended conferences and workshops conducted by SREB in the past year to help them find ways to improve opportunities for all students.

The coming year holds even more promise. Most SREB states have made tremendous progress in raising student achievement and the quality of education students receive. It's time to build on that momentum and lead the nation in addressing some of the region's most urgent education issues. High school and college graduation rates, students' college and career readiness, adolescent reading, technology, online learning, and the minority college faculty shortage are just some of the areas on which SREB will focus.

It's time to remove the region's most persistent barriers and to make even greater advances in education across the 16 states and beyond. SREB is here to help.



Member states

Alabama

Arkansas

Delaware

Florida

Georgia

Kentucky

Louisiana

Maryland

Mississippi

North Carolina

Oklahoma

South Carolina

Tennessee

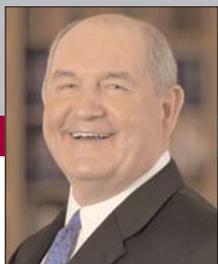
Texas

Virginia

West Virginia

Message from the Chair

Governor Sonny Perdue, Georgia



SREB Chair Sonny Perdue was elected Georgia's 81st Governor in 2002 and reelected in 2006. A former state Senator and President Pro Tempore of the Senate, he also has served as a member of the SREB Legislative Advisory Council. He has made public education his top priority and has pushed to raise the quality of state programs that affect children's lives. As Governor, he won support for the nation's first statewide "graduation coaches," to assist students in all Georgia high schools and middle grades as they work toward a diploma. He also has developed programs to recognize principals' and teachers' success in raising student achievement.

It has been an honor to lead the Southern Regional Education Board for the past year. SREB continues its tradition as one of the nation's most accomplished education policy and school improvement organizations.

Previously, as a state legislator, and now as Governor of Georgia, I have utilized SREB to help our state make great strides in education. Southern states continue to call on SREB for policy guidance, research and school improvement strategies.

This year, I challenged SREB to help us move even more quickly toward practical, useful solutions to some of our region's most pressing education challenges. One of my guiding principles has always been football Coach Vince Lombardi's famous quote, "If you are not keeping score, you are just practicing." SREB helps us track the achievement and progress in each SREB state.

Raising high school graduation rates is one of our region's most daunting education issues. In Georgia, I worked with state legislators in 2006 to provide "graduation coaches" for every high school in the state. This is a first step toward helping more of our young people earn a high school diploma. Without a diploma, most students cannot continue the career training and higher learning necessary in our fast-changing economy. I know all SREB states are struggling with ways to raise graduation rates, while still raising expectations for what skills our students should have when they graduate. We can and must do more to help increasing numbers of students finish high school and continue into college and career training.

In that light, I am pleased to chair a new SREB committee that will develop policy recommendations to raise high school graduation rates *and* achievement. The **SREB Committee for Improving High School Graduation Rates and Achievement** will begin its work this summer. I am also pleased that Governor Tim Kaine of Virginia will chair a similar panel to examine state policies that will lead to higher reading achievement throughout high school. The **SREB Committee for Improving Reading Through High School** and the Committee for Improving High School Graduation Rates and Achievement anticipate completing their work in time for the 2008 SREB Annual Meeting.

SREB will work with any state leader who wants to implement good education policy ideas. I invite you to read this *Annual Report*, explore the highlights of SREB's work and determine how the organization can help your state further its academic achievement.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the SREB Board to continue to strengthen our region's work toward leading the nation in educational improvement.

Message from the SREB President

Dave Spence

This year was productive for the Southern Regional Education Board and particularly for many SREB states. I hope you will agree that our services to states continued to be strong. We have worked hard to strengthen the connections between SREB and the needs of individual states. Please let us know what we can do to serve you even more effectively.

Over the past 12 months, SREB continued to focus its efforts on advocating, tracking and assisting states' progress on the 12 *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education, encompassing prekindergarten through postsecondary education. SREB published many notable education policy reports in the past year on issues such as improving the quality of school leadership, state testing, the alignment of K-12 school and postsecondary policies, the need to raise state academic standards, and many others. These reports describe the status of states' improvement efforts and identify practices that are showing the best evidence of effectiveness. SREB remained a leader in helping states use technology to provide more students with a high-quality education, through its work in developing state virtual schools and in enabling postsecondary students to take online courses through the SREB *Electronic Campus*.

SREB also continued to be a national force at the individual school and school district levels through its *High Schools That Work* and *Making Middle Grades Work* school improvement programs. These efforts, along with SREB's work to help states improve school leadership, complement and reinforce SREB's state policy focus at the grassroots level.

SREB has identified several key policy issues that need special attention. These include the need to improve high school graduation rates significantly and to increase the percentages of high school graduates who are well-prepared for college and careers. Critical to advancing on both of these fronts is increasing the higher-level reading and writing skills of all high school students.

Two special SREB committees will address these issues and recommend state policies that will lead to comprehensive solutions for each of our states. Governor Sonny Perdue of Georgia, the current SREB Chair, will lead an SREB committee on high school graduation rates and achievement that will recommend how states can work to raise high school diploma requirements, increase graduation rates and meet the requirements of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*, all while raising student achievement. Governor Tim Kaine of Virginia has agreed to chair an SREB committee to improve reading through the high school grades, recommending state policies to ensure that students' reading skills improve, from prekindergarten until time for college and career study.

This has been a good year for SREB, in terms of accomplishments and in setting the stage for strong responses to the most intractable problems still facing our states. It will be an exciting year.

Dave Spence is the president of the Southern Regional Education Board. He advises SREB Board members — including governors, legislators, state education chiefs and other leaders — in 16 states as they strive to improve pre-K-12 and postsecondary education. A former executive vice chancellor and chief academic officer of state university systems in Florida and California, and a former executive vice chancellor in Georgia, he advocates for improving high school students' graduation rates and readiness for college and career training.



Educational Policies

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SREB states participated in a multistate cooperative effort — the **Go Alliance** — during the past year. Go Alliance members develop and share radio, TV and print media campaigns to encourage students to complete high school, attend college and develop the skills they need to achieve these goals. In February 2007, the Go Alliance also began a series of workshops for representatives of state agencies responsible for outreach to students and parents.

Education Goals and Indicators

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SREB's Educational Policies team tracks each SREB state's progress toward the 12 **Challenge to Lead Goals for Education** and updates state policy-makers and education leaders continually, through three different types of reports. SREB's new *Action Agenda* also provides state policy-makers with recommendations on a variety of education issues.

- Goals reports: The *Challenge to Lead* goals focus on school and college readiness, achievement gaps, the efficiency and effectiveness of state education systems, and more. If SREB states are to lead the nation in educational progress, they must be measured against the nation in these areas and make continuous gains. The first series of reports on each of the goals was completed in 2006, and the second series is under way.
- State-by-state reports: SREB has identified specific indicators of progress for each goal to help state leaders know how their states are doing. SREB provides each state with a customized report on its progress in print and at www.sreb.org. New state-by-state reports were published in June 2006 and are updated regularly on the Web.
- Focus reports: SREB continues to give special attention to issues important to member states, including student achievement (particularly in reading and mathematics), accountability, students' readiness for postsecondary education, financial aid and college affordability, and teacher quality. A series of issue-oriented reports is scheduled for release in 2007 as part of SREB's continuous evaluation of progress and improvements in education.

Publications:

The *Challenge to Lead* education goals series of reports

High School to College and Careers: Aligning State Policies

Getting State Standards Right in the Early and Middle Grades

Improving ACT and SAT Scores: Making Progress, Facing Challenges

The Changing Roles of Statewide High School Exams

Clearing Paths to College Degrees: Transfer Policies in SREB States

SREB States Lead the Nation in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs

Quality Teachers

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Jenny Jackson, research associate

“Every student is taught by qualified teachers.” This is one of the *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education and reinforces a point SREB has stressed since 1981: Preparing teachers is the No. 1 topic that schools and colleges need to address together. More focused resources are needed to help beginning teachers develop the skills and knowledge they need to improve student achievement and to reduce the number of teachers leaving the profession in their first five years.

In the past year, SREB has published several policy reports on teacher quality in the 16 member states. SREB continues to monitor indicators of teacher quality and state actions to improve teacher quality, including salaries and incentives.

SREB’s *Action Agenda*, a new set of policy recommendations, emphasizes that states should provide support for beginning teachers, expand pathways for teacher preparation and change compensation plans to include incentives.

The work to ensure a qualified teacher for every classroom also involves developing better data about supply, demand and quality of teachers; licensure focused on performance; and professional development that helps teachers raise student achievement. Well-qualified teachers are especially needed in traditionally low-performing schools.

To help states address these needs, SREB is using the Web to support new and veteran teachers. **TheTeacherCenter.org** — an online SREB-state resource for teachers, in partnership with member states — provides easy access to information about teaching in the 16 SREB states. The site provides extensive answers to key questions such as: Are scholarships, grants or loans available if I want to become a teacher in my home state? What if I want to teach in my neighboring state? How do I become a teacher through an alternative route? What are the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* “highly qualified” standards for teachers in each state?

The *Challenge to Lead* goals call for all students to have well-qualified teachers in all grades, whether face-to-face in the classroom or through online courses in the middle grades and high school. The **SREB Educational Technology Cooperative** has developed first-in-the-nation standards and evaluation criteria for online teachers.

Publications and Resources:

Focus on Teacher Pay and Incentives: Recent Legislative Actions and Update on Salary Averages

SREB States Take Action to Support Beginning Teachers

Increasing Accountability for Teacher Preparation Programs

The SREB-State Teacher Center — www.TheTeacherCenter.org

The goals call for all students to have well-qualified teachers in all grades, whether face-to-face in the classroom or through online courses in the middle grades and high school.



Educational Policies

Education Data Services

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The SREB-State Data Exchange is the backbone of the SREB Fact Book on Higher Education and compiles the most detailed and up-to-date comparisons on higher education in the region.

First published in 1956, the *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education* is celebrating its 50th anniversary. The *Fact Book* is one of the nation's most comprehensive collections of comparative data on higher education and is used throughout SREB states and across the country.

SREB publishes a print edition of the *Fact Book* every two years, and an interactive online edition is updated continually. The *Fact Book* includes more than 90 tables of detailed information on colleges and universities in SREB states, plus regional and national data. It provides statistics on college enrollment, progression, graduation rates, tuition and fees, student financial aid, funding and faculty compensation. It also contains important information on state demographic and economic trends. All 50 states are included in the online version in most cases. *Featured Facts* are reports that focus on higher education trends in each of the 16 SREB states, and periodic *Fact Book Bulletins* provide additional updates on key issues for policy-makers. The 50th anniversary edition of the *Fact Book* will be published in June 2007.

The **SREB-State Data Exchange** is the backbone of the *Fact Book* and compiles the most detailed and up-to-date comparisons on higher education in the region. Since 1969, the SREB-State Data Exchange has brought together higher education governing and coordinating boards in SREB states to produce comparative information critical to the work of the boards, governors' offices and legislative committees. State agency staff members meet each year to review the data and indicators, and to plan for new sets of data that can help state policy-makers monitor trends and improve higher education opportunities in SREB states. The annual survey now includes the nation's first and most detailed annual interstate profiles on e-learning.

The SREB Data Library was established in 1991 as one of the nation's first online education data centers. It contains all the databases used for the *Fact Book*, the reports in SREB's *Challenge to Lead* education goals series, and the SREB-State Data Exchange. All are updated regularly.

Publications and Resources:

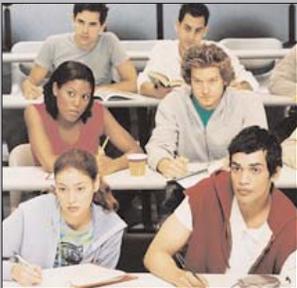
SREB Fact Book on Higher Education

Featured Facts (state-by-state reports from the *Fact Book*)

SREB-State Data Exchange Annual Statistics

SREB-State Data Exchange Highlights

SREB Fact Book Bulletins



SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program

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The **SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program** in the past year celebrated two important milestones in its 14-year history. In its effort to increase the number of minority students who earn Ph.D.s and become college faculty members, the program celebrated its 300th Mark Musick Doctoral Scholar graduate, named for SREB's president emeritus. Also, for the first time, the number of Ph.D. graduates in the program exceeded the number of students enrolled.

The Doctoral Scholars Program provides financial support, professional development, mentoring and other services to doctoral students at colleges and universities across the region. The goal of the program is to reduce the severe shortage of minority Ph.D. graduates and college faculty across the nation, especially in SREB states. The program has helped more than 700 scholars to date. About 300 are currently pursuing Ph.D.s.

More than 75 percent of the program's graduates are employed on college and university campuses, and 16 are tenured professors. The program will surpass the 350th graduate mark in 2007, furthering its effort to be "more than a check and a handshake."

The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation currently support the program with more than \$3 million for scholars who participate in affiliated doctoral programs. At colleges and universities across the nation, SREB provides mentoring, networking and job search assistance to more than 300 scholars in NSF's Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) programs. More than 200 Sloan scholars at 89 institutions also have received such services.

SREB was the lead host in 2006 for the **Compact for Faculty Diversity's 13th annual Institute on Teaching and Mentoring**, the nation's largest gathering of minority Ph.D. scholars and faculty mentors. It drew more than 1,000 participants to Miami for leadership and skills training, networking and job recruiting opportunities. Focusing on minority graduate education and faculty diversity, the Compact for Faculty Diversity comprises several regional, federal and foundation organizations, including SREB.

The SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program continues to make progress, but much work remains in order to increase the number of minority faculty.

Publications:

Capstone Graduates: The SREB-AGEP Doctoral Scholars Program

Thirteen Years, 300 Graduates

Investing in Future Faculty



The program boasts:

- a retention/graduation rate of nearly 90 percent — more than double the national persistence rate for minority doctoral students.
- an average time-to-degree (Ph.D.) of less than five years.
- that eight of 10 graduates work in an SREB state.
- nationwide recognition for excellence.

Educational Policies



Distance Learning Policy Laboratory and the Adult Learning Campaign

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In the past year, **SREB's Distance Learning Policy Laboratory** continued to assist states and institutions in defining issues and promoting solutions to a number of policy barriers facing distance (or online) learners. SREB has worked with several states to improve distance learning policies, conducted evaluations of state programs, and worked with the Sloan Consortium to increase the participation of historically black colleges and universities in SREB states.

The **Adult Learning Campaign**, supported by a \$1 million grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education, formally ended in 2006. It helped SREB states find ways to increase educational opportunities for adults who want to earn a GED credential or pursue postsecondary certificates, diplomas or degrees.

Nearly 8 million adults ages 18 to 44 in SREB states did not have a high school diploma in 2000. Targeting these adults, the campaign developed an Adult Learning Policy Review Framework to strengthen state policies, participated in the Louisiana Adult Learning Task Force, created an Adult Learning Toolkit that became part of SREB's *Go Alliance* and College Access Marketing Web site, and prepared several reports and state profiles on adult learning, among other efforts.

Most recently, SREB has begun to focus on adult learners who have completed college courses but not a degree. With Louisiana leaders, SREB has begun a pilot program known as CALL (Continuum for All Louisiana Learners) to help these students earn associate's and bachelor's degrees. The project will include fast-track course work, prior learning assessments and online degree programs that require minimal or no work on campus. Strategies from the SREB *Go Alliance* will be used to develop a promotional campaign targeted at adults in 22 Louisiana parishes. SREB will use the results of this effort to help other SREB states create similar degree-completion programs.

Resources:

The Adult Learning Campaign Web Site and Campaign Toolkit — www.sreb.org
Adult Learning Profiles for SREB states — www.sreb.org

SREB has worked with several states to improve distance learning policies, conducted evaluations of state programs and worked with the Sloan Consortium to increase the participation of historically black colleges and universities in SREB states.

Electronic Campus

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Created in 1998, the SREB *Electronic Campus* is one of the nation's leading distance learning programs. It enables students throughout the 16 SREB states to pursue college studies online and across state lines. Partnering with colleges and universities from all SREB states, including public and independent institutions, the *Electronic Campus* provides access to nearly 20,000 credit courses and 650 degree programs. A variety of online tools and services are available to help online learners, particularly adult learners.

In the past year, three states have arranged for SREB to “host” their entire online catalog of courses. The Louisiana Board of Regents' Electronic Campus, the Online Colleges of Oklahoma and Texas Distance Education are fully integrated with SREB's *Electronic Campus*. Several other states have adopted or are following SREB's database structures for course and program information.

A related effort, the **SREB-State Teacher Center (TheTeacherCenter.org)** is a convenient “one-stop shop” of online resources for the more than 2.2 million educators in the 16 SREB states. TheTeacherCenter.org integrates with the *Electronic Campus* to give teachers and prospective teachers easy, anytime access to professional development courses, details on financial aid, teacher licensure and certification requirements, information on how to become “highly qualified” under federal law, practice “testlets” for the Praxis™ II Subject Matter exams, and other resources. A Web-based promotional campaign targeted to teachers was launched in fall 2006. The first of its kind for SREB, it increased daily visits to the site from about 12,000 to more than 95,000 during the campaign.

SREB's innovative Visiting Electronic Student Authorization (VESA) rapid admissions/registration system for online learners continued to expand, with a pilot initiative for Florida educators planned for launch in summer 2007.

In the past year, SREB also was recognized for its leadership in the “Sloan Semester,” using the *Electronic Campus* infrastructure and the VESA system to help students affected by the 2005 hurricanes to continue their studies. SREB received an award from the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education and a 2006 Irving-Barrier Buster Award from the American Distance Education Consortium for the effort.

Publications and Resources:

Making the Grade: Online Learning in the United States, 2006 — Southern Edition

The Electronic Campus — www.ElectronicCampus.org

The SREB-State Teacher Center — www.TheTeacherCenter.org

EC Initiatives — www.ecinitiatives.org



Educational Policies

Educational Technology Cooperative

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The SREB **Educational Technology Cooperative**, now in its 12th year, brings together state K-12 and postsecondary coordinating and governing boards from the 16 SREB states to address educational technology issues at every education level. More than three dozen state agencies participate in this one-of-a-kind, multistate program.

The **SREB-State Virtual Schools** initiative is helping more states create and improve the quality of online learning in middle grades and high schools. Most SREB states now provide at least some Web-based academic courses. Continued rapid growth is expected. With support from the BellSouth Foundation, SREB has published several landmark reports on virtual learning in the past year, including the nation's first *Standards for Quality Online Teaching* and *Standards for Quality Online Courses*. These reports received national news coverage and are used regularly by state policy-makers and educators.

The **SREB-SCORE** (Sharable Content Object Repositories for Education) initiative was launched in 2007 to improve the quality of digital learning course content. SREB-SCORE will provide teachers and professors with an extensive library of digital classroom tools that they can share across state borders. Thirteen K-12 and postsecondary state education agencies have joined SREB-SCORE, which is working on a training guide for teachers and faculty in the use and development of digital learning content.

EvaluTech, another Cooperative initiative, gives teachers free, up-to-date and reliable resources for their classrooms and their own training. Teachers who click on EvaluTech at www.sreb.org gain access to more than 11,000 reviews of recommended software; Web resources in language arts, mathematics, social studies and science; links to lesson plans and practical teaching examples; technology resources for students with disabilities; and links to online learning and professional development resources.

The **Multi-State Online Professional Development** (MOPD) initiative provides training for leaders of online professional development and supports the sharing of course content among participating states. MOPD works with all SREB states and has helped nine states begin online training for teachers.

Publications and Resources:

Checklist for Evaluating Online Courses

Standards for Quality Online Courses

Online Teaching Evaluation for State Virtual Schools

Cost Guidelines for State Virtual Schools

Standards for Quality Online Teaching

SREB standards for online teaching and courses received national news coverage and are used regularly by state policy-makers and educators.





State Services

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Serving member states is at the heart of SREB's work. Staff members in **State Services** are often SREB's initial link to executive and legislative officials and staff in the 16 SREB states. As part of SREB's commitment to help policy-makers accurately analyze trends and topics, staff members respond to questions with timely, concise information, and they prepare reports on pressing issues.

The annual series of *Legislative Reports* follows events in the 16 state legislatures, and the *Legislative Briefing* summarizes final legislative and budget actions. These reports are shared with state leaders and are available on the SREB Web site.

State Services also works closely with the SREB Legislative Advisory Council, which is composed of state senators, representatives and delegates from all SREB states. Among recent actions, SREB helped Legislative Advisory Council members to focus on the development of state policies to help more students make successful transitions from each level of education to the next; to close achievement gaps among students; to ensure that more students complete high school and college and are ready for a career; and to follow best practices as states develop virtual (or online) schools.

State Services staff made several presentations to legislative and educational groups, coordinated SREB's annual Legislative Work Conference and meetings of the Legislative Advisory Council and legislative- and executive-branch staff, and assisted with preparations for the Annual Meeting of the SREB Board. Staff members also supported SREB's work on the *Challenge to Lead* goals.

At times, State Services coordinates other meetings and efforts in response to continuing and emerging issues. SREB, for example, helped states develop policies on issues relating to the use of high school assessments as a part of graduation requirements. Another effort brought together policy-makers and staff from states with recent or impending court decisions on school finance. These activities exemplify interstate sharing, the cornerstone of SREB.

Publications:

Legislative Report series

Legislative Briefing

Focus on Teacher Pay and Incentives: Recent Legislative Actions and Update on Salary Averages

State Notes

Focus on State Policies Limiting Excess Undergraduate Credit Hours

*As part of SREB's
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High Schools That Work

Gene Bottoms, senior vice president: gene.bottoms@sreb.org



National Acclaim

- The National Center for Career and Technical Education praised *HSTW* in March 2007 as an invaluable network of schools with a strong mission to improve academic and career/technical education.
- The U.S. Department of Education cited *HSTW* in 2006 for having preliminary evidence that its design helps improve student achievement.
- The Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center and the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center commended the experience, expertise and mission of *HSTW* in working with states to improve schools.
- In 2006, University of Pennsylvania researchers concluded that *HSTW* clearly creates changes in school structure and organization.

High Schools That Work (HSTW) is SREB's school improvement program and the nation's largest effort to combine rigorous academic courses and modern career/technical studies to raise student achievement. About 1,150 high schools in 32 states, including all 16 SREB states, are using *HSTW*.

In the past decade, *HSTW* has received national recognition for effectiveness in helping schools improve student achievement. *HSTW* has been cited for its program design, its blend of rigorous academics with career/technical studies, its emphasis on using data to guide improvement, its national staff development opportunities and its on-site assistance to schools.

States support the Goals and Key Practices of *HSTW* through legislation, policies and resources designed to help schools improve. South Carolina has selected *HSTW* as its program of choice for high school reform, and more than 100 schools in the state have adopted it. Texas leaders are working with *HSTW* to improve career/technical education. Ohio has made *HSTW* a statewide focus, dedicating \$4 million and 10 full-time employees to *HSTW* schools. The Ohio state education superintendent credits *HSTW* with helping many schools raise achievement, and Ohio outperformed the 31 other *HSTW* states in the percentage of *HSTW* schools that made major test-score gains in 2006.

After a quarter-century of work with schools to raise student achievement, *HSTW* has developed an enhanced design that emphasizes students' middle-grades-to-high-school and high-school-to-college-and-career transitions. Four states are implementing the enhanced design to raise achievement and graduation rates: Kentucky, Ohio, Texas and West Virginia.

HSTW also is working with nearly 400 career/technology centers in 12 SREB states to implement *Technology Centers That Work (TCTW)*.

HSTW regularly measures students' academic progress. In 2006, *HSTW* assessed 62,000 high school seniors using National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)-referenced tests in reading, mathematics and science. High school seniors and teachers also completed surveys about their educational experiences. In addition, *HSTW* surveyed 11,000 ninth-graders at 128 high schools to monitor their specific school experiences. In spring 2007, *HSTW* sent follow-up surveys to the seniors who had participated in the 2006 assessment, checking their college/career experiences one year after graduation. Panels of state, district and school stakeholders are guiding the development of new *HSTW* tests to align with new NAEP frameworks and to measure students' college- and career-readiness. *HSTW* held a national workshop to help states and schools make improvements based on 2006 test results.

The 20th Annual *HSTW* Staff Development Conference, held in July 2006 in Orlando, Florida, attracted about 8,000 middle grades and high school educators. *HSTW* held 17 other workshops for 4,150 educators in the past year and made 115 school improvement visits. In August 2006, *HSTW* held a state leadership forum to examine the role of career/technical studies in raising high school graduation rates.

High Schools That Work Contracted Schools Network

Rhenida Rennie, director: rhenida.rennie@sreb.org

The *High Schools That Work (HSTW) Contracted Schools Network* provides traditionally low-performing schools and school districts with a school improvement model designed to improve student achievement and build a culture of continuous progress. The Contracted Schools Network includes 100 schools, plus seven additional school districts with a total of 26 schools, funded by federal or state grants or by the districts. Nineteen *HSTW* school improvement specialists work with the schools and districts to implement the *HSTW* framework, training school leaders and teachers, monitoring school improvement plans, arranging customized workshops, and instilling new instructional techniques.

In the past year, *HSTW* school improvement specialists made 40 technical review visits to schools and provided each school with comprehensive reports and two or more workshops on topics important to local school improvement work. The network also conducted school improvement audits for three school districts and recommended strategies for improvements.

Students at 41 contracted schools participated in the *HSTW* Assessment in both 2004 and 2006, and 18 of those schools showed improvement in reading, mathematics and science.

Making Middle Grades Work

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The *Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW)* program helps middle grades schools raise student achievement. In the past academic year, *MMGW* served 286 schools, including 227 that joined through state education agencies in 12 of the 16 SREB states, plus Idaho, Ohio and South Dakota.

Forty-five schools in 10 states used federal Comprehensive School Reform grants to take part in *MMGW*. Fourteen other schools and districts on their own sought SREB's help in preparing middle grades students for high school. *MMGW* held 34 in-school workshops this year.

Twenty Alabama schools joined *MMGW* in the past 18 months as part of the new Alabama Middle School Improvement Initiative, which named *MMGW* its approved model. With the help of *MMGW*, Alabama is holding regional workshops focused on helping teachers align curriculum and instruction to nationally recognized academic standards.

Interest is rising in *Making Middle Grades Work* strategies for entire school districts. Many districts use state and local funds to contract with SREB to help schools implement *MMGW*. Of the 15 most improved schools in the *MMGW* network, six averaged a 23 percent increase in the number of students achieving the *MMGW* mathematics goal. Data from the SREB Middle Grades Assessment in 2004 and 2006 reveal that schools that implement the *MMGW* Key Practices show significant improvements in student achievement, regardless of students' socioeconomic status.



High Schools That Work

Partnership to Build State Capacity

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This project is a partnership of SREB's *High Schools That Work (HSTW)*, the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC) at Edvantia, and the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center (MACC) at The George Washington University. It aims to build the capacity of state education agencies to help traditionally low-performing schools as required by federal law. The program uses research and best practices developed through *HSTW* and *Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW)*.

In the past year, SREB provided eight leadership training sessions to state-level school improvement consultants in North Carolina and Virginia. The consultants will work with educators in struggling schools on a variety of improvement strategies.

SREB also created a Data Use Protocol for states to use during technical assistance visits to low-performing schools.

For a second year, SREB partnered with ARCC and MACC to sponsor a forum for state leaders on the transition from the middle grades to high school.

SREB also worked with states to build the capacity of schools and districts to meet accountability requirements. SREB assisted Delaware in working with school districts on ways to increase students' readiness for high school, college and careers.

High School to College and Careers Transitions Initiative

Ann Benson, director

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This two-year initiative helps states take action to increase students' knowledge and skills so they can graduate from high school better prepared for college and career training.

In the past year, *HSTW* held state forums on this crucial subject in Alabama, Georgia, Texas, Hawaii and Montana. Fifteen states have had forums in the past two years. Sponsored by SREB and the League for Innovation in the Community College, and supported by the U.S. Department of Education, the forums drew leaders from postsecondary education, businesses, state legislatures, state education boards and education agencies, and local districts and schools.

Several key challenges for states were identified at the forums, including: the high percentage of college students requiring remediation and the need to strengthen the 12th grade; the lack of college- and career-readiness standards in most states; the need to prepare teachers to help students meet such standards; the lack of effective dual enrollment policies; and completion rates at two- and four-year colleges.



States are putting information from the transitions forums to work. For example, Kentucky has reworked its high school graduation requirements and convened task forces to delve into the issues of remedial studies and dual enrollment.



Supporting Transitions from Middle Grades to High School and High School to Postsecondary Studies and Careers

Janie Smith, director

This SREB project focused on students' critical transitions from the middle grades to high school and from high school to college and careers. The project was supported by a three-year U.S. Department of Education grant that ended in March 2007. Twenty-seven high schools and 17 middle grades schools participated.

SREB developed and pilot-tested two intensive transitional courses in English/language arts and mathematics for 12th-graders who fail to score at the college-ready level as determined by local community colleges. Preliminary analyses of college-placement test data show that many students who complete the transitional courses can avoid remedial courses in college: 63 percent of students in the study met the reading-readiness standard, while 85 percent met the writing standard and 50 percent met the mathematics standard.

SREB provided leadership development and capacity-building experiences for school leaders whose campuses were involved in the transitions project. Schools received on-site training to help teachers improve reading and writing in all courses and to blend academic and career/technical studies. High schools in the project saw more students meet the reading goal on the 2006 *HSTW* Assessment, moving toward proficiency.

Texas High School Initiatives

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SREB collaborates with the Texas Education Agency, the U.S. Department of Education's Region XIII Education Service Center and the Communities Foundation of Texas (an intermediary for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) in efforts to raise the academic achievement of Texas students. Five full-time SREB consultants in Texas and two SREB staff members in Atlanta work on the Texas High School Project and the Texas Enhanced *High Schools That Work* Network.

The Texas Enhanced *HSTW* Network is SREB's first effort with a state education agency to provide broad support for schools implementing the *HSTW* design. The network began in 14 high schools with grants from the Texas Education Agency, which had contracted with SREB for school improvement support.

SREB/*HSTW* consultants conducted audits of school and classroom practices at each school and assisted teachers and school leaders in developing action plans. SREB also held workshops to help teachers and leaders develop plans for improving literacy across the curriculum and improving mathematics instruction. Consultants continue to work closely with schools to help teachers increase academic rigor by aligning curriculum and instruction to college- and career-readiness standards.

SREB developed two intensive catch-up courses to prepare students for ninth-grade English and Algebra I. Eighty percent of students who completed the English course showed improvement in reading. Ninety-two percent who completed the mathematics course later took Algebra I and passed.

With the support of *High Schools That Work*, Texas schools have made significant progress:

- Akins High School in Austin developed a ninth-grade academy and four career-themed small learning communities for grades 10-12.
- Bel Air High School in El Paso supported teachers weekly in aligning assignments to grade-level standards.
- North Side High School in Fort Worth dramatically increased parent involvement.

High Schools That Work



Services SREB provided in the Urban Network include:

- Leadership training for educators in every middle grades and high school in the Little Rock, Arkansas, school district on “Getting Students to Proficiency Through Looking at Teacher Assignments and Student Work.”
- Leadership training for all middle grades and high schools in Bibb County, Georgia, on “Creating a High-Performance Learning Culture and Using Data to Lead Change.” The training included follow-up coaching to help school leaders raise student achievement.
- Training for science teachers from the Atlanta and DeKalb County, Georgia, school districts in writing standards-based instructional units for physical science and biology — two courses with high failure rates.

Urban Network of *High Schools That Work* Sites

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The **HSTW Urban Network** provides 106 schools in 14 school districts with technical assistance, coaching and site-specific training customized for schools and districts. *HSTW* conducted 16 technical review visits to urban schools in the past academic year.

The network’s Urban Council convened 93 representatives from nine school districts to share successes and challenges during a two-day meeting in February 2007. In the past year, SREB worked with school districts on standards-based instructional units to help infuse state academic standards into classroom teaching.

The Urban Network also aided schools in implementing ninth-grade, standards-based instructional units designed to equip middle-grades students with the skills they need for success in college-preparatory high school English and Algebra I. Every high school in the DeKalb County, Georgia, school district adopted the mathematics unit, along with other schools in Georgia, Mississippi and Arkansas. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation funded 10 days of coaching by school improvement consultants for schools adopting the standards-based courses.

Project Lead The Way

Carolyn Helm, director: carolyn.helm@sreb.org

SREB’s partnership with the national, nonprofit organization **Project Lead The Way** (PLTW) provides about 550 middle grades and high schools in SREB states with engineering-related courses. PLTW’s mission is to help students take courses that lead to an engineering degree. PLTW’s nationally recognized science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) curriculum helps students prepare for college-level study in engineering technology and related fields. More than 2,000 middle grades and high schools in 47 states will teach the PLTW pre-engineering curriculum in fall 2007. About 140 schools in SREB states joined PLTW in fall 2006, and 85 schools are joining in 2007. Hundreds of teachers will gather at 28 colleges and universities this summer for two weeks of PLTW curriculum training.

SREB states’ support for PLTW continues to grow. Kentucky assists seven schools and West Virginia four schools, respectively, in offering the program. Texas pays for training and software to support PLTW in its schools. A pilot program of high school study in biomedical sciences will begin in several SREB states in fall 2007.

High school students who took PLTW courses and four years of mathematics and science scored at high levels on those subjects on an SREB exam aligned with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). PLTW courses, coupled with rigorous mathematics and science, may be among the nation’s best strategies for engaging students in higher-level study.

Learning-Centered Leadership Program

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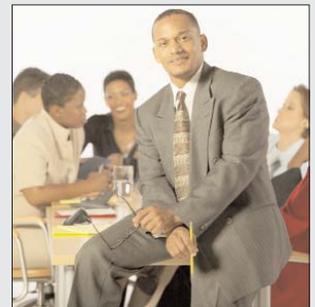
The **SREB Learning-Centered Leadership Program** supports states by researching the preparation of school principals and tracking the progress of SREB states in achieving the *Challenge to Lead* Goal for Education that every school has an effective leader who can improve student performance. SREB emphasizes the urgent need for change in school leadership research, training and policies, and in states' work with leaders in low-rated schools.

SREB is working with local school districts, universities, state policy-makers and state agencies in Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana and Tennessee to align the preparation, licensure, professional development and evaluation of school leaders with state leadership standards. SREB advocates the creation of state commissions on school leadership to study best practices and to recommend policy changes. Many school districts and universities also are forming local partnerships to prepare more effective school leaders.

Among recent highlights:

- The Alabama Board of Education approved new standards for preparing and developing school leaders. Four university-district partnerships are providing models for the program.
- Kentucky legislators passed a law requiring the redesign of the state's educational leadership preparation and development programs. SREB is supporting Kentucky as it redesigns the university-based programs.
- SREB supported Louisiana leaders who have taken major steps to improve the preparation of school leaders in the past five years. All state university-based leadership preparation programs now must pass a rigorous external audit for accreditation.
- Tennessee partnered with SREB to earn U.S. Department of Education funds to implement the SREB comprehensive leadership system redesign model. The Tennessee State Board of Education will receive recommendations in fall 2007 on ways to improve school leadership training. SREB is working with the state to redesign leadership preparation programs at East Tennessee State University and the University of Memphis.

Also, in the past year SREB prepared 675 prospective trainers from 32 states to use its leadership training modules in university preparation programs, state leadership academies, schools and districts. The District Leadership Academy Project continued to work with urban and rural school districts in Georgia and South Carolina to develop more effective school leaders.





Regional Contract Program and Academic Common Market

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Dawn Perry, staff associate: dawn.perry@sreb.org

The **Regional Contract Program**, one of SREB's first programs, has served as a model for other SREB programs through one simple concept: sharing institutional resources. The program enables SREB states to share postsecondary programs in optometry, osteopathic medicine, podiatry, dentistry and veterinary medicine across state borders. States save money by eliminating the high costs of creating their own health programs in these specialized fields, and they then can offer students the opportunity to prepare for these professions at reduced tuition rates. Other regional compacts have followed this SREB model. It helps schools keep admission standards high because of the increased number of student applications, and it contributes out-of-state funding to help maintain and strengthen programs. Since its inception in the late 1940s, more than 22,400 students have studied specialized health professions through the program.

For more than 30 years, the **Academic Common Market (ACM)** has been a winning program for states, students and colleges and universities. The ACM allows qualified residents from SREB states to enroll in extremely specialized graduate or undergraduate programs offered by institutions in other SREB states. Students pay in-state tuition and fees, providing a significant financial benefit to students and their parents. States benefit by allowing state-supported institutions to operate with optimal enrollments in these often small, specialized programs. The program also benefits states by allowing them to focus on support for existing, higher-demand programs while still meeting the needs of all of their residents. More than 2,000 students are certified each year to participate in ACM programs, making its four-year enrollment equal to many colleges and universities.

The **Academic Common Market/Electronic Campus** program combines online learning with financial relief from out-of-state tuition. Through the program, working adults in SREB states can pursue out-of-state degree programs online that are not available in their home state, while paying in-state tuition rates. During the past academic year, nearly 150 students were certified in 60 online academic programs such as aviation systems, library and information studies, and education. A list of programs is available at www.electronicampus.org/ACMEC.

Resources:

Academic Common Market — www.sreb.org

Regional Contract Program — www.sreb.org

Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing

Eula Aiken, Nursing Programs director and executive director: eula.aiken@sreb.org

The **SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing** addressed several major issues among nurse educators in the 16 SREB states and the District of Columbia over the past year, including the nursing and nursing faculty shortages, work force diversity and the emergence of doctorate of nursing practice (DNP) programs.

The results of the Council's 2006 survey showed the crisis facing nursing education programs: More than 21,000 qualified applicants were unable to enroll in college-level nursing programs in the region, mainly due to the inadequate numbers of faculty and clinical training sites. Survey results are available at www.sreb.org.

The Council's **Nurse Educator Consortium** (NEC) continued to help schools of nursing alleviate the faculty shortage by making teacher preparation courses more widely available to prospective instructors via distance learning. Seven institutions now deliver courses through the NEC, including one new addition: the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston has created a track — using NEC courses — for graduate students interested in combining teaching with their clinical focus.

Participants at the Council's 2006 annual meeting examined "Best Practices for Increasing Diversity in Nursing Education." Presenters demonstrated ways colleges can increase racial/ethnic and gender parity in nursing education. The Council also recognized the recruiting efforts of the Johnson & Johnson Campaign for Nursing's Future.

In addition, 54 nurse educators at the meeting attended a mini-workshop on the the DNP that provided faculty with details on this developing part of the field. Six institutions in the region currently offer DNP programs, 19 are developing them and 32 are considering them.

In other activities, the Council examined the need for new online resources and support to help improve the quality of online nursing courses. A committee of the Council wrote an article on new models in nursing education to be published in the *International Journal on Caring* in 2008. The Council also joined 47 nursing organizations in endorsing new guidelines for genetics, and it will help incorporate them into curricula and develop an online graduate-level genetics course.

Publications and Resources:

2006 SREB Survey Highlights and State-by-State Reports — www.sreb.org

The Economic Benefits of Addressing the Nursing Shortage

*More than 21,000
qualified applicants
were unable to
enroll in college-level
nursing programs
in the region,
mainly due to
the inadequate
numbers of faculty
and clinical
training sites.*



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† *Executive Committee member* — The Executive Committee has full power to act between Board meetings. It is composed of one Board member from each state and several from the region at large.

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Challenge to Lead Goals for Education

1. All children are ready for the first grade.
2. Achievement in the early grades for all groups of students exceeds national averages and performance gaps are closed.
3. Achievement in the middle grades for all groups of students exceeds national averages and performance gaps are closed.
4. All young adults have a high school diploma — or, if not, pass the GED tests.
5. All recent high school graduates have solid academic preparation and are ready for post-secondary education and a career.
6. Adults who are not high school graduates participate in literacy and job-skills training and further education.
7. The percentage of adults who earn postsecondary degrees or technical certificates exceeds national averages.
8. Every school has higher student performance and meets state academic standards for all students each year.
9. Every school has leadership that results in improved student performance — and leadership begins with an effective school principal.
10. Every student is taught by qualified teachers.
11. The quality of colleges and universities is regularly assessed and funding is targeted to quality, efficiency and state needs.
12. The state places a high priority on an education *system* of schools, colleges and universities that is accountable.

The Southern Regional Education Board is audited annually by an independent auditor. The audit report is mailed to Board members and made available to others. To receive a copy, please write or call:

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