

SREB

Southern
Regional
Education
Board

www.sreb.org



*Rising to
the Challenge*

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

A photograph of a graduation ceremony. Numerous blue graduation caps are being thrown into the air, creating a dynamic scene against a clear blue sky. In the foreground, the tops of graduates' heads and their raised hands are visible, some holding their caps. The overall atmosphere is one of celebration and achievement.

SREB is *Rising to the Challenge*

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Atlanta, Georgia, that works with 16 member states to improve pre-K-12 and higher education. SREB's many programs and initiatives share a single, powerful mission: to help the region lead the nation in educational progress. In the past year, SREB continued to work with states to meet the SREB *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education, which call for higher achievement at every level of education.

SREB member states

Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia

SREB states are *Rising to the Challenge*

Helping States Improve Education • Leading the Nation in Educational Progress • Pacesetters in Online Learning

Highlights from a year of important work:

Reading Is Key — An SREB panel led by Governor Tim Kaine of Virginia set the course for boosting middle grades and high school reading achievement in all academic subjects in the 16 SREB states.

Guidance for State Leaders — SREB reports pinpointed progress and challenges in the middle grades, high schools and charter schools, monitored state education budgets and more.

Improving Schools — Thousands of educators attended SREB professional development events, and new publications shared best practices for teaching and learning.

Graduating More Students, Higher Achievement — State leaders came together with SREB experts to outline a new generation of accountability that focuses on raising achievement and high school graduation rates across the region.

College Readiness — SREB worked directly with states on policies that will help prepare more students for college, career training and the workplace.

Updating Policy-Makers — State legislators and other leaders received updates on state policy and issues in face-to-face visits, presentations and information requests fielded by SREB staff.

Expanding Technology — SREB gave college students and adult learners record-setting access to 30,000 online courses and developed regionwide guidelines to ensure that middle grades and high school students have the high-quality online teachers and courses they need.

Changes in Higher Education — SREB compiled key data that reveal major demographic shifts and point to how the region's public colleges and universities can adapt.

Tuition Savings — SREB brought states together to enable the region's college students to pursue out-of-state, specialized degree programs at in-state tuition rates — earning national attention in a troubled economy.

More Doctoral Scholars — The region made progress on the minority faculty shortage as SREB served a growing number of Ph.D. students and graduates.

Needs in Nursing — SREB worked with member states to strengthen nursing education and help fill the critical need for more registered nurses.

Tomorrow's Leadership — SREB training helped states produce better principals for schools.

Still Rising — SREB's assistance to member states today moves forward with renewed vigor and an even sharper focus in the face of tough economic demands. SREB is committed to providing the critical services, information and guidance states need to improve education and fuel the long-term social and economic well-being of the region.

A Message from the SREB Chair

Governor Tim Kaine, Virginia

Alabama • Arkansas • Delaware • Florida • Georgia • Kentucky • Louisiana • Maryland • Mississippi



Tim Kaine was elected the 70th Governor of Virginia in 2005. He has expanded prekindergarten for thousands of 4-year-olds and has improved career/technical education programs. He led the creation of the New College Institute in Southside Virginia, giving every part of the Commonwealth a four-year college. He also has taught at the University of Richmond Law School and has served as the mayor of Richmond, and as lieutenant governor.

It has been an honor to serve as the SREB Chair for the past year. I am particularly proud of the work of the **SREB Committee to Improve Reading and Writing in Middle and High Schools**.

The result of the Committee's work was a major report released in May 2009 that urged states to take immediate action **to improve the reading comprehension skills of middle grades and high school students in each subject**.

The report, *A Critical Mission: Making Adolescent Reading an Immediate Priority in SREB States*, calls for states to identify the specific reading skills students need in all key subjects. Then, states should adjust their curricula, help teachers focus on higher-level reading in their classes, and provide extra help for struggling students.

These actions will help states substantially raise the levels of education students attain. More students will graduate from high school, and more of them will be well-prepared to enter college or career training — which most of our states' residents now need.

I'm also proud that the Commonwealth of Virginia is among the first states to work directly with SREB to develop a statewide college- and career-readiness initiative. Texas, Kentucky, Maryland and West Virginia also are involved in this work with SREB, and I know it will pay off.

The readiness project brings SREB together with states, thanks to support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to identify statewide college- and career-readiness standards and assessments, and make them a major focus in all high schools. The standards will provide a guide for teachers' reading and math instruction. We look forward to making progress in this area with SREB's help.

Especially in tough economic times, education is the key to economic growth and improving our quality of life in the South.

Together, we can prepare our children for a very bright future.

Message from the SREB President

Dave Spence

North Carolina • Oklahoma • South Carolina • Tennessee • Texas • Virginia • West Virginia

In the past year, SREB has helped states focus on improving education in several ways that will make a lasting difference — even as we struggle with the economic downturn.

I want to thank Governor Tim Kaine of Virginia for his leadership in the past year as the SREB Chair and for leading the **SREB Committee to Improve Reading and Writing in Middle and High Schools**. He has pushed SREB and our states to meet new challenges.

SREB states are working to lead the nation in improving education. Many of our states started further behind, owing to the legacy of low levels of family income and education. However, our region was the first to recognize that education would help break these cycles. That tradition continues.

SREB has stepped up its work with individual states, especially in these key areas:

- Helping states use the recommendations of Governor Kaine’s Committee: that states **raise expectations for students’ reading skills in each key academic subject in the middle grades and high school**. We will tap some of the nation’s leading experts in reading, convene state leaders to help them put strong policies and practices into place, and states will provide teachers with the training they need to help more students excel. No other SREB effort will have higher priority. Because *reading with comprehension is the key to all learning*.
- Working with seven SREB states individually to implement a comprehensive agenda for **improving high school graduates’ readiness for college and careers**. SREB states will be national leaders in this effort, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Focusing more attention on **helping more students who enroll in two- and four-year colleges to complete degrees**. Only about half of students who start four-year degrees in public universities in SREB states graduate within six years. This must change. We will release a major report this fall on how states and colleges are making improvements in this area.
- Promoting more comprehensive, **statewide college transfer policies**.

Just as we have since 1948, SREB states are rising to meet the challenge of improving education. Thank you to all who are involved with SREB.



Dave Spence became the president of the Southern Regional Education Board in 2005. He advises SREB Board members — including governors, state legislators, state education chiefs and other leaders in 16 states — as they strive to improve pre-K-12 and post-secondary education. He is a nationally known advocate for improving high school students’ graduation rates and readiness for college and career training. Under his leadership, SREB is helping states improve reading instruction in the middle grades and high school and raise college graduation rates, among other major priorities.



State Services

Tracking Legislative and Budget Trends • Information State Leaders Need • Conferences for Legislators & State Leaders

Legislators from across the region gather at SREB's Legislative Work Conference each year to share ideas for improving education.

Updating state leaders on legislative actions, issues and trends

The bedrock of SREB's work is providing policy-makers with the information they need to analyze education trends and topics — and to make informed decisions. State Services works with state education leaders and often is the first point of contact for legislators, legislative and governors' staffs, and other policy-makers seeking updates on specific policy issues.

In the past year, State Services coordinated responses to SREB state leaders seeking information on education governance, charter schools, state and education budgets, school calendars, student financial assistance, college completion and adult learners, K-12 and college textbook policies, teacher pay and much more.

During legislative sessions, State Services staff members meet with leaders in SREB states and prepare a series of *Legislative Reports* on current budget proposals, bills and other actions, along with reports on issues that impact education and the legislative process. These reports help state leaders learn about legislative activity on education and budgets in other states.

In addition, State Services works closely with the SREB Legislative Advisory Council, a group of state senators, representatives and delegates from all 16 SREB states. The Council meets every winter to examine education issues of importance in the region. It also advises the Board and is the steering committee for SREB's annual Legislative Work Conference. About 100 legislators regularly gather at the LWC to hear from education experts, share their knowledge and for work sessions that focus on every level of education, from pre-K through postsecondary.

State Services holds a meeting of legislative committee and governors' education staffs each fall, makes presentations in state capitals, and assists with SREB's Annual Meeting, which brings lawmakers together with other state leaders to discuss ideas for moving forward in education policy.

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College and Career Readiness



Helping More Students Complete Degrees • Boosting Students' Readiness for College and Career Training

Helping states ensure high school graduates are well-prepared for college and career training

More than ever before, most Americans need some form of education beyond high school to succeed economically. SREB has two important projects under way to help states prepare all students for college and the workplace.

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, SREB assists states as they accelerate their progress in implementing comprehensive statewide college- and career-readiness initiatives. SREB works individually with states to ensure each has a single set of statewide college- and career-readiness standards in reading and math that are recognized and applied by all public high schools and colleges within the state.

SREB helps states: review existing college- and career-readiness standards or develop and approve new ones; develop plans for helping teachers know the standards and how to incorporate them into classroom instruction; and revise senior-year curricula and instruction to strengthen the academic skills of students who need help meeting the standards before graduation. SREB also works with states to ensure that end-of-course exams specifically measure whether students meet college- and career-readiness standards.

The second part of SREB's work in this area is college completion. Federal data show that the graduation rate of incoming freshmen at public four-year colleges and universities is only 55 percent nationwide and 52 percent in SREB states. These low rates have been troubling for many years, especially for students with academic and financial disadvantages. SREB is exploring successful strategies that states and public higher education institutions are using to help more students achieve bachelor's degrees — and plans to publish a major report on the topic.

These SREB projects are geared toward helping more students graduate from high school on time and ready for college and career opportunities. Strong academic preparation and higher college completion rates are critical to SREB states' future prosperity.

Two important SREB projects aim to help states prepare *all* students for college and the workplace.

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Education Policies

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Monitoring State Progress on Education Goals • Surpassing National Averages • How Is Your State Doing?

SREB updates state leaders regularly on progress on the SREB *Challenge to Lead* goals and recommends next steps for them to pursue.

Education Goals and Progress

Helping state leaders track progress toward the SREB Challenge to Lead Goals for Education

Adopted by a committee of the region's leaders in 2002, the SREB *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education set an ambitious agenda for the region: to improve education in every state at every level — from pre-K through postsecondary studies.

Analyzing each state's progress in every area addressed in the 12 goals is the focus of SREB's Education Policies team. SREB's policy researchers examine state and national achievement results, higher education data and other information from SREB education agencies to track the progress of all 16 member states. They also issue reports on specific goals and topics, recommending policy changes and next steps for state leaders to pursue.

Among the highlights of the past year, Education Policies examined improvements in reading and mathematics achievement in the early grades and traced increases in student participation and success in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs. Reports on SREB states' achievement in the middle grades and high school are the main focus of the group's work in 2009.

Go Alliance

In pursuit of the *Challenge to Lead* goals, SREB states also participate in the *Go Alliance*, an interstate cooperative that develops and shares media campaigns to urge students to finish high school and attend college. Among other activities over the past year, the *Go Alliance's* annual Workshop Series continued to help state officials plan and implement effective education outreach and marketing campaigns.

In fall 2008, representatives from six states, facilitated by the *Go Alliance* and funded by their federal College Access Challenge Grants, launched a project to develop an online training course to help school counselors guide more students from high school into postsecondary education.

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SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program

Increasing the percentage of minority faculty members on college campuses

Now in its 16th year, the SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program continues to address the severe national and regional shortage of minority students who earn Ph.D.s and pursue careers as college and university faculty members. The program is a nationally recognized leader in this work.

The Doctoral Scholars Program currently assists more than 300 scholars who are working on doctoral degrees. The program recently celebrated its 450th Mark Musick Scholar graduate, named in honor of SREB's president emeritus who helped found the program. Of the scholars who have earned their Ph.D.s through the program, 79 percent now work in education — and more than 70 percent of them in SREB states. Seventeen program graduates have earned tenure and promotion, and many others will this year.

The program continues to provide a Service Grant Award that encourages graduates to promote academic excellence among young people in their communities. Plans also are under way to expand program services to support graduates who obtain junior faculty positions and are working toward tenure and promotion.

The program's motto, "more than a check and a handshake," describes the multi-layered support that the program provides for its scholars and institutions. The program provides scholars with professional development, mentoring and networking opportunities, employment counseling, financial assistance and other services. Participating institutions benefit from free job listings, recruiting opportunities, professional development for faculty members and resource sharing.

In October 2008, SREB was the lead host of the 15th annual Compact for Faculty Diversity Institute on Teaching and Mentoring. The Institute brought more than 1,000 participants together in Tampa, Florida, for leadership training, networking, professional development and job recruiting. The fall 2009 Institute in Arlington, Virginia, is expected to be even larger.

SREB is the lead host of the annual Institute on Teaching and Mentoring, the nation's largest gathering of minority Ph.D. scholars and faculty mentors.

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Education Policies

Leading the Nation in Online Learning • Higher Standards for Online Teaching & Courses • Support for Online Teachers

The Cooperative devoted much of its work this year to online teachers, creating professional development guidelines for them and two new Web sites to help them connect with each other.

Educational Technology Cooperative

Expanding the classroom through digital and online learning

Now in its 14th year, the SREB Educational Technology Cooperative brings together state K-12 and postsecondary agencies from the 16 SREB states to capitalize on current technology at every level of education. More than three dozen state agencies participate in this one-of-a-kind program, which is a national leader in advocating for and helping states expand online learning and digital content.

Working with the Cooperative, SREB states lead the nation in providing state virtual or online schools. More than 200,000 middle grades and high school students in the region now take online courses each academic year.

With support from the AT&T Foundation, the Cooperative focused in the past year on online teachers. Building on its landmark SREB *Standards for Quality Online Teaching*, the Cooperative developed professional development guidelines for online teachers, two new Web sites to provide quality resources for online teachers, and a forum where online teachers can obtain and share information.

The Cooperative also expanded the work of SREB-SCORE in an emerging area of educational technology: digital learning content. SCORE is helping teachers and faculty understand and use digital content to improve their teaching and student learning.

The Cooperative's *EvaluTech* Web site continues to give teachers access to free, up-to-date resources for their classrooms and their own training.

Bill Thomas, the longtime director of the Cooperative and a nationally known expert on online learning and other uses of technology in education, retired from SREB in March 2009. In January 2009, he received the prestigious Community Builder Award from the National Coalition for Technology in Education and Training at the Bytes & Books Inaugural Ball in Washington, D.C. Other honorees included U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts and filmmaker George Lucas. Myk Garn is the new director of the SREB Cooperative.

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Comparative Data for Every State • Many More College Students Enrolling • Tuition and Fees Rising

Education Data Services

Keeping states informed on the latest interstate comparisons and trends affecting elementary, secondary and higher education

SREB's Education Data Services collects, analyzes and shares the latest available demographic, economic, and pre-K-12 and higher education data among SREB states.

The program's centerpiece is the *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education*, one of the nation's most comprehensive collections of comparative data — widely used across the SREB region and nationwide for more than a half-century. The *Fact Book* is published every two years, and the 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 other regional and national data. All 50 states are included in much of the online version. The new edition will be published in June 2009.

Leaders also receive state-by-state *Featured Facts* reports highlighting their standings on key higher education indicators. Periodic *Fact Book Bulletins* provide additional updates on current issues for policy-makers, and are cited regularly by the national and regional news media.

The backbone of the *Fact Book* is the SREB-State Data Exchange, which compiles the most detailed and up-to-date comparisons of higher education data in the region. Created in 1969, the Data Exchange brings together higher education governing and coordinating boards in SREB states to produce comparative information critical to the work of governors' offices, higher education boards and legislative committees. State agency staff members meet each year to review the information and plan for new sets of data that can help state policy-makers monitor trends and improve higher education in the region.

The Data Exchange's annual survey includes helpful "SREB averages" for funding, student tuition/fees, progression rates and faculty compensation, plus the nation's first and most detailed annual interstate profiles on e-learning.

The latest edition of the *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education* helps policy-makers find the data they need to monitor trends in their states.

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High Schools That Work

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Schools Committed to Improvement • Training for Thousands of Educators • All Students Reaching Higher Standards

The 2008 *HSTW*
Summer Staff
Development Conference
attracted more than
7,500 educators from
43 states and other
nations.

Transforming high schools into places where all students learn at high levels

SREB's *High Schools That Work* (*HSTW*) program is recognized nationally for its effectiveness in helping schools improve the achievement of *all* students. Offering a results-based design, *HSTW* partners with state education agencies to help raise achievement in more than 1,200 high schools in 31 states and the District of Columbia. *HSTW*'s 10 Key Practices help schools blend career/technical studies with rigorous academics and emphasize the use of data in school improvement.

HSTW provides many workshops for educators and state leaders. The 22nd Annual *HSTW* Summer Staff Development Conference was held in July 2008 in Nashville, Tennessee, and drew more than 7,500 educators from 43 states, Canada and Japan. *HSTW* also held eight other national workshops for 1,100 educators and a school leadership series with follow-up Webinars for 71 educators.

The annual *HSTW* Leaders' Forum focused nearly 100 state leaders and legislators on policies and initiatives for realizing the potential of career/technical studies to improve achievement, high school completion rates, and preparation for college and careers.

HSTW also developed a series of Webinars for educators on improving reading, and *HSTW*'s team of school improvement consultants delivered more than 140 customized workshops and other sessions to 2,500 educators.

In fall 2008, SREB sent the results of the 2008 *HSTW* and Middle Grades Assessments to nearly 1,400 participating high schools and middle grades schools. The *HSTW* Assessment included new subject tests based on the 2009 National Assessment for Educational Progress frameworks and *HSTW*'s college- and career-readiness goals. An October 2008 national workshop and 14 state-level workshops guided school and state leaders in using data to inform school improvements.

As always, *HSTW* published dozens of reports on education policy and practice — available online at www.sreb.org.

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Partnerships with States

In 2008, this *High Schools That Work (HSTW)* program established innovative partnerships with SREB state departments of education in four states to reform high schools and improve student achievement and graduation rates.

In Alabama in 2008, SREB helped seven schools use the *HSTW* improvement framework and held workshops for educators on literacy, school culture and more. In Florida, SREB began training SREB's and the state's own school improvement coaches. This work combines school improvement efforts with training for current and aspiring school leaders in 25 underperforming schools.

The Louisiana partnership includes 12 high schools and 10 middle grades schools. In 2008, SREB held numerous workshops and helped teams of teachers and school and district leaders develop school improvement plans using the *HSTW* framework.

SREB provides on-site coaching and workshops to 43 Texas schools. In 2008, SREB helped teachers embed high-level science instruction into career/technical classes and improve student advisement. After this training, many schools showed achievement gains and higher rates of students who met college/career readiness standards on the *HSTW* Assessment than other schools. SREB helped one high school implement a pre-engineering curriculum that earned the school a national award.

Direct Services to Districts and Schools

High Schools That Work (HSTW) and *Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW)* contract with schools and districts to provide traditionally low-performing schools with a school improvement model proven to boost student achievement. School improvement consultants customize services for each school.

In the past year, these programs served 53 middle grades schools and 92 high schools in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Alberta, Canada. SREB provided direct services to an additional 81 high schools and 12 middle grades schools outside the region.

The Mobile Public Schools in Alabama expanded *MMGW* to all of its middle schools after 12 schools used the SREB program to meet test-score goals under the *No Child Left Behind Act* in 2007-2008. Robeson County, North Carolina, also added all of its middle grades schools to the program this year.

These partnerships

serve 96 schools

in four states.

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High Schools That Work

Preparing Students for High School • More Rigor & Relevance in Classes • Higher Graduation Rates and Readiness

The Transitions Institute helped more teachers prepare students for high school and college studies.

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

SREB continues to support improvement in critical education transitions for students. The 2008 SREB report *Redesigning the Ninth-Grade Experience* outlines the components of an effective transition for freshmen who are not prepared for rigorous high school courses. SREB provides professional development and coaching, in partnership with large school districts and state education agencies, to assist schools in improving students' transition into high school.

In 2008, SREB began to assist educators in teaching academic and career skills through lab- and project-based courses in the ninth grade. In 2009, the Transitions Institute will be held during the annual *HSTW* Summer Staff Development Conference. The Institute serves educators whose schools design and deliver standards-based courses that help accelerate learning for — rather than remediate — ninth-graders who may be behind. It also helps educators better prepare high school seniors for postsecondary studies.

In the 2008-2009 school year, SREB held similar institutes for educators in Alabama, Florida and Louisiana.

Project Lead The Way®

SREB's partnership with the national nonprofit organization, Project Lead The Way® Inc. (PLTW Inc.), will provide engineering-related courses to 778 middle grades and high schools and biomedical science programs to 47 high schools in SREB states in the 2009-2010 school year. The partnership increases the number and diversity of students preparing for college studies in engineering, science and technology. PLTW Inc. provides teachers with structured training for each course they teach and provides standard end-of-course assessments and course designs that embed academic skills into career/technical courses.

The PLTW Inc. engineering and biomedical sciences curricula use project- and problem-based learning to help students connect academic knowledge to the technical skills of the field. SREB and PLTW Inc. also have developed recruitment materials that schools can use to attract more girls to engineering.



High Schools That Work Urban Network

Advancing school achievement in urban areas

The Urban Network works closely with leaders in schools and school districts to improve classroom instruction and provide staff development. The network helps teachers hone their classroom practices, trains career/technical teachers to embed literacy and mathematics strategies into their courses, and helps teachers improve instructional planning. Recently, the Network has focused on helping schools redesign the ninth grade to ensure that more students meet college- and career-readiness standards and graduate from high school on time.

The 12th Annual Urban Council meeting in February 2009 assembled 40 educators from six cities. The theme, “Connections That Work,” emphasized connections between students and adults in schools, support from feeder schools in improving student achievement and high school graduation rates, personalized learning environments and student achievement, high-quality instruction, and *High Schools That Work* and other district-level improvement efforts.

Making Middle Grades Work

Ensuring the middle grades prepare students for high school

Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) focused in the past year on increasing the number of schools it serves with research-based improvement services. *MMGW*’s network grew to 440 schools in 24 states — an increase of more than 100 schools from the previous year.

The school improvement program held nearly 100 workshops for educators, addressing needs identified by *MMGW* during Technical Assistance Visits and the 2008 Middle Grades Assessment. *MMGW* provided district and school leaders with coaching to improve reading and mathematics efforts and to adopt practices that support the concept that “failure is not an option” in the middle grades.

The annual Middle Grades Leadership Forum was held in April 2009 in Atlanta. State leaders reviewed SREB middle grades research and discussed strategies to bring more attention to the transition between early grades and middle grades education.

The Urban Network helped schools redesign the ninth grade to ensure that more students will be able to succeed in high school.

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MMGW’s network grew to 440 schools in 24 states in the past year.

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High Schools That Work

Blending Academics & Career Training • Higher Standards for Instructors • Improving Shared-Time Career Centers

Building on the network's rapid growth, *TCTW* held the first annual national *TCTW* Forum in early 2009.

Technology Centers That Work

Helping career/technology centers in SREB states improve student readiness for college and careers

Created in 2007, *Technology Centers That Work (TCTW)* helps career/technology centers embed college- and career-readiness academic standards into instruction. *TCTW* also works with high schools to ensure that career/technical students receive a coherent program of academic and career/technical studies. *TCTW*'s goal is to help centers produce graduates who can succeed in postsecondary studies and high-demand, high-skill, high-wage fields.

The *TCTW* network grew by 50 percent in its second year, to 90 centers in 11 states. Other states are identifying centers for participation in the coming year. The first annual national *TCTW* Forum was held in New Orleans in early 2009. Nearly 200 participants from career/technology centers discussed crucial issues facing their schools.

TCTW held national workshops for more than 150 educators, and teams of educators developed school improvement plans for their centers. *TCTW* offered a new Webinar throughout the year on defining the mission and purpose of technology centers and establishing effective student guidance and advisement systems. *TCTW* also conducted 16 Technical Assistance Visits in schools, four statewide Site Development Workshops, three workshops on the use of data to improve instruction, and additional professional development activities.

TCTW provides its member schools with highly regarded training on embedding literacy and numeracy strategies into career/technical courses. SREB school improvement consultants provide follow-up visits to career/technology centers to observe classroom practices and to work with educators on instructional improvements.

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Learning-Centered Leadership Program

Helping prepare a highly qualified principal for every school

The SREB Learning-Centered Leadership Program works with states, universities and school districts to improve training for K-12 school leaders across the region. In 2009, the program helped states improve preparation programs, licensure, professional development and evaluation for school leaders. The program:

- advised Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee on redesigns of school-leadership preparation and professional development programs. Several other states and school districts also tapped the program's services.
- partnered with the U.S. Department of Education and the Florida Department of Education to prepare more school leaders to increase student achievement. SREB will work with six districts and a cohort of new leaders, provide professional development and coaching for leaders in 25 schools, and develop an academy model designed to prepare and develop more skilled school leaders.
- began work to revise indicators, criteria and research design for the SREB 2010 school leadership benchmark report to ensure they reflect current research and practice.
- published reports on how school principals' working conditions affect their efforts to improve schools and achievement.
- convened the annual SREB Leadership Forum in spring 2009 for state policy-makers to share research and best practices, have dialogue on critical issues, and plan for the improvement of statewide school leadership systems.
- comprehensively evaluated the redesigned leadership preparation programs at East Tennessee State University and the University of Memphis, and reported on the 2005-2008 Tennessee redesign work that was funded by the U.S. Department of Education.
- developed a new curriculum and provided SREB Leadership Curriculum Module training to 614 workshop leaders from 22 states, and investigated new ways to help educators more easily access SREB leadership training, including online courses and technical services.

The program provided
SREB Leadership
Curriculum Module
training to more than
600 module workshop
leaders from 22 states.

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Student Access Programs and Services

Increasing Access • Bringing Adults Back to College • Linking Students with Specialized Programs

College students from all 16 SREB states gained greater access to postsecondary education through these programs.

Helping college students of all ages take courses and earn degrees — no matter where they live and work

Student Access Programs and Services encompasses several SREB programs that focus on increasing college access and graduation rates. The shared mission of these programs is simple: to give students more access to postsecondary education — wherever, however and whenever they wish. The programs include online efforts (the *Electronic Campus*, TheTeacherCenter.org, the Distance Learning Policy Laboratory and Adult Learning) and two longstanding, traditional-campus programs (the Regional Contract Program for Health Professions and the Academic Common Market).

Much of the unit's work in the past year has focused on adult learners, highlighted by the continued growth of the Continuum for All Louisiana Learners, or CALL initiative, a joint project of the Louisiana Board of Regents and SREB. CALL helps working adults take accelerated online courses at their own convenience — and even provides college credit for prior education, work and life experiences — so they can complete an associate's or bachelor's degree. The program was launched at Bossier Parish Community College and Northwestern State University, where some 50 adults completed associate's and bachelor's degrees in the first year. In 2008-2009, the program added four institutions and several new degree programs, and enrollments continue to grow.

Several other SREB states have initiated or are discussing adult learning initiatives. One unique effort — planning a campaign that will use popular “social networking” media to reach adult learners — is under way in Oklahoma.

Until all SREB states can push college graduation rates higher, the number of adult learners with some college education and no degree will continue to grow. CALL is an important model for the region, and SREB will continue to work with states to help more adults further their education.

For more information:
Contact Bruce Chaloux at
bruce.chaloux@sreb.org.



Electronic Campus

One of the nation's leading online learning programs, the SREB *Electronic Campus* (electroniccampus.org) now offers college students and adult learners 30,000 online courses from more than 300 colleges and universities in the SREB region. Providing access to 800 degree programs, it features a rapid admissions system and a variety of tools and services to help students — particularly adults — find the courses they need to complete a degree at their own convenience.

A related effort, the SREB-State Teacher Center (TheTeacherCenter.org) continued to provide online resources for the million-plus educators in the SREB region. The site gives teachers and aspiring teachers “anytime, anywhere” access to online professional development courses and information on financial aid, licensure and more.

For more information:
Contact Mary Larson at
mary.larson@sreb.org.

Regional Contract Program for Health Professions

One of SREB's first programs, the Regional Contract Program for Health Professions enables SREB states to share first-professional degree programs across state borders in hard-to-find fields such as optometry, veterinary medicine, osteopathic medicine and dentistry. States save the cost of creating their own health programs and can expand the number of professionals who serve their residents in these specialized fields. Students can prepare for these professions at in-state or reduced tuition rates.

Academic Common Market

The Academic Common Market (ACM) enables college students to enroll in an undergraduate or graduate program in another SREB state if it is not available in their home state, and pay in-state tuition rates. States benefit by meeting the needs of their residents and by helping state-supported institutions optimize their enrollments in these programs. More than 2,000 students participated in the ACM last year, making its four-year enrollment equal to that of many colleges and universities.

Recent efforts to promote the ACM have proven very successful. A marketing campaign to make high school counselors aware of the program was launched in seven states in 2008. A TV “consumer report” aired in Atlanta that led to hundreds of e-mails and telephone calls about the program.

For more information:
About the Regional Contract
Program: Contact Mary Larson at
mary.larson@sreb.org.

About the Academic Common
Market: Contact Trudy Blackmon at
trudy.blackmon@sreb.org.



Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing

Addressing the Nursing Faculty Shortage • Bringing Nursing Schools Together • Solving Common Problems

The Council is working to stem the projected loss of more than 500 nurse educators in SREB states in the next few years.

Inspiring excellence in nursing education

As the population and health care needs expand, SREB states and the nation face an acute shortage of registered nurses and an urgent need for more nurse educators who will teach them.

SREB states will lose an estimated 502 nurse educators in the next three years, a 2008 SREB annual survey of nursing education programs revealed. In addition, 52 deans in the region plan to retire within three years.

The SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing is helping nursing education programs address these shortages through several initiatives.

The Council's Nurse Educator Consortium has brought together graduate schools to help alleviate faculty shortages in SREB states and the District of Columbia. Currently, eight graduate programs offer Web-based teacher preparation courses for graduate students and advanced practice nurses who are interested in teaching. The consortium has enrolled 102 students since 2004 — and 72 percent have completed their courses.

The Council's Leadership Development Committee, led by Patricia A. Burns of the University of South Florida College of Nursing, is focused on enhancing the skills and readiness of the next generation of academic leaders in nursing. Collaborating with Ed O'Neil, the director of the Center for the Health Professions (CHP) at the University of California, San Francisco, the Council and CHP will offer a combination of focused seminars and individual projects to help interested faculty prepare for leadership roles. The Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, Georgia State University and the University of South Florida have agreed to serve as primary sites.

The Council's annual meetings continue to address important issues in nursing education. At the 2008 meeting, nurse educators shared strategies on increasing admission, retention and graduation rates in nursing programs. The Program Committee, led by Roseanne Pruitt of Clemson University in South Carolina, has selected faculty workloads and NCLEX pass rates as the focus of the next annual meeting in fall 2009.

For more information:
Contact Eula Aiken at
eula.aiken@sreb.org.

Communications



Stronger Links to State Leaders and Educators • Outreach to News Media • Publishing SREB Reports

Building greater awareness of critical education issues

Promoting the important education messages and priorities of SREB and its member states is the focus of SREB's Communications office. The office works constantly to clarify and distribute these messages face to face and via print, broadcast, the Web and new media — ensuring that SREB informs state leaders, policy-makers, educators and the public.

In the past year, Communications assisted many SREB staff in writing, editing, designing, publishing and delivering the organization's numerous publications and public presentations. The office also advises SREB senior staff and helps them promote important education issues in the region.

Communications led the development of the new and improved SREB Web site, www.sreb.org, a leading source of information on education policy and practice, to be available soon. The office also launched SREB's first presence on Facebook to reach a wider scope of educators, young professionals, journalists and others who are interested in education.

In May 2009, Communications organized a presentation by SREB Chair and Governor of Virginia Tim Kaine at the Education Writers Association annual conference in Washington, D.C. Governor Kaine presented SREB's major new report on improving reading in the middle grades and high school, attracting national attention to the report and this crucial issue.

SREB press releases now reach more than 1,000 reporters and editorial page editors across the SREB region and nation. Communications works closely with the news media to ensure that SREB and its member states are featured regularly in national and local-level news outlets such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Education Week*, National Public Radio, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and many others.

Communications staff also participated in conferences by the Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media at Teachers College, Columbia University; the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education; and the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, among other events.

New and improved design and content for SREB's Web site, www.sreb.org, are on the way.

For more information:
Contact Alan Richard at alan.richard@sreb.org
or Lisa Johnston at lisa.johnston@sreb.org.

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* *Finance Committee member* — The Finance Committee, a subcommittee of the Executive Committee, prepares an annual budget and presents it and other financial policy matters to the Executive Committee.

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Reginald P. Barnes, Horn Lake	2010
Hank M. Bounds, <i>State Superintendent of Education</i>	2011
† * Jack Gordon, <i>State Senator</i>	2012
Charles L. Harrison, <i>Educational Consultant</i> , The Excellence Group	2009

North Carolina

Beverly Perdue, <i>Governor</i>	2013
Walter H. Dalton, <i>Lieutenant Governor</i>	2008
† * Howard N. Lee, <i>Executive Director</i> , North Carolina Education Cabinet	2011
Cathy Tomon, <i>Principal</i> , Broad Creek Middle School	2010
Douglas Y. Yongue, <i>State Representative</i>	2009

Oklahoma

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Nelda Jo Kirk, <i>Deputy Chief of Staff for Administration</i> , Office of the Governor	2012
Kara Gae Neal, <i>Superintendent/CEO</i> , Tulsa Technology Center	2009
Susan Paddack, <i>State Senator</i>	2010
† M. Susan Savage, <i>Secretary of State</i>	2011

South Carolina

Mark Sanford, <i>Governor</i>	2011
Nikki G. Setzler, <i>State Senator</i>	2005
† * Ronald P. Townsend, Anderson	2007
Mitchell M. Zais, <i>President</i> , Newberry College	2012

Tennessee

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Stephen A. Cobb, Nashville	2007
Lois M. DeBerry, <i>Speaker Pro Tempore of the House</i>	2010
Paul E. Stanton Jr., <i>President</i> , East Tennessee State University	2009
† Andy Womack, Murfreesboro	2008

Texas

Rick Perry, <i>Governor</i>	2011
Rob Eissler, <i>State Representative</i>	2012
Geanie W. Morrison, <i>State Representative</i>	2011
Robert P. Scott, <i>Commissioner of Education</i>	2010
† Florence Shapiro, <i>State Senator</i>	2009

Virginia

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Kristen J. Amundson, <i>State Delegate</i>	2010
† * Mark E. Emblidge, <i>President</i> , State Board of Education; <i>Affiliate Professor and Director</i> , The Literacy Institute, Virginia Commonwealth University	2012
Steve F. Kime, Clifton	2009
Henry G. Rhone, <i>Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services</i> , Virginia Commonwealth University	2011

West Virginia

† Joe Manchin III, <i>Governor</i>	2009
Thomas W. Campbell, <i>State Delegate</i>	2009
Jay Cole, The College Board	2008
† Robert H. Plymale, <i>State Senator</i>	2010
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