

Background

Advanced Career (AC) is an innovative initiative from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and a consortium of states, creating programs of study that prepare high school students for careers and meaningful credentials or postsecondary certificates or degrees. **The AC curricula blends learning experiences that advance students' literacy, math, science and technical knowledge and skills, and strengthen the habits and mind for success.** Understanding students' interests, abilities and potential career goals, and possible educational and training paths leads to students' deeper understanding of postsecondary education and workplace opportunities.

AC is being implemented as a coherent, articulated sequence of **four intellectually demanding courses that can lead to a recognized industry certificate, a community/technical college certificate, or an associate's or bachelor's degree.** The courses are organized around authentic, hands-on projects requiring application of rigorous standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and career technical education standards, and 21st-century skills. Each program has a college-ready academic core and is designed to bridge high school and postsecondary studies. Both formative and summative assessments are built into each course and project to advance academic and technical achievement and success in entry-level positions and in postsecondary entry-level, credit-bearing courses.

The consortium has agreed to curricula, assessment and professional development components that ensure fidelity of implementation at various school sites. Each course has a syllabus with instructional philosophy, course standards, instructional delivery and support systems, assessment and a recommended grading system. Each course is designed around project-based units including essential questions, project scenarios, academic and technical standards, and daily instructional plans. There is an end-of-course assessment that measures students' understanding of college- and career-readiness standards.

Finally, **professional development is a key element.** It includes an intensive full-day two-week summer institute. Teachers perform the student assignments that blend reading, math, science and technology by using miniature devices and tools developed by national industry partners. Teachers plan and teach content to other teachers and ask for feedback to set the context for project scenarios, complete with assessments and rubric scoring. They learn about special tools that help students read complex technical texts, practice counseling techniques for struggling students and work with formative assessment math lessons. Teachers learn how to manage and teach in a project-based classroom using technology as a learning tool.



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SREB and several states have identified emerging career areas chosen for curriculum development:

Alabama: Aerospace Engineering

Arkansas: Innovations in Science and Technology

Kentucky: Integrated Production Technologies and Informatics

New Jersey: Global Logistics & Supply Chain Management

Ohio: Automated Materials Joining Technology and Health Informatics

South Carolina: Clean Energy Technology

West Virginia: Energy and Power

We are seeing significant increases in schools that adopt AC courses or redesign current career and technical education courses in high-demand fields to fit the AC model. More students are pursuing career programs and graduating with career credentials ready for college programs or advanced career training without remediation.

For information, contact AdvancedCareer@sreb.org