

HSTW Senior-Year Redesign:

Launching pad to advanced credentials and degrees

SREB's **High Schools That Work (HSTW) model** transforms high schools by connecting secondary and postsecondary studies with workplace learning. At its heart is the blending of a college-ready academic core with four or more career pathway courses taught through project-based assignments.

A key feature of the new HSTW model is a **redesigned senior year** that allows eligible students to complete graduation requirements while taking college-level courses at the high school or on a college campus. Students may graduate with **up to two semesters of credit** (or 30 hours) toward an associate or bachelor's degree or an advanced industry credential.

Working in partnership with community colleges and universities, high schools can offer students four different options of this redesigned senior-year model.

Who can participate? Any student, with the right preparation.

Coupled with college-ready academics, career pathways have the power to move students into good, higher-paying jobs — and into the middle class.

Here's how it works:

Junior Year	Senior Year – Four Options		
Students take a state-approved college- and career-readiness assessment — like the ACT, SAT or other approved college placement exam — to gauge their preparedness for college-level studies.	<p>Ready option 1: Seniors whose assessment scores fall well below readiness benchmarks — for example, three or more points below benchmarks on tests like the ACT — receive intensive remediation in literacy and math alongside their core academic and career pathway courses. Students also engage in hands-on career counseling and work-based learning experiences designed to help them build skills, gain confidence and identify appropriate postsecondary and career goals.</p>	<p>Ready Option 2: Seniors who aren't quite ready for college-level studies — for example, those whose literacy and math scores fall no more than two to three points below benchmarks on tests like the ACT — enroll in a double-block of readiness courses during their first semester. In their second semester, seniors who meet benchmarks complete graduation requirements plus up to 15 college credits toward a postsecondary credential or degree.</p>	<p>Accelerated Option 4: Seniors who meet readiness benchmarks complete graduation requirements plus up to 30 college credits toward an advanced industry credential or an associate or bachelor's degree at a community college or four-year college or university.</p>
		<p>Ready Option 3: Seniors who do not meet readiness benchmarks after the first semester engage in college- and career-preparatory courses and supplemental learning experiences like those described under Ready Option 1. Students graduate ready to enroll in college-level English and math courses.</p>	

What do accelerated pathways look like?

- Dual enrollment courses are **taught on the college schedule** and use **college syllabi, exams and materials**; extra time is provided for labs, internships or capstones.
- High school career pathway courses and college courses are offered at the high school, at the college or online and taught by **qualified high school teachers or college faculty**.
- Academic and career pathway teachers collaborate to **integrate project-based instruction and assignments**.



SREB can help your state, district or school:

Meet graduation requirements. Depending on your state's academic requirements for graduation, some college English and math courses, for example, could substitute for a fourth English or a fourth math course. SREB can facilitate the policy changes needed to allow eligible seniors to satisfy graduation requirements with challenging college courses.

Connect high school and postsecondary studies. Accreditation organizations like the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools set criteria for the kinds of courses that can be offered for college credit and where and by whom they can be taught — for example, by postsecondary faculty versus by high school teachers who meet accreditation guidelines. SREB can work with you and your two- and four-year institutions to streamline credit transfer policies and identify the conditions under which certain high school teachers may offer college courses.

Find time for accelerated learning. More seniors will choose accelerated learning options if they know they can also continue to participate in sports, clubs and other meaningful activities at their home high schools. SREB can help create schedules that balance accelerated learning with time for important senior-year milestones.

Manage funding concerns. Extending postsecondary education to high school seniors carries financial implications — from tuition and full-time equivalents to transportation to and from college campuses, technical centers or work sites. SREB is prepared to work with secondary and postsecondary education agencies to negotiate funding agreements that honor each institution's contribution to students' education.

Enhance postsecondary and experiential learning. As more seniors engage in work-based or experiential learning activities, schools need to ensure that both students and employers or community partners are protected from harm. SREB can help schools leverage available resources to offer real-world learning opportunities and to identify policies needed to insure students and limit employers' liability if a student is injured during a work experience.

Here's how to get started:

SREB can help you harness the untapped potential of the senior year — and put more students on a path to quality credentials, good jobs and economic security. The redesigned HSTW model can help states, districts and schools double the percentage of young people who earn a credible credential or degree before the age of 25.

Contact Gene.Bottoms@sreb.org to learn more.