

# Virginia and SREB

SREB

## ■ SREB and its mission

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The Southern Regional Education Board is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states to improve public education at every level, from pre-K to postdoctoral study. The nation's first interstate compact for education, SREB was created in 1948 by governors and legislators who recognized the link between education and the economic vitality of the region. Today, the organization continues to focus on improving quality of life by advancing public education.

SREB helps states focus on what works in both policy and practice. We draw on our expertise in policy and research to advise state leaders on key education issues. We track and report progress, state by state, on important benchmarks. We bring together member states to forge consensus and work together on initiatives that would not be possible alone.

SREB programs and services help states implement best practices. School improvement services work directly with public schools to improve instruction, student achievement and school leadership. A cooperative helps teachers, professors and state

education officials realize the promise of technology. Access programs help students reduce out-of-state tuition, find online programs, and navigate the path to — and through — college and career training.

The governor and four gubernatorial appointees (at least one state legislator and one educator) serve four-year, staggered terms on the Board. Each state is represented on the Executive Committee, which can act for the Board between meetings. The SREB Legislative Advisory Council, composed of legislators from each state, is the largest standing committee advising the Board.

Legislative involvement in SREB is extensive:

- Legislators serve as members and officers of the Board.
- Legislators are members of the Board's Executive Committee.
- Legislators are members of the Board's Finance Committee, which is chaired by the treasurer, who is a legislator.
- Legislators also serve on other SREB program committees, panels and task groups.

## ■ Virginia Board and Legislative Advisory Council members

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Board terms for appointed members expire June 30 of the specified year. Board members are: Governor Robert F. McDonnell (SREB chair); Delegate Mark L. Cole (2014); Steve F. Kime, retired president of Servicemembers' Opportunity Colleges (2013); Alvin Williamson, com-

mandant, Fort Union Military Academy (2015); and a vacancy (2012). As a legislative member of the Board, Delegate Cole serves on the Legislative Advisory Council. Delegates Thomas A. Greason and Robert Tata also serve on the Council as governor-appointed members.

2012

Southern  
Regional  
Education  
Board

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## ■ Where does financial support come from?

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Basic operating support comes from annual appropriations from each member state, but the bulk of the operating budget of more than \$47 million includes funds from foundations and federal sources. In addition, SREB administers the Regional Contract

Program for students in medicine, dentistry, optometry, veterinary medicine, osteopathic medicine and other fields. The operating budget for the Regional Contract Program is approximately \$12 million.

## ■ Preparing for student success in college and careers

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Rebuilding state economies by creating new jobs and strengthening a well-educated and well-trained work force to attract and retain industry are top state priorities in the SREB region. In response, Southern states have intensified efforts to increase dramatically the number of college degrees and postsecondary certificates required to meet economic development and work force needs. SREB's special projects on college readiness and college completion assist states through public policy and programmatic efforts as they address these concerns.

With grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation, SREB's **State College and Career Readiness Initiative** and the **College Completion Initiative** are supporting the Southern states to ensure that all students leave high school prepared for college courses and the workplace and have greater opportunities to complete a certificate or degree.

During 2011, SREB expanded its work from previous years to implement comprehensive statewide college-readiness initiatives throughout the SREB region. Drawing on a new, three-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, SREB advanced college and career readiness by:

1. developing indicators of implementation of the Common Core State Standards (or other rigorous standards), with benchmarking reports against those indicators for most SREB states.
2. supporting Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia in designing and implementing their statewide, 12th-grade mathematics and literacy transition courses to improve students' college readiness.

3. developing and implementing a model statewide Career and Technical Education pathway in a STEM sector that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards in Georgia.
4. developing statewide scaling of innovative literacy and math strategies in Arkansas.

Generous grants from the Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation supported SREB's College Completion Initiative in 2011. Using a series of focus groups, with representatives from K-12 and postsecondary education, and regional working groups of legislators in consensus-building, issue-based meetings, SREB began identifying the essential elements of effective state policy on a number of actions that impact students' success in completing a certificate or a degree in a timely manner. Issue areas developed in 2011 included college readiness, outcomes-based performance funding, transfer, credits- and time-to-degree, and accelerated options (i.e., AP, dual enrollment and prior learning assessment). SREB also provided technical assistance to Georgia and West Virginia on college completion issues.

This work builds on recommendations from SREB's report *No Time to Waste: Policy Recommendations for Increasing College Completion*, which challenges states to increase significantly the numbers of students who complete postsecondary career certificates and associate's and bachelor's degrees. Across both initiatives in 2011, SREB worked with regional and national organizations, as well as leaders throughout the 16 SREB states, to increase legislative and gubernatorial understanding and engagement on key policies that impact readiness and completion. These initiatives will continue to be a priority for SREB.

## ■ Charting states' educational progress

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A central focus for SREB has been helping member states meet the *Challenge to Lead Goals for Education*. The goals, adopted in 2002, begin with an ambitious statement: "SREB states can lead the nation in educational progress." To do this, students at every level must be ready to learn: in first grade, the middle grades, high school, college and the workplace. Schools and colleges also must close gaps in academic achievement among groups of students.

SREB completed the first series of reports on the *Challenge to Lead* goals — one per goal — by 2006. Since then, SREB has issued many other reports focusing on specific goals or on topics related to the goals. SREB also has issued four sets of customized, biennial state progress reports that highlight the progress of individual SREB states in meeting the goals, point out significant improvements by most SREB states in many areas, and make recommen-

dations on next steps to pursue. Under the title *A Decade of Progress*, the latest set of state progress reports was issued in June 2012. Other reports include:

- *Redesigning Dual Enrollment to Promote College Completion*
- *Transitioning to the New High School Graduation Rate*
- *Measuring a Teacher's Value and Effectiveness in SREB States*
- *Smart Class-Size Policies for Lean Times*
- *Maximizing Education Data Use in SREB States*

In spring 2012, the *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education were reissued with a fresh format and refined indicators of progress to reflect recommendations from Board commissions and goals reports from the past decade. All reports are available at [www.sreb.org](http://www.sreb.org).

## ■ Encouraging more students to plan for and apply to college

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*Go Alliance* is a multistate cooperative that strives to boost the postsecondary enrollment and completion rates of students who would be first in their families to go to college. Services focus on: 1) college access policy; 2) support programs to help these students prepare for and apply to college; and 3) communications strategies that inform and motivate them about college.

In 2012, *Go Alliance* (with SREB's Educational Technology Cooperative) received a Next Generation of Student Supports grant from Lumina Foundation to identify how best to support students in applying for financial aid. Student focus groups across the country will guide the recommendations to Lumina.

*Go Alliance* also hosts an annual meeting and a workshop series that provide professional development

to members. Several 2012 workshops have focused on using websites, smartphones and educational gaming to communicate with students about college and financial aid. In addition, *Go Alliance* gives technical assistance to SREB states implementing federal College Access Challenge Grants.

Eight SREB states collaborate with *Go Alliance* to provide training in college advising to high school counselors. Independent evaluation found that about 75 percent of counselors who completed the training changed their practices and implemented the strategies they learned. Nine in 10 found the training "useful" or "very useful" and — in spite of its rigor — 82 percent would recommend it to colleagues.

## ■ Improving schools

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SREB's *High Schools That Work (HSTW)* program partners with states, districts and schools to provide professional development, technical assistance, coaching, assessments, surveys and materials that support comprehensive high school reform.

These services aim to ensure more students complete career-focused pathway programs of study joined with a college-ready academic core, so that more students are prepared for college, advanced training and careers. Active in 1,200 schools in 30 network states

and the District of Columbia, *HSTW* is America's largest high school improvement effort. Virginia has six schools in the network.

Virginia state, district and school leaders and teachers participated in a variety of *HSTW*'s professional development opportunities in 2010-2011, including national workshops, site-based workshops, the *HSTW* Staff Development Conference and the State Leaders' Forum. A partnership between SREB and the Virginia Department of Education provided member schools with two statewide workshops, more than 60 school-site coaching visits and 10 school-specific professional development workshops on improving instruction. Seven Virginia high schools participated in the 2012 *HSTW* Assessment.

SREB's *Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW)* program works with states, districts and schools to ensure more students leave the middle grades prepared for rigorous high school studies and, ultimately, for postsecondary studies and careers. SREB supports more than 450 *MMGW* schools in 23 states with professional development, technical assistance, coaching and surveys. Four Virginia schools participate in the *MMGW* network through Technical Assistance Visits, national workshops and site-based professional development. Four middle grades schools participated in the 2012 *MMGW* Student and Teacher Surveys.

SREB's *Technology Centers That Work (TCTW)* initiative helps shared-time technical centers raise academic and technical achievement and improve collaboration with "sending" high schools to prepare students for both careers and further studies. Since it began in 2007, the network has grown to more than 175 sites in 17 states. Virginia's one *TCTW* site par-

ticipated in the *HSTW* Assessment and national professional development activities this year to support school improvement.

In 2009, SREB and 12 states formed the *Preparation for Tomorrow (PFT)* consortium. Each participating state is designing a sequence of four CT courses in a high-wage, high-skill career field that is important to that state's economy — and then collaborating with SREB to train teachers, principals and counselors to implement and assess the courses. All 12 states will share the curricula and accompanying materials. Virginia currently does not participate.

SREB's *Learning-Centered Leadership Program (LCLP)* works with states to redesign school leadership preparation systems and certification policies and conducts research on school leadership topics to inform practices and policies. The LCLP also assists states, districts and schools to design succession plans and improve training for principals so that they are better able to improve schools. To support current and aspiring school leaders and leadership teams, the program provides face-to-face and online training on strategies for effective instructional leadership.

At the request of SREB's partner, the Appalachian Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC), SREB compiled a progress report on the SREB *Challenge to Lead* goal on effective school principals. The information was intended to help ARCC staff to target technical assistance and support services for state education agencies to the leader effectiveness issues of greatest need.

Virginia leaders participated in SREB's 2012 Leadership Forum on leadership strategies for saving struggling schools.

## ■ The most current comparative information for state leaders on colleges

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For 43 years the annual SREB-State Data Exchange has provided Virginia officials in government and higher education with timely, comparative information on postsecondary education enrollments, state and local appropriations, faculty salaries and benefits, degrees awarded, student persistence and progression toward graduation, tuition and fees, and higher education revenues. Most recently, comparisons on e-learning, college credits taken by high

school students, and time- and credits-to-degree have been added. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia furnishes campus-by-campus information to the Data Exchange. States use Data Exchange information in planning and coordinating activities, in making budget decisions about higher education and in setting tuition and fees. The Data Exchange also enables states to work together to develop new interstate comparisons to measure progress.

The biennial *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education*, released in 2011, has been a standard reference for policy-makers since 1956. The *Fact Book* provides information on national, regional and 50-state trends in population, schools, the economy, college enrollments, degrees awarded, student finance, college budgeting, and salaries and benefits for faculty and administrators. State leaders and planners who

access the *Fact Book* online can see trends graphically highlighted and retrieve the latest updates.

*Fact Book Bulletins* update and emphasize key items, and SREB also publishes customized state *Featured Facts* reports. The “Education Data” section at [www.sreb.org](http://www.sreb.org) gives states access to SREB’s extensive databases and comparative reports.

## ■ Increasing minority Ph.D.s and faculty diversity in Virginia

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For 19 years, the **SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program** has helped increase faculty diversity in SREB states. Through professional development, mentoring, financial assistance and other services, the program helps minority students earn advanced degrees and prepares them to become college and university faculty members. By funding the program, SREB states work more cost effectively, share resources and achieve a more diverse faculty than each state could accomplish alone. To date, the program has produced more than 600 Ph.D. graduates and currently supports a pipeline of more than 350 Ph.D. scholars.

The SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program is one of the most successful programs of its kind in the country. Nationally recognized, it has a retention/graduation rate of almost 90 percent — about double the national average. The program also decreases the

time it takes to earn a Ph.D. More than 80 percent of program graduates are working in an academic setting, more than 70 percent are employed in the SREB states, and 59 have achieved tenure.

Virginia has remained a supporter since the program began in 1993. Demonstrating its commitment to college and university faculty diversity, Virginia has supported 101 scholars and celebrated 61 Ph.D. graduates.

Each year the central event of the program is the Compact for Faculty Diversity Institute on Teaching and Mentoring, the nation’s largest gathering of minority Ph.D. scholars seeking faculty careers. More than 1,000 scholars, their mentors and nationally recognized experts meet for intellectual collaboration and further development of critical skills required for outstanding teaching, mentoring and research.

## ■ Using technology to improve teaching and increase learning

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The **SREB Educational Technology Cooperative** connects and convenes state-level technology leaders representing more than 3,400 school districts and nearly 800 two- and four-year postsecondary institutions across the 16 SREB states. Membership from both the K-12 and higher education sectors is common and encouraged. The Virginia Department of Education and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia are members.

Now in its 17th year as a nationally recognized leader in educational technology, the Cooperative has become a regional platform for national innovation. It communicates the latest technology research and trends, coordinates collaboration across SREB states, and catalyzes projects and educational technology policy leadership. It also helps members address key

technology issues through face-to-face and Web-based conferences and other events; provides state leaders, administrators and educators with information and analyses; assists with state planning initiatives; and triggers innovation through grant-funded projects, helping members identify opportunities and obstacles.

The Cooperative’s **SREB Online Learning** initiative helps states and districts work together to share information on policy and finance issues and ensure quality online teaching, courses and programs. State progress is updated in annual state virtual school survey reports. A recent publication examines the role that public school districts are playing in online learning: *Increasing Online Learning Options for K-12 Students: The Role of School Districts* (April 2012). The Cooperative also published the nation’s first *Standards*

for *Quality Online Teaching* — which have been adapted nationally and internationally — plus *Standards for Quality Online Courses* and *Guidelines for Professional Development for Online Teachers*.

The Cooperative is active in professional development for online teachers and helps improve teaching and student learning through the use of the Web, guidelines and materials. In partnership with the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL), the Cooperative manages the annual SREB/iNACOL **National Online Teacher of the Year (NOTY)** award program for K-12 online teachers. The NOTY awardee is recognized for excellence in online teaching and represents that expertise at more than 30 state, regional and national events and activities through the year. The 2012 NOTY awardee is Leslie Fetzer, an online biology teacher from the North Carolina Public Virtual School.

The 2012 **Annual Symposium on Teaching and Learning** (March 2012 in Atlanta, Georgia) featured Innosight's Michael Horn and used multiple perspectives to examine the disruptive and transformative potential of online and blended learning. The Cooperative (with the Go *Alliance*) also is utilizing a Lumina Foundation grant to explore the use of smartphones to engage first-generation, minority and low-income students in college-going. In addition, it represents the SREB states in the Gaining Online Accessibility Learning Through Self-Study (GOALS) project, funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), which enables students with disabilities to use Internet-based resources.

Giving students greater access to postsecondary education is a key mission of SREB. The *Electronic Campus*, one of the nation's leading distance learning initiatives, enables students to pursue college studies on the Internet and across state lines. It provides online access to more than 30,000 courses and nearly 1,700 degree programs from colleges and universities throughout the SREB region and now offers a wider range of services, especially for adults and e-learners. Users easily reach specialized services such as online applications, financial aid, career planning, and searches for courses and programs. It also provides opportunities to help persons of any age who need a college course, degree program or additional educa-

tion/training to get or keep a job. Visit the *Electronic Campus* at [www.ElectronicCampus.org](http://www.ElectronicCampus.org).

The **SREB-State Teacher Center**, part of the *Electronic Campus*, provides one-stop access to courses, programs, services and information for the nearly 2.5 million educators in SREB states. Teachers can find direct links to state departments of education and certification/licensure agencies, alternative paths to teaching in each state, and professional development opportunities, among other services. Visit the SREB-State Teacher Center at [www.TheTeacherCenter.org](http://www.TheTeacherCenter.org).

The **Academic Common Market/Electronic Campus (ACM/EC)** program combines the best of two SREB programs. It enables college students in SREB states to enroll in selected online degree programs offered by institutions outside of their home states — but at in-state tuition rates. More than 126 degree programs are available, and nearly 129 students were certified by their home states for study during the past year. The program is especially valuable to working adults who need greater flexibility and affordability to earn a degree. Visit the ACM/EC at <http://home.sreb.org/acm/ecinitiatives/acmintroduction.asp>.

With support from Lumina Foundation, SREB also will launch **TheAdultLearner.org** site by fall 2012. This regional (and later, national) portal will build on efforts under way in several SREB states to reach the more than 20 million working adults ages 25 to 55 in the region who have some college credit but never completed a degree. The portal will help them access specialized degree-completion programs and services designed to meet their needs.

The **Distance Learning Policy Laboratory** remains an important forum for states to review and develop policies to expand distance learning. SREB's aim is to increase access to high-quality, affordable postsecondary education by identifying barriers to distance learning; to support the development of innovative programs to test distance learning models and interstate partnerships; and to encourage colleges, universities and legislatures to make necessary policy changes. A current focus is helping states respond to changes in federal regulations that require institutions with online programs to have approval in states where they enroll students. SREB is working closely with

states to monitor changes and to promote reciprocal agreements, which have been in place since the creation of the *Electronic Campus*. SREB's "free trade

zone" will be a model for other regions as new regulations are enacted. Visit the Distance Learning Policy Laboratory at [www.sreb.org](http://www.sreb.org).

## ■ **Academic Common Market helps Virginia residents earn specialized college degrees**

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What happens to residents of your state who want to earn undergraduate or graduate degrees — such as nuclear engineering, or library and information studies — but must leave the state to study these programs? Can they afford to pursue the programs they have dreamed about that are not available in Virginia?

The **Regional Contract Program** makes it possible for other SREB states to contract with the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine for student spaces to secure entry into this professional program. For providing these contract services, the college currently receives more than \$100,000 from other SREB states. SREB is the fiscal agent for the Regional Contract Program and handles administrative duties for the states.

The **Academic Common Market (ACM)** enables Virginia residents to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees in programs of study available in other SREB states, but not in their home state, at in-state tuition rates. Both the states and students save significantly: States save the cost of creating specialized programs, and students save by paying in-state tuition for ACM programs. Through the ACM and ACM/EC, Virginia residents have access to 349 programs, including 25 online programs, in other SREB states. Virginia institutions offer 118 programs, including one online program, to residents of other SREB states.

## ■ **Preparing the nurses and nurse educators that SREB states need**

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Eight of Virginia's college-based nursing programs are members of the **SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing**. The Council — unique in America — enables nurse educators to address trends in nursing education and health care. The theme for the annual meeting in November 2012 is "Creating Partnerships and Collaboratives."

Nine institutions in the SREB Nurse Educator Consortium offer online teacher preparation courses for graduate students and novice faculty. Virginia is one of 15 states participating in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Regional Action Coalitions as part of The Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action initiative.

## Legislative Advisory Council, 2012

The SREB Legislative Advisory Council is the largest standing advisory body to the Board. The Council advises the Board on legislative matters, serves as a permanent steering committee for the annual Legislative Work Conference and sponsors special seminars on timely topics.

Senator Jack Westwood, Kentucky, *Chair*  
Delegate Thomas W. Campbell, West Virginia, *Vice Chair*

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| Videt Carmichael, <i>State Senator</i> ,<br>Meridian, Mississippi            | Jan Jones, <i>Speaker Pro Tempore of the House</i> ,<br>Alpharetta, Georgia    | Jabar Shumate, <i>State Representative</i> ,<br>Tulsa, Oklahoma            |
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| Nancy C. Detert, <i>State Senator</i> ,<br>Venice, Florida                   | Phillip D. Owens, <i>State Representative</i> ,<br>Easley, South Carolina      | Jack Westwood, <i>State Senator</i> ,<br>Erlanger, Kentucky                |
| Tom Dickson, <i>State Representative</i> ,<br>Cohutta, Georgia               | Susan Paddack, <i>State Senator</i> ,<br>Ada, Oklahoma                         | Mike Wilson, <i>State Senator</i> ,<br>Bowling Green, Kentucky             |
| Rob Eissler, <i>State Representative</i> ,<br>The Woodlands, Texas           | Paul G. Pinsky, <i>State Senator</i> ,<br>University Park, Maryland            |  |
| Joyce Elliott, <i>State Senator</i> ,<br>Little Rock, Arkansas               | Robert H. Plymale, <i>State Senator</i> ,<br>Huntington, West Virginia         |  |

The Southern Regional Education Board states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.