

Connecting Classrooms, Careers and College

Preparing students for success with SREB's Making Schools Work process



SREB

School
Improvement

The pool of jobs available to those with only a high school diploma is shrinking.

About two out of every three jobs now require some postsecondary education and training. By 2025, demand for Americans with a credential or degree may exceed supply by as many as 11 million.

There is no disputing that young people benefit from connected learning experiences that equip them with the lifelong learning skills needed to secure good jobs and a middle-class life.

For more than 30 years, SREB has partnered with states, districts and schools to identify and implement strategies

that empower young people to connect what they learn in the classroom with the world of work.

Our efforts began in 1987 with High Schools That Work, SREB's premier school improvement process. This process now spans grades 3-12 and includes designs for elementary grades, middle grades, high schools and technology centers. It's called **Making Schools Work**, a problem-solving process grounded in the belief that increased achievement starts with motivating students to make the effort to succeed.

“When educators design and implement engaging learning experiences that align with students’ interests and aptitudes, students find purpose in their learning and are able to meet career and college standards.”

— Dale Winkler, Vice President, SREB



Making Schools Work employs a distributed leadership approach to engage leaders and teachers in identifying problems of practice and developing school improvement plans to solve them. These plans foster supportive learning environments that integrate academic and technical content and empower youth to explore and achieve their career goals.

Making Schools Work helps schools and districts in any setting make the changes needed to provide equitable access to high-quality learning experiences and ensure that all students — regardless of their gender, race, socioeconomic background, ability level or location — have the support they need to be successful.

Since 1987, we've continuously refined this process and our related services. Individually, these services help schools address specific needs and areas, as described on page 3. When adopted as part of Making Schools Work, they represent a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to continuous school improvement.

Best of all, by putting a strong focus on career pathways and teacher collaboration for integrated learning, Making Schools Work helps students make the essential connections between college-ready academics and careers — the connections that help students engage fully in their education.



What SREB offers schools

SREB's approach to school improvement helps schools prepare students for college and careers by:

- aligning instruction with grade-level college- and career-readiness standards
- connecting classroom learning with real-world problems
- using instructional time to meet students' unique needs
- empowering teachers to co-plan instruction and assignments within and across disciplines
- offering developmentally appropriate career exploration
- personalizing learning to reflect students' interests and aptitudes
- accelerating credential and degree attainment

What makes SREB different

SREB is trusted. Thousands of schools have used the Making Schools Work process to transform teaching and learning. SREB's school improvement designs and curricula reflect the higher levels of academic, technical, technological and personal skills required for college and career success.

SREB has deep expertise in policy. SREB can help you meet federal guidelines for accountability, well-rounded academic and technical studies, career guidance and counseling, and teacher preparation and development. SREB consultants help states design career pathways that align with requirements in the Perkins Act, the Every Student Succeeds Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

SREB is affordable. SREB is a nonprofit, and many of our school improvement services can be offered through grant funding at no cost to districts or schools.

Elementary Schools • Middle Grades • High Schools • Technology Centers • Community & Technical Colleges



We help states, districts and schools...

- Grades 3-12 teachers, counselors and school leaders
- State and district education agency personnel
- Postsecondary partners
- State policymakers

We help employer partners, too... by involving them in designing career pathways and delivering real-world learning experiences

...meet college- and career-readiness goals...

- Strengthening foundational literacy, math and science skills
- Creating career pathways that help students earn credentials and degrees and secure good jobs
- Preparing and supporting effective teachers and school leaders
- Transforming school systems, structures and cultures to improve student achievement

...by providing a portfolio of tested tools and strategies

- Comprehensive school improvement frameworks
- Professional development and instructional coaching services
- Research-based curriculum designs
- Expert technical assistance

School Improvement Designs

Connect careers and college in high school HS TC CTC

The cornerstone of SREB's school improvement designs, High Schools That Work, connects college-ready academics, challenging career pathways and hands-on workplace learning to credentials and degrees and emerging career opportunities. Principals, teachers and counselors use powerful instructional strategies, curricula and professional development to reorganize instruction around rigorous assignments. Students master academic, technical, technological, cognitive and workplace skills and graduate ready for college and careers. More than 4,000 schools in 36 states have transformed school cultures and boosted student achievement with our school improvement framework.



Accelerate high school readiness in the middle grades MG

Making Middle Grades Work is SREB's school improvement design for the middle grades. It engages the whole school in getting students ready for challenging high school studies. Starting in the sixth grade, struggling students participate in accelerated learning experiences that help them master grade-level literacy and math skills and see the connections between their academic work, personal interests and potential careers. Students complete Algebra I or take Readiness Courses that help them get on track for high school.

Jump start credentials and careers at technology centers HS TC CTC

SREB's school improvement design for technology centers, Technology Centers That Work, unites full- and shared-time technology centers, home high schools and postsecondary institutions around career pathways that give students a head start on a high-demand credential or degree. Career pathway teachers work with literacy and math teachers at the home school or technology center to embed college-ready academics in instruction. The model can also be adapted to suit extended-day or extended-year programs and 13th-year programs.

Promote STEM learning with Advanced Career academies HS TC CTC

High schools or technology centers adopting any of SREB's nine Advanced Career pathway programs can offer them in stand-alone or wall-to-wall career academy settings. Professional development, coaching and technical assistance help schools build schedules that support student cohorts and interdisciplinary teacher planning. Students have time to explore careers and complete exciting STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) projects with employer mentors. A dedicated help desk answers teachers' questions about AC technology tools and supports school leaders with all aspects of career academy implementation.

Get ready for careers or college with a redesigned senior year HS TC CTC

Making Schools Work transforms high schools into launching pads to credentials and degrees. All students prepare for postsecondary options. College-ready seniors take dual enrollment courses totaling up to 30 credits toward a credential or degree. Seniors who need extra help in literacy and math receive personalized support and take Readiness Courses that prepare them to graduate with up to 15 college credits or transition to further education or good jobs.

Making Schools Work empowers schools to:

- engage students through quality instruction
- align curricula with state readiness standards
- ensure that students can explore and complete career pathways that align with their interests and aptitudes
- provide appropriate supports so students graduate college and career ready
- create and support cultures of continuous improvement

Professional Development and Instructional Coaching



Strengthen literacy and academic achievement ES MG HS TC

SREB's Powerful Literacy Practices enable teachers in all disciplines, grades three through 12, to increase students' literacy achievement and content knowledge. Supported by ongoing coaching and professional development, teachers create assignments that engage students in reading diverse grade-level texts and expressing their understanding of those texts in oral and written form.

Build math knowledge and reasoning skills ES MG HS TC

Math teachers who adopt SREB's Powerful Mathematics Practices and a balanced approach to math instruction enhance their students' procedural fluency and ability to apply math knowledge and reasoning skills to solve problems. Expert coaching shows teachers how to use formative assessment lessons to correct misunderstandings and engage students in a productive struggle.



Equip career pathway teachers for classroom success HS TC

SREB's Teaching to Lead teacher preparation program helps professionals from business and industry become great teachers. Teaching to Lead builds new and early-career teachers' capacity to design standards-focused instruction and use strategies like project-based learning and experiential learning. Intensive, ongoing professional development and instructional coaching build teacher confidence in engaging students and managing classrooms.

Connect and apply knowledge through project-based learning MG HS TC

Project-based learning captures students' interests and helps them connect their academic learning with their career and college goals. SREB's project-based learning coaches work with teams of academic and career pathway teachers in schools and technology centers to develop projects that encourage students to think critically and apply academic, technical and workplace know-how to solve problems.

Counsel students about their career and college choices MG HS TC CTC

When careers are a focus of school counseling, students connect education with achieving their goals. Workshops, materials and coaching from SREB's Counseling for Careers and College program show counselors and teachers how to create curricula and experiences that awaken students to their aptitudes and interests. They also promote collaboration with students and parents to develop personalized plans of study.

Develop transformational school leaders ES MG HS TC

SREB's professional development and coaching services help principals support teachers in designing standards-driven assignments that build students' literacy and math skills. Principals learn how to work with career pathway teachers to craft project-based assignments that connect academics to the real world. Principals learn how to conduct classroom observations using rubrics that help them identify good instruction and provide helpful feedback. Coaching helps principals organize career academies and create effective counseling systems. SREB's Learning-Centered Leadership Program develops current or aspiring principals' capacity to lead school turnaround efforts.

Curricula and Professional Development

Prepare students for tomorrow's jobs with Advanced Career HS TC CTC

Co-designed with state leaders, postsecondary educators, employers and master teachers, each of SREB's nine Advanced Career curricula consists of four courses featuring fully developed lesson plans, projects and assessments. As complete programs of study, AC's college-preparatory, STEM-intensive pathways are taught in the context of a college-ready academic core. Through AC summer institutes and ongoing professional development, AC teachers learn course content by completing the same projects as their students.

Launch STEM careers with middle grades courses MG

SREB's middle grades STEM courses include projects that introduce students to the principles of scientific inquiry and the engineering design process. Schools can also teach the projects individually. All projects require students to work in teams to conduct research, develop and test prototypes, analyze data and make presentations.

Enhance literacy and math skills with Readiness Courses MG HS TC

SREB's Readiness Courses help struggling students master foundational literacy and mathematics skills as they make critical transitions from the middle grades to high school and from high school to postsecondary studies.

In Ready for High School Literacy, eighth- or ninth-graders acquire strategies for reading and writing about complex texts. Eighth- or ninth-graders in Ready for High School Math learn why to use certain math formulas to solve problems.

In Literacy Ready, seniors develop and defend ideas from varied texts and write about those ideas at a college level. Math Ready develops critical-thinking skills and engages seniors in applying math to real-world problems.

School Improvement Services ES MG HS TC CTC

SREB's technical assistance services increase the percentage of graduates who are ready for college and careers. SREB offers curriculum and instruction reviews, which look at the whole school, along with career pathway reviews, which assess the alignment of pathways with college-ready academics, postsecondary programs and good jobs. In site development workshops, principals, teachers and counselors work in teams to use data to design school improvement plans.

National Convenings ES MG HS TC CTC

SREB annually convenes thousands of elementary and secondary teachers, counselors, principals, technology center directors and state and district education agency personnel at our national Making Schools Work Conference, formerly known as the High Schools That Work Staff Development Conference. This premier professional learning event brings educators together to share promising practices for advancing students' engagement and achievement. Other learning opportunities include forums, workshops, webinars and more.

NINE ADVANCED CAREER PATHWAYS

- Aerospace Engineering
- Automated Materials Joining Technology
- Clean Energy Technology
- Energy and Power
- Global Logistics & Supply Chain Management
- Health Informatics
- Informatics
- Innovations in Science and Technology
- Integrated Production Technologies

sreb.org/ACcurricula



Here are just a few examples of how we help schools transform teaching and learning.

By embracing the Making Schools Work school improvement process, Georgia's Meadowcreek High School broke down barriers between academic and career pathway teachers and community partners. More students are performing at Level 3 or better in the school's expanded array of Advanced Placement courses. Meadowcreek "enabled me to change my mind about my potential and what I could do," reported one student.

Teachers say Advanced Career flips the switch for engagement. "We have six minutes between classes. During the prototype phase of our 'Science of Survival' project, students were in class and working within three minutes of the bell," said one Arkansas AC Innovations in Science and Technology teacher. "Student engagement was off the charts."

Students avoid remediation with SREB's Readiness Courses. In a before-and-after look at scores in several schools in Arkansas and Mississippi, more than half of students who took Literacy Ready increased their ACT scores, by an average of 3 points in English and 3.6 points in science. About 60 percent of seniors who took Math Ready increased their scores, by an average of 2.4 points in math and 3.5 points in science.

Poor exam scores threatened to close one Mississippi teacher's agriculture program. By scaffolding instruction around SREB's powerful literacy practices, this teacher increased student achievement and turned his technology center into the highest performing in the state.

"When kids are enjoying writing so much that they want to do it a second day, you are doing something right."

— Mississippi teacher

Let's talk about how SREB can help you reach your school improvement goals.

Dale Winkler

Dale.Winkler@SREB.org, 404.879.5529

