

Southern Regional Education Board
592 10th St. N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30318-5776
(404) 875-9211
www.sreb.org



SREB

2008

Southern
Regional
Education
Board

www.sreb.org

A Legacy of Leadership



CELEBRATING 60 YEARS

Helping States Improve Education

A Legacy of Leadership



America's first interstate compact for education, SREB was created in 1948 at the request of Southern governors "to advance knowledge and to improve the social and economic life of the region." Building on six decades of achievement, SREB today continues its work as a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that provides an extensive range of services to education leaders and policy-makers in 16 member states.

The Southern Regional Education Board:

- studies and reports on current and emerging education trends and issues.
- studies and develops model state policies in key education improvement areas.
- compiles and analyzes comparable educational data.
- provides cooperative programs to improve education at all levels, including the nation's largest school improvement network, *High Schools That Work*, and a program to improve school leadership.
- uses its work in schools and extensive research to inform state leaders about best practices in education and policy decisions.
- supplies interstate and inter-institutional sharing of academic programs in specialized areas.
- works to reduce critical shortages of nurse educators and minority college faculty members in the region.
- offers expert consultation to member states and their institutions.
- works with the news media to highlight education issues.

SREB is governed by a Board of governors and governor-appointed legislators, educators and other leaders from the member states — Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. Financial support comes from the states, with supplementary funding from private foundations and federal agencies.

SREB MILESTONES

1940s AND 1950s

Focusing originally on higher education alone, SREB helps member states share graduate-level and professional education programs to combat shortages of trained professionals and educational opportunities in the region.

More than 22,000 doctors, dentists, optometrists, veterinarians and other health professionals have received their professional education through SREB's Regional Contract Program since it began in 1949.

SREB initiates a major program to study the region's higher education needs and how to meet them.

For decades, SREB has gathered and analyzed comparable national, regional and state data on finance, enrollment, degrees, faculty salaries and other factors affecting progress in higher education. In 2007, SREB published the 50th anniversary edition of the *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education*, which is published every two years and updated continually online.

At the request of the Southern Governors' Conference, SREB establishes a program to expand training and research in mental health professions.

As changes in health care occurred, the SREB program broadened to include education, supply and other issues in the health care system. The SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing is now a leader in activities that strengthen nursing education in the region's colleges and universities. It works to reduce the critical regional and national shortage of registered nurses and faculty members.

1960s

Through a Goals Commission of distinguished lay citizens, SREB advances long-term goals for higher education in the region, stressing that colleges and universities in SREB states must be measured against nationwide standards of excellence.

The early emphasis was on accommodating vast numbers of new students. Today, SREB also focuses on improving access and the quality of education in the region at every level, in the classroom and on the Web.

Through expanded consultation and reports, SREB becomes an advocate for effective statewide planning and coordination of higher education.

SREB provided assistance to most states in establishing, restructuring or strengthening state higher education coordination and governance.

In 1969-1970, SREB founds the SREB-State Data Exchange to share higher education data among member states.

The Data Exchange today is one of the nation's oldest, most comprehensive sources of comparative data on public higher education. It annually collects, compiles and publishes the most up-to-date statistics on postsecondary education in the 16 SREB states and is the backbone of the *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education*.

SREB launches a comprehensive program to expand and improve postsecondary educational opportunities for black students in historically black and other institutions.

SREB has worked for many years to increase the number of black teachers and to improve black students' academic success. In the 1990s, the SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program was created to encourage more minority doctoral scholars to complete their studies and enter academe. Today, SREB reports regularly on progress in closing achievement gaps among all groups of students at every educational level.

1970s

SREB initiates the SREB-Kenan Trust program to help historically black colleges strengthen their instructional programs.

The William R. Kenan Jr. Charitable Trust committed some \$9 million to this program, administered by SREB. This work helped many students gain needed skills to success in professional fields and graduate study.

The SREB Academic Common Market is established to expand interstate and inter-institutional sharing of specialized academic degree programs.

The Academic Common Market continues to enable students to enroll in specialized graduate and undergraduate programs in out-of-state institutions at in-state tuition rates. Today, more than 2,000 students are certified each year to participate in ACM programs.

SREB releases *Priorities for Postsecondary Education in the South*, recommending how states and institutions can sustain higher education as enrollment stabilizes and resources become more scarce.

SREB's State Services office was established in the 1970s to respond promptly to requests from state officials for information on higher education. State Services today provides information on issues at every level of education and holds the annual SREB Legislative Work Conference for the region's legislative leaders, among other activities.

1980s

In this decade, SREB adds K-12 education to its focus on higher learning — the nation's only educational compact to focus on both pre-K-12 *and* higher education issues. With its broader scope, SREB's work and the leadership of key governors, legislators and others in the region place member states on the cutting edge of education reform and improvement — including the setting of statewide academic standards and tests, and later, holding schools accountable for improvement.

In 1981, SREB advances the nation's first proposals for education reform through statewide academic standards and closer ties between schools and colleges.

SREB supported unparalleled action in SREB states to improve the quality of education. The emphases on joint decisions and actions by states, schools and colleges and on the interdependence of all levels of education continue to guide SREB's work.

Reviewing states' work to improve education, SREB in 1987 stresses that long-term public support requires measurable results from improvement efforts.

SREB and the National Assessment of Educational Progress developed the nation's first program to test student achievement so that results can be compared nationally, regionally and state-to-state. This three-year pilot program became the model for the nationwide student assessment program known today as NAEP, the Nation's Report Card.

In 1987, SREB creates the *High Schools That Work* school improvement program, stemming from a 1985 report by the SREB Board. *HSTW* began as a partnership with 28 school sites in 13 states to improve career/technical education.

Today, *HSTW* and its middle grades program, *Making Middle Grades Work*, form the nation's largest and most recognized school improvement network. The program now encompasses school principal training, urban education, career/technical education, small learning communities and other key aspects of public schools. Many SREB publications focus on K-12 issues and the best school and classroom practices.

In 1988, the SREB Commission for Educational Quality adopted the 12 **Goals for Education: Challenge 2000**, which became the basis for the national education goals adopted by the nation's governors. SREB's recommendations urged states to improve teaching, undergraduate education and secondary vocational education programs.

SREB brought colleges and high schools together to develop model programs that encourage and prepare disadvantaged minority students to go to college.

The SREB-State Vocational Education Consortium was the nation's first multi-state effort to raise the competencies of high school vocational students through model programs that use applied, or hands-on, instruction.

1990s

Throughout the 1990s, SREB reports on states' progress in meeting the educational goals that members set in the previous decade. SREB also begins to urge states to create or expand state-funded prekindergarten programs — an area in which the region leads the nation today.

In 1993, SREB creates the SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program to increase the number of minority faculty members at colleges and universities.

To date, the program has helped more than 400 scholars earn their Ph.D.s and currently supports more than 300 Ph.D. candidates. Participants have a graduation rate of nearly 90 percent — nearly double the national average. More than 70 percent of program graduates are employed in education in SREB states.

SREB takes the lead in recognizing the impact of technology on education.

SREB's Educational Technology Cooperative has helped states develop high-quality online classes for school and college students, increase resources for students and teachers, support state work in the use of digital content, expand professional development for educators, and establish quality standards for online teaching and courses. Through the Cooperative, SREB states today lead the nation in the creation of state virtual (or online) schools.

1990s (continued)

Begun in 1998, the SREB *Electronic Campus* becomes one of the nation's leading distance learning programs.

Partnering with colleges and universities from all SREB states, the *Electronic Campus* now gives students online access to 20,000 credit courses and nearly 700 degree programs.

With a grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, *Making Middle Grades Work* is launched in 26 schools in 13 SREB states to focus on a critical area of academic preparation.

Today, *MMGW* provides research, assessments and other services to more than 350 schools in 18 states — including 14 SREB states — to help prepare students to succeed in high school.

THE MILLENNIUM

The SREB Commission on Education Goals, comprised of state leaders from all 16 member states, creates the *Challenge to Lead Goals for Education*, which call for SREB states “to lead the nation in educational progress.” Endorsed by the Board, these 12 goals set performance targets for every state, from pre-K to college and beyond.

SREB monitors and reports regularly on each SREB state's progress on each goal. The SREB region now leads the nation in state-funded public prekindergarten for 4-year-olds and in raising student achievement in some subjects and grade levels.

In 2008, SREB added online “Scoreboards” to www.sreb.org to make each SREB state's key education data easily accessible to policy-makers, educators and the public. The Scoreboards show each state's progress on the *Challenge to Lead* goals.

SREB creates the Distance Learning Policy Laboratory to overcome policy barriers facing distance learners, the Adult Learning Campaign to improve adult education, a special Web site for educators, and the *Go Alliance* to help states reach teens and young adults with the message that graduating from high school and going to college are crucial to their success.

The *Go Alliance* helps member states share marketing campaign materials, provides workshops for state officials, and more.

The SREB-State Teacher Center (TheTeacherCenter.org) provides online resources to the region's more than two million educators, and SREB's adult learning efforts continue to grow.

Recognizing that schools need strong and well-prepared leaders to improve, SREB creates a program in 2000 to prepare school principals to aggressively lead improvement in curriculum, instruction and student achievement.

The SREB Learning-Centered School Leadership program works with universities, state agencies and schools to improve leadership preparation and certification programs. It has helped train more than 2,500 aspiring leaders in 35 states through research, technical assistance and other services.

High Schools That Work also continues to expand and help more schools improve.

In the last decade, *HSTW* has received national recognition for effectiveness in helping schools raise student achievement. About 1,500 high schools in 32 states now use the program. Each year, *HSTW* provides thousands of school assessments in SREB states and beyond, and it conducts workshops and training for nearly 10,000 educators.

***HSTW* also works with about 40 schools in SREB states through *Technology Centers That Work*, launched in 2007, which helps the centers to work closely with their local high schools to improve academic instruction and prepare more students for college and career training.**

In 2008, SREB launches a major project to help member states improve high school graduates' readiness for college study and career preparation.

SREB works directly with state leaders to help them establish statewide college- and career-readiness standards and to help students meet them.

THE MILLENNIUM (continued)

SREB updates educators, state leaders and policy-makers through more than 150 published reports each year on critical topics in education.

SREB's School Improvement, Education Policies, State Services and other program experts analyze and report on trends and progress in prekindergarten access and quality, student achievement, school leadership, state virtual schools, graduation rates, legislative actions and more — all online at www.sreb.org.

SREB helps state leaders focus on crucial education issues in the region — including the need to improve high school graduation rates while also raising student achievement, and to improve students' reading and writing skills in the middle grades and high school.

Governor Sonny Perdue of Georgia is leading a group of SREB Board members and legislative leaders in addressing the need to raise both high school graduation rates *and* student achievement levels in SREB states, and to revise states' school accountability programs to give equal weight to achievement *and* graduation rates.

Governor Tim Kaine of Virginia is leading a committee of state leaders to determine the state policies needed to make the improvement of middle grades and high school students' reading comprehension a major priority in every state.

SREB is a leader in urging states to improve high school tests. One result of this work is that end-of-course exams have become more prevalent in SREB as a better way to measure student achievement and academic progress than comprehensive high school graduation exams. End-of-course tests also can determine more accurately whether students are ready for college or career study.

SREB reached record levels of outside support from philanthropic grants and contracts with schools and districts to provide direct school improvement services through *High Schools That Work* and other programs. These resources support SREB's work in college/career preparation, school leadership, educational technology, and more. These efforts build on state investments to improve the economic and social progress of the region through education.



As SREB's efforts to improve the quality of education continue, the commitment remains strong to provide state leaders with the information and services that assist them in making informed decisions for educational improvement.

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