

About HSTW School Improvement Services

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. And by 2025, demand for individuals with a credential or degree after high school is expected to exceed supply by as many as 11 million, according to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

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

Connecting Classrooms, Careers and College

For more than 30 years, the Southern Regional Education Board has partnered with states, districts and schools to identify and implement strategies that engage and empower young people to put what they learn in the classroom to work in the real world.

These efforts began in 1987 with High Schools That Work, SREB's premier school improvement framework. HSTW is a proven, comprehensive approach to creating learning environments that encourage youth to identify their goals, embrace hard work, earn credentials and degrees, and embark on careers. Since 1987, SREB has used data to continuously refine its HSTW framework and related services.

Individually, these services address specific needs and areas; when adopted as part of the HSTW framework, they represent a customized, multi-faceted approach to school improvement. Best of all, by putting a strong focus on career pathways, HSTW helps students make the connection between college-ready academics and careers — the personal connection that's needed to engage students fully in their education.

SREB helps districts and schools identify barriers to achieving their college- and career-readiness goals and take ownership of the tools, strategies and solutions they need to increase the percentage of students who graduate college ready, career ready or both.

How We Help States, Districts and Schools

Our 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
- Accelerating credential and degree attainment



"All students can succeed when the whole school comes together to create rich, connected learning experiences that help students find a sense of purpose for their studies and their lives and make that extra effort needed to succeed."

Gene Bottoms
Senior Vice President, SREB

| We help states, districts and schools... | ... meet college- and career-readiness goals... | ... by providing a portfolio of tested tools and strategies |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades three-12 teachers, counselors and school leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening foundational literacy, math and science skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive school improvement frameworks |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and district education agency personnel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating career pathways spanning grades nine-14 that help students earn credentials and degrees and secure good jobs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development and instructional coaching services |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postsecondary partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing and supporting effective teachers and school leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research-based curriculum designs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State policymakers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transforming school systems, structures and cultures to improve student achievement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special convenings and expert technical assistance |

HSTW's Six Design Principles

More than 30 years of research in real school environments has proven the efficacy of the six Design Principles governing High Schools That Work and SREB's related school improvement frameworks — Making Middle Grades Work, Technology Centers That Work, Advanced Career STEM Pathway Academies and the Senior-Year Redesign.

These principles — when properly funded and implemented by school and district leaders and supported with **our related school improvement services** — can help more youth prepare for a full range of postsecondary options.

- 1. Prepare all students for college, careers or both.** All students in all courses receive challenging assignments that align with grade-level readiness standards. Teachers use rich, literacy-based assignments and project-based instruction to challenge students.
- 2. Redefine how time is used to connect academic, career pathway and workplace learning.** Academic and career pathway teachers have time to co-plan instruction and assignments that strengthen students' literacy and math skills and engage them in deeper learning.
- 3. Provide extended time and support for middle grades and high school students to achieve college and career readiness.** Accelerated learning strategies and multiple tiers of instruction help struggling students master the academic, technical, cognitive and personal skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education and the workplace.
- 4. Use career pathways and a redesigned senior year to erase the lines between secondary, postsecondary and workplace learning.** Seniors who meet college-readiness benchmarks can earn up to 30 hours of credit toward an associate or bachelor's degree or advanced industry credential in a high-demand field. Seniors whose 11th-grade assessment scores fall shy of benchmarks take special readiness courses that prepare them for credit-bearing postsecondary studies. Seniors whose assessment scores fall well below benchmarks receive a suite of services that enhance their academic, technical and workplace skills and empower them to make good educational and career choices.
- 5. Provide students with school- and community-based learning experiences that help them set career and educational goals.** Beginning in the middle grades and continuing throughout high school, students and parents have many opportunities to learn about their interests and aptitudes. Caring business and community partners work with schools to offer ongoing work-based learning experiences that allow students to explore careers in a safe environment. No later than the eighth grade, students and parents begin working with teachers and counselors to develop and revise personalized programs of study that reflect their evolving goals and include one or more years of postsecondary study.
- 6. Make school and instruction work for students.** Schools provide all teachers with ongoing professional development and time to work in interdisciplinary teacher teams to co-plan assignments. Schools also create organizational structures and schedules that allow them to find the time needed to:
 - Organize instruction around students' interests and abilities and create engaging, standards-driven assignments.
 - Personalize learning through greater use of technology and other strategies.
 - Empower teachers to become effective facilitators of student learning.

Related Services

- Literacy and math professional development
- Project-based learning
- CTE teacher preparation
- Counseling for careers and college
- Principal leadership
- Readiness courses
- Middle grades STEM courses
- Career pathway curricula
- Career pathway reviews
- Career pathway design services
- Curriculum reviews
- Classroom observation tools
- Special convenings and services

Why Partner With Us?

SREB is trusted. Thousands of schools have adopted HSTW to transform teaching and learning. SREB's professional development providers, instructional coaches and content specialists have successfully led school reforms or served long tenures as classroom teachers.

SREB has deep expertise in policy. SREB helps districts and schools collect and use data to meet state accountability goals, provide well-rounded academic and technical studies, and offer effective career counseling and teacher professional development. Our experts help districts design career pathways that align with rising workplace requirements.

SREB is affordable. SREB is a nonprofit, and some of our services can be offered at no cost through grant funding.

