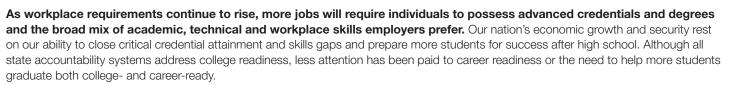
## **Executive Summary**

## Valuing Both Cs in College- and **Career-Readiness Accountability Systems**

Gene Bottoms and Kirsten Sundell, Southern Regional Education Board



As SREB's Credentials for All (2015) report describes, high-quality career pathway **programs offer a different approach to learning** — one in which students apply academic knowledge, hands-on technical know-how and teamwork skills to solve real-world problems. Career pathways also allow students to earn college credits while they explore the world of work. American parents overwhelmingly want their children to have these kinds of educational experiences, according to Phi Delta Kappa's 2017 national poll.

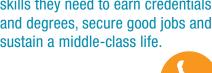
Career pathways equip young people with the lifelong learning skills they need to earn credentials and degrees, secure good jobs and sustain a middle-class life.

## **Building Accountability Systems That Value Career Readiness**

SREB has long advocated that states set a goal that 80 percent or more of students will graduate college-ready, career-ready or both. To meet this bold goal, state accountability systems must include simple, straightforward indicators that send a clear message to district and school leaders that college readiness and career readiness are being equally valued and that greater value will be placed on students who graduate ready for both college and careers. States can also invest in career pathways in high-wage, high-demand fields, as Delaware has done. We urge states to:

- Establish definitions of college readiness and academic and technical career readiness in policy (to learn how, visit sreb.org/cte-commission).
- Set long-term student achievement and credential attainment goals and measure growth toward those goals annually and over time.
- Equally value college readiness and career readiness.
- Award extra weight for each student who:
  - o Demonstrates both college readiness and career readiness.
  - o Completes a four-course career pathway sequence in a high-wage, high-demand industry and earns a passing score on approved end-of-course exams or industry certification exams in those courses.
  - o Completes a four-course sequence of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or Advanced Career courses (to learn more, visit sreb.org/ac) in broad STEM fields and scores at the proficient level or above on approved end-of-course exams in those courses.
  - o Earns a college- and career-readiness diploma endorsement for completing a college-ready academic core curriculum and a career pathway program of study.
  - o Earns a significant number of credits toward a credential or degree in a high-wage, high-demand industry or STEM field.
- Use earmarked funds and bonus points to incentivize districts and schools to work with two- and four-year postsecondary institutions and employers to develop pathways in high-wage, high-demand fields that:
  - o Span grades nine through 14, at minimum.
  - o Offer opportunities for students to participate in work-based learning.
  - o Redesign the senior year to allow college-ready students to earn up to 30 college credits before graduating.

We encourage you to read the full version of Valuing Both Cs in College- and Career-Readiness Accountability Systems, available for download from sreb.org/ValuingBothCs. To learn more about how SREB can help you prepare more students for a double purpose — college and careers, email Gene.Bottoms@sreb.org or call (404) 879-5529.



## **State Spotlight:** Delaware

The Delaware Promise initiative seeks to ensure that 65 percent of the state's workforce holds a college degree or professional certificate by 2025. The state is also using funds from its JP Morgan Chase New Skills for Youth grant to develop and expand pathways in such high-demand fields as computer science, engineering, finance, health science, information technology and the biomedical sciences.

