

2021 Gene Bottoms Pacesetter School Awards

CRITERIA AND NOMINATION PROCESS

SREB's Making Schools Work school improvement process employs a distributed leadership approach to involve the whole school in identifying problems of practice that impact student engagement and achievement and developing plans to solve them.

With designs for elementary grades, middle grades, high schools and technology centers, Making Schools Work empowers school teams to create improvement plans that address **five focus areas**:

- engaging students through **quality instruction**
- **aligning curricula** with state readiness standards
- ensuring that students can **explore careers** and **complete career pathways** that align with their interests and aptitudes
- providing **student supports** that promote readiness
- creating and supporting **cultures of continuous improvement**

At the 2021 Making Schools Work Conference, SREB will recognize outstanding middle grades schools, high schools and technology centers that have implemented the key practices with fidelity and are achieving success in meeting bold goals related to graduation, readiness, and credential attainment.

All nominations must be received by **October 15, 2020**. Please send completed forms to Jasmine Jones at Jasmine.Jones@SREB.org.

To be recognized as an outstanding site, schools and centers must:

- Be an active member of the Making Schools Work network for two consecutive years;
- Administer [SREB's student and teacher surveys](#) for middle grades schools, high schools and/or technology centers;
- Provide evidence of implementing with fidelity one of the key practices (see page 2);
- Provide evidence of student achievement; and
- Participate in the staff development conference and present a session aligned to the key practice for which the school is being recognized.

Making Schools Work Key Practices for High Schools and Technology Centers

1. Create a **culture of high expectations** in every classroom and throughout the school.
2. Ensure each student develops and completes a **personalized program of study** that leads to postsecondary and career success.
3. Teach academic content through the lens of **real-world problems and projects**.
4. Ensure that all students, including underrepresented and nontraditional students, have **access to high-quality career pathways**.
5. Use research-based instructional strategies and innovative technology practices to **engage each student**.
6. Provide **teams of teachers with training, time and support** to work together to improve instruction.
7. Provide each student with a continuum of **real-world learning experiences** that connect classroom and workplace learning.
8. Offer **guidance and advisement** that empowers students to pursue a full range of career and college options after high school.
9. Provide students with the **extra help or accelerated learning strategies** they need to graduate college and career ready.
10. Engage the whole school community in **continuously using data** to identify problems and develop plans to solve them.

Making Schools Work Key Practices for the Middle Grades

1. Create a **culture of high expectations** in which each student has equitable access to resources and opportunities to complete rigorous course work.
2. Teach each student through **engaging assignments** that align with grade-level standards.
3. Integrate **literacy strategies** in all subject areas.
4. Use a balanced approach to teaching math.
5. Provide each student with inquiry-based science instruction and rich STEM learning experiences.
6. Reframe how students understand and interpret the world through an **intellectually demanding social studies curriculum**.
7. Engage each student in **career exploration** experiences.
8. Provide **systems of support and enrichment** that help each student prepare for high school success.
9. Offer **comprehensive guidance** for each student.
10. Create a **culture of continuous improvement** in which instructional leaders help good teachers become great teachers.