

2026 Meeting of the Southern Regional Education Board and 75th Annual Legislative Work Conference

Priorities for Education in an AI-Informed Economy

Sheraton Charlotte Hotel | June 5-7, 2026


This year we will explore what's next for the South as our states continue to lead the nation in educational progress and excellence. As technology reshapes our workforce, SREB's work through our **Commission on Artificial Intelligence in Education** and **Commission on Career Pathways and Credentials** has never been more vital. We will build on these efforts to focus on the region's critical needs, including educator workforce development, career pathways for an AI-transformed economy, early learning and childcare, and sustainable education funding.

Friday, June 5	
1 p.m. <i>Carolina E</i>	Executive Committee Meeting
3:30 p.m. <i>Carolina D</i>	Orientation Session Orientation for new members of the SREB Board, new members of the Legislative Advisory Council and first-time Annual Meeting and Legislative Work Conference attendees.
5 p.m. <i>CJs</i>	Reception
6 p.m. <i>Mecklenburg Ballroom</i>	Dinner GENERAL SESSION <i>Presiding:</i> Felicia Cumings Smith, President and CEO, National Center for Families Learning, Kentucky, and Vice Chair, SREB Voices from the States: Shaping SREB's Vision for Education An update on educational and workforce priorities identified during SREB President Valerie Greenhill's listening tour across the 16 compact states.
8 p.m.	Adjourn

Saturday, June 6

7:30 a.m. <i>Mecklenburg Ballroom</i>	Breakfast
8:30 a.m. <i>Carolina Ballroom A+C</i>	Business Meeting of the Board <i>Note: Your participation is important. All participants are invited to attend.</i> The business meeting includes the Report of the Executive Committee, the Report of the Nominating Committee, the election of Board officers and an overview of Compact programs and services.
9:15 a.m. <i>Carolina Ballroom A+C</i>	GENERAL SESSION <i>Presiding:</i> Felicia Cumings Smith, President and CEO, National Center for Families Learning, Kentucky, and Vice Chair, SREB Pipelines to Policy: The Educator Workforce Imperative Student success depends upon long-term educator workforce stability and instructional success. We achieve progress when we focus on sustainability, pathways, systems of support and innovation, rather than filling shortages or replacing vacancies. This session will explore how the combination of district action and state policy support can strengthen the educator pipeline, improve retention and drive better student outcomes through advanced practice and comprehensive policy design. <i>Moderators:</i> Megan Boren, Program Director, Educator Workforce, SREB Amanda Merritt, Director, Development and Innovation, SREB <i>Panel:</i> Aubrey Bennett, Teacher and Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and Specialty Schools Coordinator, Birmingham City Schools, Alabama Greg Dozier, Commissioner, Technical College System of Georgia Trevor Longmore, Teacher, Laurel High School, Maryland Shanna Rae, Principal, University Park Creative Arts, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, North Carolina
10:45 a.m.	Break
11 a.m. <i>Carolina Ballroom A+C</i>	AI Pathways: Connecting Learners, Colleges and Careers for Economic Mobility What's next for student success? SREB is working with states to ensure every learner is prepared to earn postsecondary credentials that lead to meaningful careers, economic mobility and success in an AI-informed workforce. Effective pathways integrate strong K–12 preparation, access to postsecondary education and training, and the development of durable, transferable skills, such as problem-solving, communication and digital literacy, that align with evolving workforce demands. Hear how Georgia, Maryland and North Carolina are implementing skills for an AI-ready workforce into their programs and pathways. <i>Moderator:</i> Harriette Scott, Vice President, Postsecondary Education, SREB <i>Panel:</i> Kirill Afonin, Professor of Chemistry, University of North Carolina Charlotte Steven Ferguson, Principal Research Scientist and Deputy Director, Georgia Tech Manufacturing Institute, Georgia Institute of Technology Morgan Halman, Director US, MIMETAS, Maryland Joe Little, Associate Dean of Technology, Technology Division, Central Piedmont Community College, North Carolina Sean Mulvanity, Program Lead, STEM@GTRI, Georgia Tech Manufacturing Institute, Georgia Institute of Technology

Saturday, June 6 *continued*

<p>12:30 p.m. <i>Mecklenburg Ballroom</i></p>	<p>Lunch and Awards Ceremony</p>
<p>2 p.m. <i>Carolina Ballroom A+C</i></p>	<p>Childcare and Early Learning</p> <p>High-quality early learning experiences are foundational to long-term educational success. At the direction of the Legislative Advisory Council, SREB is focusing on strengthening state systems for childcare governance, accountability, workforce development and access, thus supporting working families and contributing to economic growth.</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Lee Posey, Vice President, State Strategy, Policy, Research and Evaluation, SREB</p> <p><i>Panel:</i> Jessica Brown, Assistant Professor of Economics, Darla Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina Jay Chaudhuri, State Senator, North Carolina Felicia Cumings Smith, President and CEO, National Center for Families Learning, Kentucky, and Vice Chair, SREB Alisha Green, Director, Instructional Supports, South Carolina Department of Education Beth Mizell, State Senator, Louisiana James Tipton, State Representative, Kentucky</p>
<p>3:15 p.m.</p>	<p>Break</p>
<p>3:30 p.m. <i>Carolina Ballroom A+C</i></p>	<p>State Team Planning and Discussion: Continuing President Greenhill's Listening Tour</p> <p>A chance for state teams to gather, discuss what they have learned and discovered so far, and start planning next steps.</p>
<p>4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Closing Announcements</p>
<p>6 p.m.</p>	<p>Dinner Event at the NASCAR Hall of Fame</p> <p>Experience activities and interactive exhibits of Inside NASCAR and the Heritage Speedway, enjoy a documentary in the High Octane Theater and explore the Hall of Honor.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <p><i>The NASCAR Hall of Fame is filled with classic and present-day cars as well as interactive experiences, realistic racing simulators, highlights of your favorite drivers' most electrifying moments and so much more. The history and passion of NASCAR comes alive through ever-evolving exhibits and stories from legends who embody NASCAR's most memorable moments.</i></p> </div>

Sunday, June 7

<p>7:30 a.m. <i>Mecklenburg Ballroom</i></p>	<p>General Breakfast</p>
<p>7:30 a.m. <i>Carolina D+E</i></p>	<p>Legislative Advisory Council Breakfast Meeting</p>
<p>8:30 a.m. <i>Carolina Ballroom A+C</i></p>	<p>GENERAL SESSION</p> <p><i>Presiding:</i> Beth Mizell, State Senator, Louisiana, and Chair, SREB Legislative Advisory Council</p> <p>Education Funding: The Urgent Need for Modernization</p> <p>Education funding is one of the most complex and pressing issues for states, yet while states' education needs and priorities have changed over time, many of their funding models and mechanisms have not. SREB seeks to support states in ensuring that their approaches to funding education at all levels effectively allocate resources to advance statewide educational goals and support workforce priorities. We will explore how states are tackling this issue and how SREB can assist.</p> <p><i>Moderators:</i> Dale Winkler, Senior Vice President, School Improvement, SREB Jeff Gagne, Director, Policy Analysis, SREB Jeffrey Grove, Program Specialist, State Strategy, Policy, Research and Evaluation, SREB Elisa Jaden, Program Specialist, Student Access and Success, SREB</p> <p><i>Panel:</i> Mark Dixon, President, A+ Education Partnership, Alabama Sarah Keyton, Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Operations, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Kent McCarty, State Representative, Mississippi Laura Sturgeon, State Senator, Delaware Aaron Thompson, President, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education</p>
<p>10:15 a.m.</p>	<p>Break</p>
<p>10:30 a.m. <i>Carolina Ballroom A+C</i></p>	<p>Mapping to the Future</p> <p>As our concluding session, this interactive panel discussion invites participants to reflect on key meeting themes and consider the most important K-12 and postsecondary education priorities in the South.</p> <p><i>Moderator:</i> Valerie Greenhill, President, SREB</p> <p><i>Panel:</i> Kim Hunter Reed, Commissioner of Higher Education, Louisiana Eric Mackey, State Superintendent of Education, Alabama Lizzette Reynolds, Commissioner of Education, Tennessee Aaron Thompson, President, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education</p>
<p>11:30 a.m.</p>	<p>Adjourn</p> <p><i>Boxed lunches for attendees and guests are in Mecklenburg Ballroom.</i></p>