

# 2030 SREB Challenge to Excel Goals for Education

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Proposed for Board review and approval  
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“If excellence means anything at all, it is a universal concept... and we must be measured against the same criteria of excellence which are applied elsewhere.”  
— *Within Our Reach*, Report of the Commission of Goals for Higher Education in the South, 1961

The Goals for Education are conceived and adopted *by* SREB states *for* SREB states. They provide a framework for states to chart their path toward excellence as a region and for SREB to report back to all of them on their progress regionally and by state.

The Southern Regional Education Board states formally committed to leading the nation on key education measures when they adopted the Challenge to Lead Goals for Education in 2002. Along the way, SREB commissions, led by governors and legislative leaders, developed recommendations for policies to help states achieve progress on the Goals. Over the last two decades, these recommendations helped SREB states and the region as a whole outpace the nation in progress and lead the U.S. on several key indicators by 2020.

As we began to look toward 2030, SREB heard loud and clear that for the new decade's Goals to be meaningful, they would need to reflect state priorities and current data. In November 2019, SREB convened teams from all 16 states to discuss Goals 2020 and our states' priorities. We hit pause on development of the Goals in 2020 as the pandemic took its toll on education. However, SREB never stopped tracking data and the priorities of the states.

The time has come to move forward, with Goals that point us toward education excellence, a productive workforce and strong economies. As we move beyond the pandemic and look ahead, adopting a new set of Goals is the first step. Only by working together can we overcome the challenges we now face and rise to meet those of the next decade.

With that in mind, we present you with a draft of the proposed 2030 Goals., Each is paired with examples of indicators that SREB will use to report to states on progress over the decade.

## Goal 1: Social and Economic Vitality

### The prosperity and potential of the region's residents of all ages will increase through education.

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#### Sample indicators

##### *Employment*

- The percentage of adults earning incomes below the poverty level decreases
- The percentage of adults in the labor force increases
- The percentage of appropriate employment placements (as defined by Perkins V) in the second quarter after program completion increases
- Middle-skills job gaps by state, region and sector narrow
- Employment gaps in high-demand industries decrease
- Employability increases

##### *Attainment*

- The percentage of adults with industry-recognized credentials of worth increases
- Educational attainment for adults ages 24-34 increases
- The percentage of adults ages 25-34 who hold a postsecondary degree or certificate increases
- Employment levels of adults with higher credentials increases
- Educational attainment among specific populations — those below poverty, with a disability or with less than a high school credential, for example — increases
- The number of adults with graduate degrees in STEM increases

##### *Teacher Workforce*

- Teacher workforce diversity increases
- Teacher shortages decrease
- Dependence on emergency certified teachers decreases
- The percentage of preservice candidates who graduate and enter the teaching workforce increases
- Support for new teachers as they enter the classroom, such as at least three years of mentoring, increases
- Teacher attrition rates decrease
- The percentage of new elementary school teachers prepared for the the public-school classroom (special education inclusion, multiple first languages and explicit reading preparation, for example) increases

##### *Well-Being*

- Student debt loads decrease
- The percentage of children and adults who have health insurance increases
- Poverty decreases
- Food insecurity decreases

## Goal 2: Postsecondary

**The percentage of state residents who earn a meaningful certificate or degree to ensure they are prepared for employment over the next decade will increase.**

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### Sample indicators

- Postsecondary enrollment rates of recent high school graduates increase
- Enrollment in public colleges and universities represents the diversity of the state's recent high school graduating class
- First-year persistence rates and progression beyond the second year increase
- High school and postsecondary programs of study, including dual enrollment, are better aligned
- Credit hours that students earn toward degrees do not exceed the base requirements of degree programs by more than 10%
- Percentages of college students who graduate on time increase for students of all racial and ethnic groups in both four-year and two-year programs
- The time it takes for full-time students to earn degrees decreases
- The percentage of adults ages 25-64 who have postsecondary degrees or career certificates increases
- Advanced degrees and degrees awarded in high-need fields increase to meet state targets based on state needs
- Students pass professional licensure examinations at rates that meet or exceed national averages

## Goal 3: High School

**Greater percentages of high school students will graduate on time, prepared to pursue a postsecondary certificate or degree.**

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### Sample indicators

- The percentage of students who graduate ready to pursue a certificate or degree increases
- Four-year high school graduation rates, calculated using the adjusted cohort graduation rate, rise each year to meet annual state targets and reach at least 90% by 2030
- Percentages of students in SREB states who meet state standards on end-of-course and other graduation tests meet or exceed percentages in the nation
- Rates of on-time progression through high school — from grades nine to 10, 10 to 11 and 11 to 12 — increase over time to meet or exceed national averages
- Percentages of students taking and passing courses as part of accelerated learning options (such as dual enrollment and Advanced Placement) increase and meet or exceed national averages
- State average scores on national college admissions exams (when more than 50% of a state's seniors take them in high school) meet or exceed national averages
- Percentages of students who concentrate in and complete career and technical programs of study increase
- The percentage of students who participate in work-based learning experiences increases

## Goal 4: Middle Grades

**Building on success in the early grades, more middle grades students will be prepared for success in rigorous high school courses.**

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### Sample indicators

- Percentages of all groups of students who score below basic on state assessments in reading, mathematics and science decrease annually
- Percentages of all groups of students who meet the proficiency level on state assessments increase each year
- Percentages of groups of students scoring Below Basic on NAEP, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, in reading, math and science decreases annually
- Achievement gaps between low-income and all other students narrow
- Percentages of groups of students scoring at or above the Proficient level on NAEP in reading, math and science exceed national averages
- All students successfully develop an academic and career plan

## Goal 5: Birth Through Elementary

**All children will be equipped with the foundational skills needed for success in school.**

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### Sample indicators

#### *Birth to 3 Years Old*

- The percentage of children who receive developmental screenings by the age of 35 months increases annually
- The percentage of 3-year-olds enrolled in state-funded pre-K programs increases annually

#### *Pre-K to Third Grade*

- Enrollment of 4-year-olds in state-funded pre-K programs increases annually
- States meet standards of quality for pre-K programs and teacher quality
- Percentages of third graders performing at or above proficient on state assessments in reading and math increase annually for all student groups
- Percentages of third graders performing below basic on state assessments in reading and math decrease annually for all student groups

#### *Fourth Grade*

- Percentages of fourth graders performing at or above Proficient in reading and math on NAEP, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, increase annually for all student groups
- Percentages of fourth graders performing below Basic on NAEP reading and math decrease annually for all student groups
- Achievement for all students increases, and gaps between low-income and other students narrow