



# SREB

The policies and practices that are essential to improve education are more clear than ever. What's needed is an unprecedented effort to scale them statewide and across the region. The Southern Regional Education Board stands with the states as a partner in this effort — serving as convener, advisor, trusted resource and champion for **what works.** | 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Southern  
Regional  
Education  
Board

[sreb.org](http://sreb.org)

The Southern Regional Education Board works with 16 member states to improve public education: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. Based in Atlanta, SREB was created in 1948 by Southern governors and legislatures to help leaders in education and government advance education and improve the social and economic life of the region.



Robert F. McDonnell,  
*Governor of Virginia*

Fellow Governors,

Ensuring that our children have access to a high-quality education is a bipartisan issue that I believe all policy-makers can agree on. It is critical that we are preparing our students for the highly skilled, highly technical jobs of the 21st century while making sure that they are able to compete in this global economy.

The Southern Regional Education Board has been a resource for all member states focused on education reform. In Virginia, we have strived to improve outcomes for all age levels — starting in kindergarten and continuing through college. We have implemented sweeping K-12 and higher education reforms in order to make sure that, upon graduating from high school, our K-12 students are college- or career-ready and to increase the access and affordability of a college education for these students in Virginia.

States must continue to put forward innovative reforms to ensure that all children, regardless of their ZIP codes, have access to the quality education they need for the top jobs of the 21st century. This includes making sure we are providing educational options for our young people, have the best teachers in our classrooms, are preparing our students for the high-demand STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and math), and have programs in place to ensure every student is college- or career-ready upon graduating from high school.

Through innovative education initiatives advanced during my administration, we are making great progress. We have laid the groundwork to increase educational options for our young people through legislation that facilitates the expansion of high-quality public charter schools, virtual schools and college partnership laboratory schools in the Commonwealth. We also opened the door for low-income students who otherwise might not have access to a high-quality education to have the opportunity to attend a non-public school, by providing tax credits to companies that contribute to the educational improvement

scholarship fund. Finally, through legislation passed this year, we are going to ensure that every third-grader is provided reading intervention services before moving on to fourth grade. Reading is such an essential skill, and we cannot let our young people fall behind at an early age.

Improving higher education is just as important as making sure our K-12 schools are providing the best education to our children. Creating more access and affordability to our postsecondary institutions ensures more students have the ability to pursue a college degree and be prepared for the jobs of the future. However, we must ensure high school students are prepared for postsecondary work and life after graduation. SREB's College and Career Readiness Initiative has been instrumental in Virginia and other member states developing comprehensive strategies to ensure our high school graduates will be successful whether they enter college or the job market.

Last year, the Virginia General Assembly unanimously passed our landmark higher education legislation, *Preparing for the Top Jobs of the 21st Century: The Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011*. This legislation tackles the difficulties colleges around Virginia are facing today and will produce positive results for Virginia's college students. "Top Jobs" provides a roadmap for an additional 100,000 degrees from our colleges and universities over the next 15 years. Because of this legislation, more Virginians will have the opportunity to go to college than ever before. We are already seeing the results. The legislation also established a framework for sustained, reform-based investment in our colleges and universities to increase access and affordability for our students. This framework will rein in rising tuition costs and end the cycle of state funding reductions to our higher education system. Finally, "Top Jobs" places an emphasis on degree attainment in the high-demand, high-income STEM-H (health) fields that are keys to today's 21st century economy.

We must continue to be bold and innovative by embracing 21st century learning and promoting success and achievement in the classroom. In Virginia, we believe that to get a good job, you must get a good education. We want to ensure that all children, regardless of where they live, are able to get the good education they deserve. I commend all SREB member states for their efforts to ensure all students have access to a first-quality education.



## Not just how far, but how to get there



Dave Spence, *President*

The last year, in many ways, has been a watershed one for SREB. We have launched new initiatives and moved into the next phases of other important projects. And we have taken stock of intensive policy and practice work in recent years to consolidate its more specific recommendations with our long-standing efforts to help states reach our common goal of leading the nation in education improvement.

While the range of SREB activities has grown, all are focused on this fundamental goal: students graduating from high school ready for as many career and postsecondary options as possible and then completing some form of postsecondary education.

Over the last five years or so, in addition to regular reporting on state progress on the 2002 *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education, SREB completed a number of major initiatives that recommended best state policies and practices to meet key areas in the *Challenge to Lead* agenda. These recommendations centered more specifically on what needs to occur in public schools and colleges to meet the ambitious goals. For example, what kind of state accountability system will encourage public schools not only to increase graduation rates but also to raise achievement to college- and career-readiness levels? And how can reading and writing skills be improved to enable higher learning in all subjects? These deeper examinations included:

- The Committee to Improve High School Graduation Rates and Achievement, led by Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue in 2006-2008
- The Committee to Improve Reading and Writing in Middle and High Schools, led by Virginia Governor Timothy Kaine in 2008-2009
- An intensive focus on college completion during West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin's chairmanship in 2009-2010
- The Middle Grades Commission, led by North Carolina Governor Beverly Perdue in 2010-2011

During these years, SREB directed a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant to develop statewide college-readiness initiatives in six of our states. We also launched the Go *Alliance*, which works with 15 states to motivate students to go to college.

The recommendations flowing from these initiatives not only encourage higher standards for educational achievement — they also identify practical and effective policies and practices for meeting the goals. They tell us not just how far we need to go, but what, specifically, we need to do to get there.

In 2011, SREB embarked on intensive work, supported by SREB states and external funds, to delve deeper into crucial areas to provide states even more effective practices and policies to raise student achievement. We see this newer, action-oriented work as a natural next phase in helping states meet our common goals. Here are some examples:

***Preparation for Tomorrow.*** SREB is working with 12 states to build career pathway course sequences that connect high-standard career/technical and academic curricula. These projects build on SREB's long belief that career/technical education can be highly rigorous and also help many more students succeed.

**Literacy Design Collaborative and Mathematics Design Collaborative.** SREB is helping states implement new teaching and learning tools for teachers to incorporate the new Common Core State Standards in literacy and mathematics into all classrooms.

**Teacher Effectiveness and Evaluation.** Building on findings of the latest research on how to evaluate and improve teacher effectiveness, SREB, with Gates Foundation support, will work with states on teacher evaluation and related policies and practices.

**College Readiness.** We continue efforts to establish statewide college-readiness policy and practice. This includes Gates Foundation-funded work with six states to develop 12th-grade transition courses in reading/writing and mathematics to help seniors achieve college-readiness standards before they graduate from high school.



**College Completion.** Our 2010 *No Time to Waste* report recommended actions for states to increase significantly the number of degrees and certificates awarded. Now, with funding from Lumina Foundation and the Gates Foundation, we are convening working groups to lay out the essential elements of effective state policy on specific issues — such as transfer, funding, access and credits-to-degree — that are critical to improving college completion.



***Challenge 2020***

All of this most recent work to help states act to reach our goals builds on SREB's ongoing programs. For many years, our work has centered on data collection, analysis and reporting; school improvement services for schools, teachers and leaders; and programs to build capacity and access in higher education.



In setting the stage for the latest initiatives, SREB staff reviewed the 2002 *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education, recognizing that continuing our gains requires us to monitor not only progress but the measures themselves, to be sure they are right for the times. Staff summarized states' progress toward the goals and identified actions that need to occur to meet the updated goals by 2020. The result is a draft *Challenge to Lead 2020* Goals for Education. These updated goals incorporate the specific policy and practice recommendations of recent years to give states a better roadmap for meeting them. And they sharpen the focus of SREB's work in the years to come.



The next eight years are crucial. We now have the standards and the goals. What comes next has always been the central challenge: how to help more students meet these standards. SREB is prepared to work with its states to do so.

Thank you to Virginia Governor McDonnell for chairing SREB this past year, and to our Board and Legislative Advisory Council for their leadership. And thanks to the 16 states that steadfastly support SREB while working to improve education in their communities.

*David S. Spence*

SREB is serious about service to member states. Staff consult with governors, state legislatures and their staffs and provide them with the latest information on budgets, legislation and trends that affect education. Legislators look to SREB for comparative data, news of legislative actions in other states and policy research on issues in their own states. SREB's State Services office is often the first point of contact.

**TRACK** | SREB State Services staff members tracked legislative actions across the 16-state SREB region and the nation. The most requested topics in 2011-2012 were:

- revenues and budgets for education
- changes to state-funded, merit-based scholarships and education employee retirement programs
- college tuition increases
- policies on teacher evaluation, charter schools, school calendars and educational governance

**PUBLISH** | Seven *Legislative Reports* and a topical *Legislative Briefing* informed lawmakers about governors' proposals, key trends, bills and other legislative changes regarding education.

**RESEARCH** | Thousands of state leaders received *Focus* reports on topics of special interest, including:

- *Charter Schools in SREB States: Critical Questions and Next Steps for States*
- *Teacher Reform Legislation in SREB States: Tenure, Dismissal and Performance Pay Policies*

**CONVENE** | SREB's Board and Legislative Advisory Council members came together for the SREB Annual Meeting and Legislative Work Conference to keep abreast of the latest research and emerging trends in



education. Each year, State Services also brings legislative and governors' staff members together to discuss upcoming education issues. These gatherings are rare opportunities to share ideas with colleagues in other states and to consult with experts on practices that produce results.

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**NEXT** Look for current updates of legislative action in 2012-2013 and *Focus* reports on topics as they arise at [SREB.org/StateServices](http://SREB.org/StateServices).

# SREB's policy analysts produce nationally recognized reports to inform state leaders as they shape education policy to improve

student achievement. The Education Policies team tracks trends and analyzes the progress of member states toward the SREB *Challenge to Lead* goals.

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**MEASURE AND ANALYZE** | Education Policies staff provide detailed biennial state reports on each member state's progress on the *Challenge to Lead* goals. This year, *A Decade of Progress* shows that SREB states made gains in prekindergarten access, early and middle grades achievement in reading and math, and high school graduation rates.

**SET GOALS** | SREB worked this year to update the organization's goals for education for the decade ahead. The *Challenge to Lead 2020* Goals for Education are built on SREB's continuous work dating from 1988, especially the *Education Benchmarks 2000 Goals* and the 2002 *Challenge to Lead* goals. The refreshed goals for 2020:

- Reflect the progress states have made since the goals were last published in 2002
- Include measurable outcomes at each stage of a student's education journey
- Incorporate the past decade of policy work by SREB governors, commissions and member states

**PUBLISH** | In 2011-2012, SREB published policy papers on these topics:

- *Strengthening Attend 'n' Drive Laws to Reduce Truancy and Dropouts*
- *Maximizing Education Data Use in SREB States Measuring a Teacher's Value and Effectiveness in SREB States*
- *Transitioning to the New High School Graduation Rate*
- *Redesigning Dual Enrollment to Promote College Completion*
- *Smart Class-Size Policies for Lean Times*

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**NEXT** The *Challenge to Lead 2020* goals will guide much of SREB's policy and data work through the year 2020. SREB policy staff will report on these regularly, adding a commitment to track how states are implementing policy in addition to how they meet student achievement measures. Staff will also publish reports on transfer of college credit, prekindergarten and alignment of college-readiness policies.

# Getting high school students ready for college and career is a top priority for the region.

SREB continues to build on its leadership for this complex challenge. In 2011, SREB completed a three-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help leaders in Kentucky, Florida, Maryland, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia develop policies and practices to increase students' college and career readiness.



During 2011-2012, SREB began expanding this work to help more states take effective practices statewide, with a new three-year grant from the Gates Foundation.

**BENCHMARK** | SREB is developing indicators to benchmark implementation of the Common Core State Standards or other rigorous standards and will publish regional and state reports on progress.

**DESIGN** | SREB is working with education leaders in Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee and West Virginia to design model transitional courses to boost “unready” high school juniors and seniors to college readiness. Florida and Virginia already offer such courses.

**ALIGN** | To demonstrate how to integrate rigorous Common Core State Standards into career and technical education, SREB is working with Georgia on a four-course CTE pathway in advanced manufacturing.

**ROLL OUT** | A project is under way with the Arkansas Department of Education to train teachers in eight schools to roll out innovative literacy and math strategies that will help implement the CCSS.

#### **SREB College and Career Readiness Initiative**

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**NEXT** In late 2013, SREB will publish an initial baseline report showing where the region and individual states stand in implementing the Common Core and other rigorous state standards.

# Creating jobs is a top priority in the Southern states, and a better educated work force is

an important strategy in attracting them. SREB’s college completion initiative urges states to substantially increase the number of residents who complete two- and four-year college degrees and career certificates each year.

This is a multifaceted task. More students must graduate high school ready to succeed in college and career. Colleges and other postsecondary institutions must be more accessible and affordable. And they must do a better job of getting their students through to degree or certificate — which requires dedicated attention to everything from academic advising to transfer policy to the way states fund institutions.

**DEFINE** | In 2011-2012, with new funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation, SREB began to take these efforts to the next step: describing state policy that will help states’ postsecondary institutions award significantly more degrees and certificates. This effort builds on SREB’s *No Time to Waste: Policy Recommendations for Increasing College Completion* report and 2008-2011 work to implement statewide college-readiness initiatives throughout the region.

**CONVENE** | SREB is convening regional focus groups and working groups of policy-makers — such as legislators and state higher ed and K-12 officials — to identify best practices and essential elements of state policy for issues critical to college access and success.



## **SREB College Completion Initiative**

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**NEXT** Out of these consensus-building, issue-based “convenings” — on topics such as transfer, credits-to-degree, outcomes-based funding, college readiness, virtual learning, remediation and affordability — will come a series of policy papers and briefs that outline the essential elements of effective state policy to increase college completion.

SREB collects, compiles, analyzes and publishes the latest demographic, economic and pre-K to 20 data, revealing important trends and enabling comparisons among states and regions of the nation. SREB Education Data Services also responds to special requests from state leaders, agencies and media outlets.



**ANALYZE AND PUBLISH** | Already one of the nation's most comprehensive collections of comparative state education data, the *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education* was expanded in 2011 to include all 50 states and a region-by-region format. The *Fact Book* is updated continually online. Periodic *Fact Book Bulletins* also analyzed the education impact of trends:

- *Growing Proportion of Children in Poverty Means More Education Challenges*
- *Percentage of Working-Age Adults With an Associate's or Higher Degree Lowest in SREB Region*
- *High School Students Take Notable Portion of College Credits*
- *New Highs Reached in College Courses Taken Through E-Learning*

**COLLECT AND COMPILE** | The backbone of the *Fact Book* is the SREB-State Data Exchange, a partnership with the region's higher education boards to compile and report unique, up-to-date comparisons of higher education data.

- *The SREB-State Data Exchange: 2010-2011 Indicators Report* provided the latest SREB averages, which are often used in state decision-making.
- *New Measures, New Perspectives: Graduates' Time- and Credits-to-Degree in SREB States* introduced unique measures developed by the Data Exchange for time-to-degree and credits-to-degree.

A large number of reliable sources of comparative data are mined constantly to complete the *Fact Book* storehouse of long-term trend data.

#### **SREB Education Data Services**

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**NEXT** Monthly *Fact Book* updates are posted online. Watch for *Fact Book Bulletins* and the *SREB-State Data Exchange 2011-2012 Indicators Report*.

# Through its Educational Technology Cooperative, SREB is a national leader in helping states

improve online learning, share digital content, and make smart planning and policy decisions about technology. SREB states are at the forefront of many of the fast-paced changes technology is bringing to education.

**CONNECT** | The state higher ed and K-12 agencies that are members of the Cooperative represent more than 3,400 school districts and nearly 1,200 colleges and universities in the SREB region. The Cooperative's 2011 annual meeting gathered state officials and policy-makers, and the 2012 symposium "Disrupting Education: Depends on How You Look at It?" provided teacher, national and state agency, and foundation perspectives on new learning models fueled by technology.

**REPRESENT** | The 2012 SREB/iNACOL National Online Teacher of the Year is putting her passion to work as a spokesperson for online teaching, raising awareness about the teachers behind the screen. Leslie Fetzer (below left) of North Carolina Virtual Public School says online learning is the tool that has made it possible for special ed students in her state to succeed in the same courses as other students.



**RESEARCH** | In addition to its annual *Report on State Virtual Schools*, the Cooperative began documenting an accelerating trend toward district-level online learning in K-12 schools. With a National Science Foundation grant, the Cooperative developed and tested the National Science Digital Library Backpack, a student-designed portal.

**CATALYZE** | The Cooperative hosted webinars for academic leaders, teachers and faculty on topics such as blended learning, the growing practice of combining online learning with face-to-face instruction. With support from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the Cooperative developed tools to assess and improve accessibility of Internet-based instruction and services at colleges and universities.

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**NEXT** Watch for a broader and deeper survey of online learning options at the district level in late 2012 — and for work on how technology can reduce the time to and cost of college degrees.

# SREB brings together college opportunities to make them more widely available in the region.

The shared mission of these programs: *To help college students of all ages take courses and earn degrees, no matter where they live and work.* States save the cost of creating specialized programs, and students get broader access to learning or save by paying in-state tuition.

**SHARE | Academic Common Market** enables college students from one SREB state to pursue uncommon degrees in another SREB state at in-state tuition rates.

**Regional Contract Program** gives students in SREB states the opportunity to earn specialized professional health degrees at in-state or reduced tuition rates.

**Electronic Campus** helps adults and e-learners start or resume their college education or satisfy a job requirement. The *Electronic Campus* provides easy access to more than 30,000 online courses and 1,700 online degree programs from colleges and universities in all 16 SREB states. Now users can access services such as online applications, financial aid and career planning at [ElectronicCampus.org](http://ElectronicCampus.org).

**TheTeacherCenter.org** helps K-12 teachers find and connect to state certification requirements, online courses and graduate degree options.

**Academic Common Market/Electronic Campus** allows students in SREB states to enroll in online degree programs outside their home states — at in-state tuition rates. More than 126 degree programs are available, and about 130 students were certified for study during the past year.

**LEAD |** SREB has been a leader in policies to expand distance learning. A current focus: Staff are continuing to help states respond to changes in federal regulations that require institutions with online programs to gain approval in states where they enroll students. SREB's state reciprocity arrangement will be a model for other regions as new regulations are enacted.

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**NEXT** With support from Lumina Foundation,

TheAdultLearner.org builds on efforts in several SREB states to reach the region's 20 million adults ages 25 to 55 with some college credit but no degree. The portal will help them access specialized degree-completion programs when it launches in late 2012 at [TheAdultLearner.org](http://TheAdultLearner.org).

# Go Alliance works to boost college access and attendance — especially for students who would be the first in their families to go to college.

This membership cooperative shares best practices for policy, programs and campaigns to get more students ready for college and overcome financial barriers.

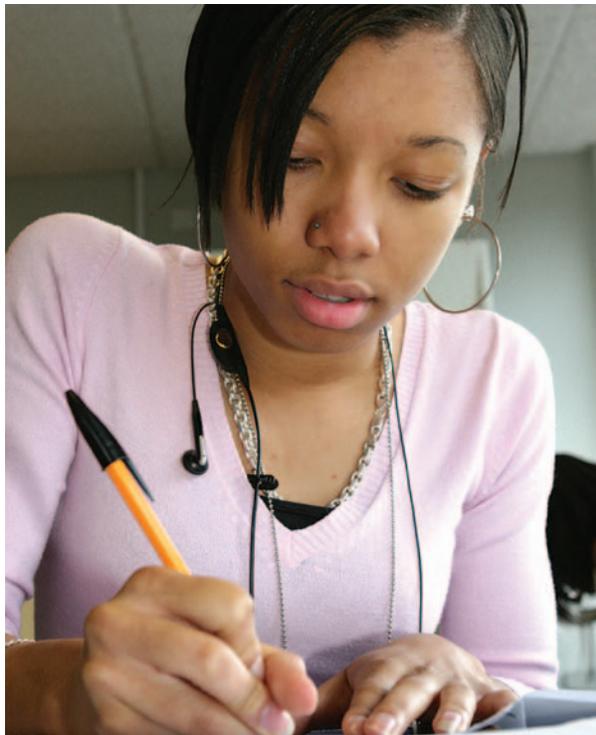
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**SHARE** | Most students say they want to go to college, but many never apply. Go Alliance published *College Application Week: A Toolkit for Increasing Access to Higher Education*, a how-to guide for events that help high school seniors complete applications.

**TRAIN** | Eight SREB states continued to work with Go Alliance to provide professional development for middle grades and high school counselors, teachers,

administrators and mentors in how to increase graduation rates and create a college-going culture in their schools. The modules are available to other states for a moderate (at-cost) fee.

**CONVENE** | In addition to its annual meeting for education agency and college access program staff, the Go Alliance hosts workshops and webinars with national experts on communication, marketing and other topics that member states request.



## **SREB Go Alliance**

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**NEXT** Watch for promising ideas to use mobile technology to help high school students navigate the path to college. SREB won a \$200,000 planning grant in Lumina Foundation's Next Generation program to discover innovative ways to connect students with guidance on applying and paying for college.

# The SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing generates new ideas to address the challenges facing nursing education at all levels — associate's, bachelor's, master's and doctoral.

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**INNOVATE** | The SREB Nurse Educator Consortium, a collaborative of eight graduate nursing programs and SREB's *Electronic Campus*, enrolled 12 students in innovative, online teacher preparation courses during the 2011-2012 academic year. Blending these online courses with classroom instruction can accelerate the time-to-degree for future nursing faculty so they are ready to teach the next generation of registered nurses.

**SURVEY** | SREB's 2011 annual survey of college nursing programs documented important changes in the region's nurse educator work force — including 97 full-time faculty retirements, 353 full-time faculty vacancies, and 37 deans or directors who plan to retire in three years.

**CONVENE** | In November 2011, nurse educators met in Atlanta at the Council's annual meeting to discuss best practices in using technology to deliver courses. Dee Baldwin of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte was presented the Council's M. Elizabeth Carnegie Award for excellence in nursing education.

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**NEXT** In 2012-2013, the annual meeting will focus on building partnerships. Look for the results of the 2012 annual survey, a report on how SREB states are addressing Institute of Medicine recommendations for the future of nursing, and a series of webinars to help faculty use technology in the delivery of courses.

# More than one-third of America's college students are people of color, but relatively few faculty are

members of racial or ethnic minority groups. The SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program is working to change that. It helps minority students earn doctoral degrees and prepares them to become college faculty members.

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**SUCCEED** | More than 600 scholars have earned their Ph.D.s through the program since 1993.

More than 80 percent of these graduates are employed in education — 70 percent of them in SREB states. More than 75 graduates have earned tenure.

**MENTOR** | The SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program currently serves more than 345 scholars with professional development, mentoring, networking, employment counseling and financial assistance.

**CONVENE** | The nation's largest gathering of minority Ph.D. scholars and faculty convened in October 2011 for the 18th annual Compact for Faculty Diversity Institute on Teaching and Mentoring. More than 1,100 doctoral students and mentors met in Atlanta for leadership training, networking, professional development, job recruiting — and inspiration to fuel another year of hard work.

**PILOT** | The Junior Faculty Professional Development Conference brought together new minority faculty members to examine classroom and research challenges that have prevented others from achieving successful academic careers.

**SHOW** | A new video brings all this home. Students tell how the Doctoral Scholars Program helped them overcome doubt, fatigue and economic hardship to reach that proud moment of doctoral graduation. Visit [youtube.com/SREBvideo](http://youtube.com/SREBvideo) to see for yourself.

## **SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program**

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**NEXT** The Doctoral Scholars Programs marks its 20th anniversary in 2012-2013 and expects to reach the 700th graduate mark.

## *High Schools That Work* is America's largest high school improvement effort, active in

1,200 schools in 30 states and the District of Columbia. This SREB program partners with states, districts and schools to support comprehensive high school reform.

*HSTW* helps schools create pathways for success that blend rigorous career/technical studies with a college-ready academic core and other reform conditions that transform high schools into places where *all* students learn at high levels and graduate prepared for college, advanced training and careers. The program embeds academic standards into career/technical assignments, uses literacy standards and strategies into both academic and career/technical courses, and includes supported guidance and an extra-help system.

During 2011-2012, SREB provided direct services through special contract to more than 200 high schools in 23 states. Of these, 164 schools were in SREB states: 18 in Alabama, 25 in Arkansas, one in Delaware, 18 in Florida, 20 in Georgia, 13 in Kentucky, 10 in Louisiana, two in Maryland, three in Mississippi, 10 in North Carolina, six in South Carolina, 13 in Tennessee, 21 in Texas and four in Virginia.

**TRAIN AND MOTIVATE** | During 2011-12, 812 state, district and school leaders and teachers participated in five *HSTW* professional development national workshops, more than 500 site-based workshops, many webinars and the State Leaders' Forum. The 25th annual *HSTW* Staff Development Conference in July 2011 drew more than 5,500 educators from 42 states.

**ASSESS** | In 2012, SREB conducted its biennial *HSTW* Assessment of more than 40,000 seniors in 33 states. More than 8,000 of them received the 2012 *High Schools That Work* Award of Educational Achievement. The assessment tests students in reading, mathematics and science and includes a student survey and a teacher survey to help school, district and state leaders see what is — and is not — working to increase student achievement.

**PUBLISH** | In 2011-2012, *HSTW* published eight online newsletters that share the best practices from the 2011 *HSTW* conference. Two examples: *Creating a Culture of High Expectations, Student Motivation and Instructional Support in Schools and Classrooms* and *Building the Capacity of Principals and Teacher-Leaders to Implement Effective School and Classroom Practices*.

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**NEXT** *HSTW* will publish *Recognizing Academic Achievement in Career/Technical Education: Conditions for Awarding Academic Credit for Career/Technical Courses*.

# *Preparation for Tomorrow* is broadening the definition of rigor in career and technical studies

by incorporating mastery of the Common Core State Standards into authentic projects that are meaningful to students.

Each member of the 12-state consortium is designing a sequence of four CT courses in a high-wage, high-skill career field important to that state's economy. The pathways will prepare students for a number of options beyond high school: entry-level jobs, advanced training, industry certification, two-year certificates or associate's degrees, or bachelor's degrees.

Each course will embed the CCSS for college readiness and incorporate cooperative learning strategies, engaging instructional techniques, guidance and advisement, extra help, and assessment of students' technical and academic skills. In the end, all 12 states will share the curricula and accompanying materials. The states will work with SREB to train teachers, principals and counselors to implement and assess the courses.

**COLLABORATE** | Each state engaged key stakeholders from industry, higher education, government agencies and secondary education to work on the course sequences.

- Alabama: aerospace engineering
- Arkansas: futures in science and technology
- Georgia: advanced manufacturing
- Kansas: STEM education and training
- Kentucky: informatics
- Maryland: construction design and management
- Nebraska: food and nutritional sciences

- New Jersey: global logistics and entrepreneurship
- North Carolina: project management
- Ohio: automated materials joining technologies and health informatics
- South Carolina: renewable energy technologies
- West Virginia: energy and power

**PILOT** | During 2011-2012, Alabama began field-testing the first two courses in its curriculum.

## **SREB Preparation for Tomorrow**

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**NEXT** During 2012-2013, Kentucky, Ohio, South Carolina, West Virginia and New Jersey will field-test the first two courses in their curricula. Alabama will begin testing courses three and four.

The transition from eighth to ninth grade is critical. Being sure middle grades students are well prepared for high school — and ultimately for postsecondary study and careers — is the goal of SREB's *Making Middle Grades Work* program.

To improve curricula, instruction and support services for students, SREB provided more than 450 *MMGW* schools in 23 states with professional development, technical assistance, coaching and surveys. *MMGW* provided direct services through special contracts to more than 100 schools in 15 states in the 2011-2012 school year. This included 121 schools in the SREB states: 19 in Alabama, five in Arkansas, 21 in Florida, two in Georgia, 18 in Kentucky, two in Louisiana, five in Mississippi, 13 in North Carolina, nine in South Carolina, four in Tennessee, 19 in Texas and four in Virginia.

**ASSESS** | *MMGW* surveyed students to document the classroom experiences of eighth-graders and to determine the extent to which each school has implemented the key practices of the program. *MMGW* surveys teachers on their views about improving student achievement, their expectations of students and the extent to which they use instructional practices that improve student achievement.

**TRAIN** | Through national and site-based workshops for new and existing *MMGW* schools, educators learn to develop solutions to critical issues identified by states, districts and schools.

**COACH** | *MMGW* staff coached school, district and state leaders in areas such as aligning classroom assignments and assessments to grade-level standards,

using standards-based grading practices and high-quality rubrics, and creating and supporting a culture of success.



**PUBLISH** | *Improved Middle Grades Schools for Improved High School Readiness: Ten Best Practices in the Middle Grades* identifies the best practices implemented by most-improved middle grades schools.

*A New Mission for the Middle Grades* issues an urgent call for SREB states to improve student achievement in the middle grades so that students are ready for success in high school.

**SREB Making Middle Grades Work**

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*Technology Centers That Work* helps shared-time technical centers embed academic standards into their curricula so that technical courses become more intellectually demanding. The goal is to prepare graduates to succeed in postsecondary studies and careers in high-demand, high-wage fields. The network has grown to more than 175 sites — career centers, career/technical centers, technology centers or academies — in 17 states.

**COACH AND ASSIST** | *TCTW* technical assistance visits helped school leaders and teachers take stock of where they are and where they want to go and provided teachers strategies to increase student performance. School improvement consultants made follow-up visits to centers to observe classrooms and work with educators.

**TRAIN** | *TCTW* conducted 12 statewide site development workshops and nearly 100 state and local workshops and webinars on topics such as using data to improve school culture, integrating literacy and numeracy in CT classrooms, and differentiated learning.

**ASSESS** | Based on the *TCTW* assessment, students who were well prepared for postsecondary studies, advanced training and work received the Award of Educational Achievement.

**CONVENE** | The Fourth Annual National *Technology Centers That Work* Leaders' Forum brought together nearly 300 administrators and other instructional leaders from shared-time centers in 22 states to network and learn about strategies that improve the culture of centers.

**PUBLISH** | *An Undeveloped National Resource: The Unrealized Potential of the Nation's Career/Technical Centers* explores specific practices and strategies implemented by 11 successful *TCTW* sites to increase reading and mathematics achievement and to prepare students for postsecondary studies and careers.

Two studies, *Hunterdon Polytech Career Academy* in New Jersey and *Wes Watkins Career/Technology Center* in Oklahoma, document how shared-time centers are using the *TCTW* design to raise achievement.

#### **SREB Technology Centers That Work**

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# SREB's school improvement program has piloted a program of support and guidance for new

career/technical teachers who come to teaching from industry, through alternative certification rather than a teacher preparation program. For the past four years, in partnership with the National Center for Research in Career/Technical Education, SREB has developed and field-tested this teacher induction model. Preliminary results show promise in influencing beginning teachers' competence and commitment to remain in the teaching field.

**TRAIN AND COACH** | The program includes 200 hours of professional development, support from trained mentors and local administrators, on-site coaching and an electronic community of practice. The goals are to help teachers:

- Plan career/technical assignments with embedded Common Core State Standards
- Design curriculum around authentic, intellectually demanding projects and problems
- Manage classrooms with a diverse group of students
- Create classroom assessments that measure mastery of technical concepts, reading complex technical materials, and applying math to assignments

**FIELD-TEST** | Oklahoma and South Carolina served as field-test sites, and Oklahoma continues to implement the modules. Several agencies in Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee are at various stages of implementation.



### **SREB Induction Model for Preparing CTE Teachers**

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**NEXT** SREB staff are providing technical assistance and training to several states that will adopt the model. SREB will evaluate use of the model and content of the materials every two years.

# School leaders fuel school improvement. SREB's Learning-Centered Leadership Program works

with states, universities and school districts to improve training for principals and other public K-12 school leaders.

**TRAIN** | SREB provides face-to-face and online training on strategies for effective instructional leadership. Based on practices from principals who succeeded in raising student achievement, the courses are built around clear objectives and integrate real-world problems.

**GUIDE AND REDESIGN** | SREB consults with states to redesign the ways they prepare and certify leaders by:

- Benchmarking policy and legislation against best practices
- Providing technical assistance on university preparation programs, licensure and evaluation for principals, and succession plans
- Helping forge district-university partnerships and design quality internships and mentoring for aspiring principals

In 2011-2012, LCLP worked with programs in states including Alabama, Louisiana and Tennessee. In Florida, SREB is partnering with the Florida Department of Education to design training for 100 leaders to turn around low-performing schools.

**RESEARCH AND PUBLISH** | SREB publishes on school leadership topics to inform practices and policies. Two notable reports from 2011-2012:

- *Turnaround High School Principals: Recruit, Prepare and Empower Leaders of Change* takes an in-depth look how to identify, prepare and support principals who can improve the lowest-performing high schools.

- *Who's Next? Let's Stop Gambling on School Performance and Plan for Principal Succession* outlines critical actions that states, districts, universities and principals should take to address principal succession.

**CONVENE** | SREB's 2012 Leadership Forum on "Strategies for Saving Struggling Schools" brought together 130 principals, education professors, superintendents, legislators, counselors and HR leaders to focus on what works to turn around low-performing schools.

## **SREB Learning-Centered Leadership Program**

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**NEXT** Watch for a progress report on effective school principals in late 2012, to help states and districts target support where it is most needed.

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