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Commission charts path to double number of young adults with relevant credentials.  
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**SREB News**



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## Commission Charts Path to Credentials for All

*Double the number of young adults with relevant certificates and degrees*

*Atlanta, June 3, 2015* — The Southern Regional Education Board today released the recommendations of its Commission on Career and Technical Education and moved forward with plans to help states implement them.

The Commission report — [Credentials for All: An Imperative for SREB States](#) — calls for clear pathways to take students from high school through college and technical schools to good-paying jobs in demand in their states. The report defines the kind of career pathways that can engage students and prepare them for both college and careers.

The overall goal: Double the number of young adults who hold a credible credential or degree by the age of 25. The report offers specific [actions in eight areas](#) to help states reach the goal.

“These policies and practices will build strong career pathways so more students graduate from high school with the academic, technical and workplace knowledge and skills they need to find employment in industries critical to our state economies,” said Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear, who chaired the Commission.

Building such pathways means states will need to align programs across secondary and postsecondary education agencies and find ways to promote business and industry investment in education.

“Bringing together these sectors will be difficult work, but it is imperative that we give students the right kind of career pathways to put many more young adults on the road to credentials of value,” said SREB President Dave Spence.

### Surveying State Priorities and Needs

SREB is surveying states to see which recommendations align with their priorities for career pathways and what support they need to move forward. SREB will use the results to develop targeted services that help states learn from one another’s best practices and policies.

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“We owe it to our youth to provide more than one pathway to college and careers — and to help them begin exploring their options beginning in the middle grades.”

### **Learning at Work**

The Commission makes a case for expanding employer-sponsored, work-based learning opportunities for students such as job shadowing, apprenticeships, internships, co-ops and service learning. In high school and in postsecondary programs, students can learn about careers firsthand and use what they learn in the classroom to solve real workplace problems.

To help make employers full partners in education, *Credentials for All* suggestions include offering tax credits and encouraging employers to commit to hiring some students who complete their training. Workforce development agencies, nonprofit organizations and chambers of commerce can help coordinate work-based learning.

### **Specific Actions in 8 Areas**

*Credentials for All* challenges states to help all students graduate academically ready for both college and careers. A major section of the report describes the elements of career pathways that create smooth transitions from high school to postsecondary education. Such pathways:

- Align college-readiness academics and challenging technical studies through real-world assignments.
- Engage students in career guidance starting in the middle grades.
- Allow high school students to learn in settings that put them on the fast track to earn advanced industry credentials and college credits.

Among the report’s other recommendations, each supported by specific examples from states around the nation:

- Define academic and technical career readiness in state policy.
- Choose industry certification exams that offer value to students, employers and local economies.
- Restructure low-performing high schools around career pathways.
- Prepare career pathway teachers.
- Use accountability systems to reward schools, technology centers and community colleges that add to the number of young adults with credible credentials.

[Explore the recommendations online >](#)

[Executive summary >](#)

[Full report >](#)

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*The Southern Regional Education Board works with states to improve public education at every level, from pre-K through Ph.D. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Atlanta, SREB was created in 1948 by Southern governors and legislatures to advance education and improve the social and economic life of the region. SREB member states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.*



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