

CHALLENGE TO LEAD 2020

SREB

Goals for Education

Southern
Regional
Education
Board

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About the Challenge to Lead 2020

Goals for Education

The Southern Regional Education Board and its member states have long partnered to set goals and work together to improve education. Today, thanks in part to this focused collaboration, SREB states lead the nation in many measures of educational progress.

These *Challenge 2020* Goals for Education set targets for student achievement at each level of the education pipeline, from preschool through college and adult education. And they lay out the essential policies that will bring results. SREB will monitor and report to states regularly on their progress.

This brief version of the goals lists all six goals and gives examples of outcome measures and essential policies that are recommended for state leaders and policy-makers. For a complete list, as well as progress updates and related reports, visit SREB.org/Goals.

The measures and policies shown are samples from the full goals report, available at SREB.org/Goals.



The Goals

All children **entering school** will exhibit the knowledge and the social and developmental skills needed for success in first grade.

Student achievement for all groups in the **early grades** will exceed state standards and national averages — at rates that close achievement gaps between groups.

Student achievement for all groups in the **middle grades** will exceed state standards and national averages — at rates that close achievement gaps between groups.

Eighty percent of all groups of ninth-graders will graduate from **high school** ready for college and career training. (This likely means more than 90 percent will need to graduate from high school and more than 80 percent will need to meet readiness standards for college and career training.)

Sixty percent of working-age adults will have a **postsecondary** credential: an associate's or bachelor's degree, or a career certificate. Public postsecondary institutions will make it a top priority to help states meet state needs by increasing graduates, public service and research.

Increasing percentages of **adults** without high school or postsecondary credentials will pursue opportunities to earn high school alternative certificates, college degrees or career certificates.



FIRST-GRADE READINESS: The importance of a strong start

All children **entering school** will exhibit the knowledge and the social and developmental skills needed for success in first grade.

Outcome Measures:

How to know if your state is improving

- Percentages of all groups of 3- and 4-year-olds who enroll in public (or high-quality private) prekindergarten programs will increase to above national averages.
- A higher percentage of children will meet targets for school readiness based on state standards each year.

Essential Policies:

What policies your state needs to improve performance

- Have effective policies for assessing school readiness.
- Ensure programs meet high national standards of quality.

EARLY GRADES: Skills all students must gain

Student achievement for all groups in the **early grades** will exceed state standards and national averages — at rates that close achievement gaps between groups.

Outcome Measures:

How to know if your state is improving

- Percentages of all groups of students meeting state academic standards in reading, mathematics and science will increase annually to reach 90 percent — and achievement gaps between groups will close.
- Percentages of fourth-graders who score at or above the Proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading, math and science will increase regularly — to above national averages.



Essential Policies:

What policies your state needs to improve performance

- Place young children who are behind in reading in programs that can help them catch up to grade level.
- Develop working conditions for school leaders that align with standards for leadership preparation, licensure and evaluation of principals.

MIDDLE GRADES: The make-or-break point in the K-12 system

Student achievement for all groups in the **middle grades** will exceed state standards and national averages — at rates that close achievement gaps between groups.

Outcome Measures:

How to know if your state is improving

- Ninety percent of eighth-graders will score at or above the Basic level on NAEP in reading, math and science.
- All students will pass Algebra I, preferably in eighth grade, but no later than ninth grade.

Essential Policies:

What policies your state needs to improve performance

- Ensure teachers can teach students to use critical literacy skills in reading complex, discipline-related texts.
- Set high standards for teacher preparation programs, which should focus on both content and pedagogy; states should monitor programs to ensure teachers are able to teach the middle grades standards to all groups of students.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION: Door to the future

Eighty percent of all groups of ninth-graders will graduate from **high school** ready for college and career training. (This likely means more than 90 percent will need to graduate from high school and more than 80 percent will need to meet readiness standards for college and career training.)



Outcome Measures:

How to know if your state is improving

- Four-year high school graduation rates, calculated using the adjusted cohort graduation rate, will rise each year to meet annual state targets and to reach at least 90 percent by 2020.
- Percentages of students taking and passing courses such as dual enrollment and Advanced Placement will increase to exceed national averages.

Essential Policies:

What policies your state needs to improve performance

- Have plans and programs to prevent students from dropping out and to bring dropouts back into the education system.
- Ensure students have access to technology, digital instructional materials, online and blended learning options, and individualized instruction.

POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS: A workforce imperative

Sixty percent of working-age adults will have a **postsecondary** credential: an associate's or bachelor's degree, or a career certificate. Public postsecondary institutions will make it a top priority to help states meet state needs by increasing graduates, public service and research.

Outcome Measures:

How to know if your state is improving

- Postsecondary enrollment rates of recent high school graduates will increase.
- Percentages of college students who graduate on time will increase for students from all racial and ethnic groups, in both four-year and two-year programs. The time it takes for full-time students to earn degrees will decrease to no more than one semester beyond normal time.



Essential Policies:

What policies your state needs to improve performance

- Hold postsecondary institutions accountable for making timely graduation central to campus culture and for taking specific steps to increase the number of graduates and the completion rates.
- Improve college affordability by coordinating funding, tuition and financial aid policies more effectively.

LIFELONG LEARNING: A solid return on investment

Increasing percentages of **adults** without high school or postsecondary credentials will pursue opportunities to earn high school alternative certificates, college degrees or career certificates.

Outcome Measures:

How to know if your state is improving

- Each year, more working-age adults without high school credentials will enroll in Adult Secondary Education programs and earn GED credentials.
- More working-age adults who do not have associate's or bachelor's degrees will enroll in college.

Essential Policies:

What policies your state needs to improve performance

- Design and implement statewide plans for adult education. Establish statewide goals; identify funding; and assign state responsibilities for coordination, governance and partnerships with business.
- Develop policies that reduce barriers for returning adults: expedited admissions, child care services, online services and lower counselor-student ratios.

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