

## Gordon Cooper Technology Center Wins 2020 Pacesetter Award

*Center honored for implementing systems of student support in career pathway programs*

June 30, 2020 — Gordon Cooper Technology Center in Shawnee, Oklahoma, is the winner of a 2020 Gene Bottoms Pacesetter School Award from the Southern Regional Educational Board. GCTC will be honored on July 6, 2021, at SREB's Making Schools Work Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, due to the cancellation of the 2020 conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Pacesetter School Awards recognize schools that are implementing one of SREB's Making Schools Work school improvement frameworks and are achieving success in meeting bold goals related to increases in student graduation rates, readiness for college and careers, and credential attainment.

GCTC implements [Technology Centers That Work](#), SREB's school improvement design for technology centers. GCTC is achieving remarkable gains by helping students develop an Individual Career Academic Plan and participate in work-based learning opportunities. Beginning in the middle grades, GCTC assists students from 27 sending districts in selecting quality career and technical education programs.

The center hosts site visits, which provide an opportunity for students to see each of the center's programs, ranging from emergency medical services to business and entrepreneurial services. Teachers and counselors serve as guests at various advisory activities across all sending districts. Teachers meet individually with students about pathway opportunities.

The center's staff also help students determine their interests and passions so they can develop their own career pathways. Once a program is selected, the center uses a pathway "career tree" — a visual depiction of various career opportunities — to help students extend their training beyond high school and accelerate their progress toward a credential of value.

GCTC's efforts to support its CTE programs have paid off for students and area businesses. In 2019, a student survey administered by SREB found that 62% of students completed a career pathway consisting of four or more related courses. GCTC students also achieved a 94% success rate for earning nationally recognized industry certifications. In 2017-18, GCTC developed partnerships with hundreds of area businesses that helped many students receive on-the-job training. A follow-up study of the partnership found that 48% of GCTC completers were employed in a career that was directly related to their program area.

SREB's [Making Schools Work Conference](#) is held annually and provides educators with opportunities to participate in professional development, network with colleagues from across the country and build school and district leadership capacity.

*The Southern Regional Education Board works with states and educators to improve education at every level, from early childhood through postsecondary education. Learn more about SREB at [sreb.org](http://sreb.org).*

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