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SREB states make progress in education

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## South Carolina Shows Gains in Education Outcomes, Policy

### *High School Graduation Rate Outpaced Nation*

*Atlanta, Georgia — July 12, 2016* — South Carolina continues to improve public education by several key measures, according to a new report from the Southern Regional Education Board.

[\*\*Gauging Progress, Accelerating Pace\*\*](#) reports on recent growth on outcomes and policy activity in the SREB region. The reports show the 16-state SREB region leading the nation on early childhood education access and quality, narrowing some achievement gaps between racial and ethnic groups, and surpassing the national average for high school graduation rates. Yet the report's demographic and student achievement data foreshadow the difficult job states face: getting more students college- and career-ready so they can become successful adults and states can meet future workforce needs.

This report focuses on the region's progress — and on determining what it will take to help each state accelerate pace.

#### **Notable outcomes for South Carolina students**

- Fourth-graders outpaced the region and nation in gains in reading achievement on NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) at the Proficient level.
- South Carolina's high school graduation rate outpaced the nation in growth.
- The increase in the percentage of graduating seniors who took an AP exam while in high school outpaced the nation.
- The six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time freshmen who entered public, four-year colleges and universities topped the national and regional rates.

#### **Strong policy in South Carolina**

- The state is one of 10 in the nation — all in the SREB region — that require school districts to offer full-day kindergarten programs.
- The state approved industry exams for specific career and technical education (CTE) courses.
- CTE teachers must hold an appropriate industry certification in the fields they teach.

"Higher graduation rates are great news for South Carolina and other states," said SREB President Dave Spence. "Far too many of these high school graduates are still unprepared for college-level work, though. States need to renew their focus on closing this readiness gap and hold schools accountable for being sure students have the skills they need."

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- state demographic and income trends
- student achievement from pre-K through postsecondary
- priorities for teacher evaluation and educational technology

SREB monitors progress of its 16 states on the SREB Challenge to Lead Goals for Education adopted by state leaders to help the region lead the nation in educational progress at all levels.

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*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.*

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