

Report of the SREB Teacher Preparation Commission

SREB

State Policies to Improve Teacher Preparation

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This report of the SREB Teacher Preparation Commission was developed by James H. Wyckoff and Julia Jackson Cohen of the University of Virginia, with policy research by Matthew Smith of SREB, under the leadership of Dave Spence and Mark Emblidge of SREB.

For more information, visit SREB.org/TeacherPrep.

Message from the Chair

Today, 3.5 million teachers in the United States are readying 56.6 million students in our elementary and secondary schools for their futures. Like all of you, I firmly believe that a great teacher can change the trajectory of a student's life, which is why every student deserves an excellent educator. However, becoming an effective teacher is a learned skill. While they must master their subjects, they must also know how to inspire students to learn in order to meet today's higher standards for college and career readiness.

Teaching is the profession that teaches all other professions and should be highly regarded and respected. Given its importance, it should require a firm grounding in initial preparation, close mentoring in the early years, and continued professional learning. The SREB Teacher Preparation Commission is calling for just that — more practice-based preparation for teachers, informed by close partnerships with local K-12 schools and by data systems that show what is and isn't working. To that end, we're asking states to implement programs that will prepare all new teachers in their states to the same high standards at licensure as an entry point into the profession.

We know these recommendations come as schools grapple with teacher shortages and as state education budgets recover from the Great Recession. But we must keep improving and moving forward. In Louisiana — after a pilot program and two years of public input from thousands of educators — all teacher prep programs now include competency-based curricula plus a yearlong residency alongside an expert mentor. There is much more to learn, but the good news is we're now training mentors and identifying ways we can meet the unique challenges of rural communities in Louisiana.

Our teachers' success in educating our children is the foundation of our social and economic vitality. Now is the time for state policymakers to support our teachers in becoming effective in every classroom. I look forward to what we can accomplish together.

Sincerely,



John Bel Edwards
Governor, State of Louisiana
SREB Chair



*Governor John Bel Edwards, Chair
SREB Teacher Preparation Commission*

Every Student Deserves a Good Teacher

A great teacher can make a tremendous difference. We know this from our own experience in school. And a body of research now documents that a student learns more with an effective teacher — or languishes in the classroom of a less effective one.

We need more teachers who are well-prepared when they enter the classroom. Too many come into the profession ill-prepared, disadvantaging the students they serve. Schools with concentrations of poor, nonwhite or low-performing students are more likely to be staffed by these less-effective teachers, so the students who need good teachers the most are less likely to land in their classrooms. Inadequate preparation also contributes to teacher turnover. Many teachers who leave the profession after a few years say they felt underprepared for the job.

Improving the quality of new teachers can dramatically alter the lives of millions of students in the years ahead. *The opportunity for state policymakers* is to play a leading role, bringing together the many players to coordinate policies that will improve the effectiveness of programs that prepare teachers in their states.

The job of teaching is harder than ever. We now expect teachers to prepare most students for college, yet the classroom is much more diverse. We require teachers who are skilled at reaching a wide range of learners. So as they came together to confront one of education's most challenging issues, members of the SREB Teacher Preparation Commission acknowledged that, although there are no easy answers, taking action has never been more important.

From the outset, the Commission wrestled with a series of seemingly conflicting objectives. How can states commit to action without definitive proof of best practices? How can they encourage promising practices from some alternative teacher preparation programs while acknowledging that others are failing to prepare teachers for the classroom?

And at every meeting, Commissioners debated how to raise standards for teacher preparation without aggravating teacher shortages. Some schools are hard pressed to attract effective teachers. This is especially true for rural areas, for schools with high concentrations of the neediest students, and in subjects such as special education, science and math.

The SREB Teacher Preparation Commission

The charge to the SREB Teacher Preparation Commission was to develop practical and effective statewide recommendations to improve the programs that prepare new classroom teachers. The aim: a course of action to better prepare teachers so they can help students achieve higher standards.

Chaired by Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards, the Commission included state legislators, deans, university presidents, educators, researchers, heads of postsecondary systems, state and district superintendents, and leaders of nationwide organizations. (See page 28 for a full list of members.) They met during 2016, 2017 and 2018 to evaluate the evidence in the field of teacher preparation, to understand licensure and residency programs and to consider promising practices in SREB states.

The Commission discussed factors across the continuum of the profession that affect the supply of good teachers: How educators are inducted, their development over the years, their salaries and benefits, even the public's regard for the profession. And while teacher preparation and licensure — the focus of the Commission — play a role in teacher shortages, the Commission concluded that the solutions to shortages extend well beyond its scope. All of their recommendations, however, were tempered by the reality that many schools struggle to put a teacher in every classroom.

Over two years, members of the Commission explored these questions in detail, in discussions with researchers and practitioners working at the cutting edge of effective teacher preparation. Their deliberations resulted in a clear understanding of the challenges and a consensus on policies and practices states can put in place to improve the effectiveness of early-career teachers.

How to raise standards for teacher preparation without aggravating teacher shortages or discouraging more diverse teachers from entering the profession?

Good teaching is complex. Members of the Commission — many former educators themselves — understand that teachers must not only know their subject matter but also know how to help students learn it. And today they must also analyze student data and shift instruction to meet their students' needs, all while managing a classroom.

Learning to teach is complex, too, and formal teacher preparation is just the beginning. Teachers typically improve significantly in their early years in the classroom and hone their skills with professional learning throughout their careers. The Commission discussed the importance of development across the professional continuum but focused its recommendations on state-level policy on the preparation of teachers *before* they enter the classroom. At this early stage of the profession, the role of the state is to set licensure requirements and hold teacher preparation programs accountable for how their graduates perform.

In the end, the teacher must be effective. Filling vacancies with people who cannot help their students learn is not a solution. The Commission acted to raise expectations while allowing time to meet them.

The Commission concluded that there is sufficient guidance from research and practice to support expanding promising practices while collecting evidence so states can continue to assess and improve them. The recommendations have the potential to accomplish two important goals: substantially improve the skills of teachers entering the profession, and provide preparation programs with information and incentives for continuous improvement.

Four promising practices that the Commission studied serve as the organizing framework for the recommendations:

1. Hold all new teachers in a state to the same high standards, and require candidates to demonstrate mastery of practical classroom skills through practice-based licensure tests.
2. Require high-quality clinical teaching experiences.
3. Develop comprehensive statewide data systems for continuous improvement.
4. Encourage strong partnerships between teacher preparation programs and K-12 districts.

This report presents an overview of what research tells us about these promising practices and offers recommendations for states to put them into action.

What We Know — and Don't

A Review of the Evidence

The work of the Commission began with a review of the research on teacher preparation. The field lacks strong evidence on which specific components or program designs make a difference. The conclusions drawn by a 2010 National Research Council panel of experts remain largely true today: “There is currently little definitive evidence that particular approaches to teacher preparation yield teachers whose students are more successful than others.” Policymakers, researchers, colleges and schools would benefit from more attention to how specific teacher education programs affect outcomes for graduates.

What we know about what works is summarized here. Find a complete list of sources on page 26.

1. A teacher candidate’s individual credentials or academic qualifications are weak predictors of future effectiveness. When considered together, these attributes provide a stronger — but still modest — signal of teachers’ ability to improve student achievement.
2. Recent research suggests undergraduate grade point average and screening measures such as mock teaching lessons are better predictors of teaching effectiveness.
3. Researchers have not identified individual courses or specific program approaches associated with candidate effectiveness. However, research suggests that intensive methods instruction and high quality clinical experiences have an outsized impact.
4. In clinical experiences, the match matters. Teacher candidates benefit from student teaching or internship experiences in schools similar to those in which they will work as licensed teachers. Guidance from effective mentor-teachers whose instructional approaches align with the teacher preparation program is also important.



A Review of the Evidence

Research Topic	Summary	Source
Candidate and Teacher Qualifications	Teach for America’s candidate selection criteria are associated with meaningful gains in the achievement of students once graduates enter the classroom.	Dobie (2011)
	Considered individually, credentials such as academic background, licensure exam scores, licensure status, master’s degrees and college entrance exam scores provide weak signals of future teacher effectiveness.	Kane, Rockoff & Staiger (2008) Clotfelter, et al. (2007) Harris & Sass (2011)
	When considered together, academic qualifications and performance on licensure exams provide a stronger but still modest signal of teachers’ ability to improve student achievement.	Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, Rockoff & Wyckoff (2008) Clotfelter et al. (2007)
	Leadership and personality traits such as perseverance may predict future effectiveness but have only modest effect on student achievement.	Jacob et. al (2016) Rockoff & Speroni (2010) Rockoff et al. (2011) Duckworth, Quinn & Seligman (2009)
	The combination of qualifications such as undergraduate grade point average and screening measures such as a mock teaching lesson could predict teaching effectiveness.	Jacob et al. (2016)
Program Design and Quality	Research does not identify which specific components of programs account for differences in graduates’ outcomes.	Gansle et al. (2012) Goldhaber et al. (2013) Koedel et al. (2015) Lincove et al. (2013) Mihaly et al. (2013)
	Stronger methods preparation (courses where teachers learn how to teach specific content of subjects) may increase how ready teachers think they are to teach — and how long they stay in the profession.	Ingersoll, Merrill, and May (2012) Ronfeldt, Schwartz & Jacob (2014)
Clinical Experiences	Teachers seem to benefit from clinical practice in schools with student populations similar to the schools in which they intend to work.	Goldhaber, Krieg & Theobald (2016) Ronfeldt (2015)
	Candidates who student-teach in schools with lower levels of teacher turnover are more effective and stay in teaching longer.	Goldhaber et al. (2016)
Practice-Based Assessments	Passing edTPA, a licensure exam used in several states, is a predictor of student achievement scores in English language arts but not in math.	Goldhaber, Cowan & Theobald (2016)
Method of Preparation	Preparation route is not a reliable indicator of effectiveness in raising student test scores.	Boyd et al. (2006, 2009) Constantine, et al. (2009) Henry et al. (2014) Kane, Rockoff & Staiger (2008)

Promising Practices

The SREB Teacher Preparation Commission explored promising practices that can be implemented more broadly while rigorously evaluating them to further the evidence for what works in teacher preparation.

Teacher Licensure

How can states assess whether teacher candidates are prepared to teach — ready to add value to their students' education when they first enter a classroom? At licensure, all teachers should demonstrate the knowledge and skills they need to prove their classroom readiness.

Policymakers set teacher certification and licensure requirements so teachers in their state have a common baseline of training experiences. These requirements typically cover coursework, clinical practice experiences and exams to measure understanding of content and pedagogy.

Pathways to the Profession: University Preparation and Alternative Programs

More than 2,000 providers across the United States prepare new teachers before they are licensed by the state. The differences among them are vast — in coursework, student teaching and assessments. More than 80 percent of prospective teachers graduate from university preparation programs, though in some states, such as Louisiana and Texas, the percentage prepared in alternative programs is greater than 40 percent. (Proportions in each state are listed in Appendix C, page 25.)

Routes available to prepare teachers for licensure vary substantially across the 16 SREB states:

- **Virginia**, for example, recruits new teachers primarily through university-based programs.
- In **Arkansas**, many teachers pursue Master of Arts in teaching degrees with teaching methods coursework and clinical practice.
- Most SREB states have partnerships with long-standing alternative-route programs such as Teach for America.
- **Delaware, Louisiana** and **Tennessee** have residency programs specific to local school districts, such as Teach NOLA in New Orleans.
- **Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina** and **Tennessee** partner with the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, a low-cost, entirely web-based program designed to address specific teacher workforce needs. More than 20 percent of the program's graduates are non-white, and approximately a third go into STEM fields.

Reciprocity

Different requirements for transferring licenses from state to state make moving between states expensive and time-consuming for teachers and create a barrier for states that want to attract new talent from other states.

One route to license reciprocity across states is National Board Certification. However, teachers cannot pursue National Board Certification until they have three years of experience, so reciprocity for early-career teachers remains a challenge.

Appendix A on pages 20-21 details licensure requirements for each SREB state.

Promising Practices for Licensure

Practice-based exams

Increasingly strong evidence suggests that traditional exams such as Praxis tests have little connection to the effectiveness of classroom teachers and may screen out otherwise effective teachers. Many states are exploring practice-based licensure tests that better align with practical classroom skills teachers need to be effective on the job. A few examples:

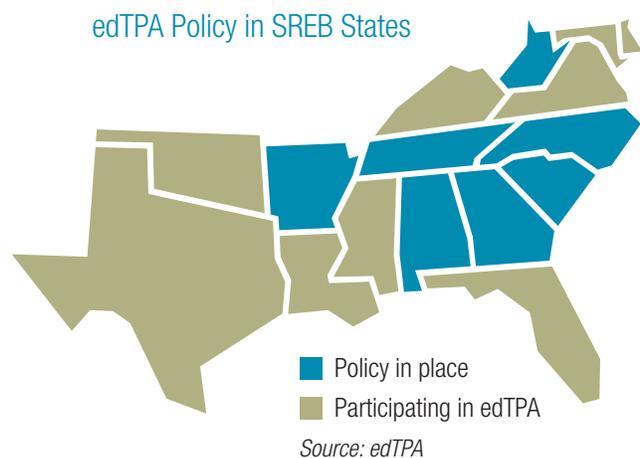
edTPA requires prospective teachers to videotape several lessons in real classrooms and provide extensive written reflection on their instruction.

NOTE, an interactive, online performance assessment, includes a demonstration of high-quality teaching practice in a simulated classroom environment with student avatars.

Massachusetts created its own licensure exams to better align with the professional standards for practicing teachers featured in their statewide teacher evaluation system.

Preliminary evidence is encouraging, and over the next five years much more evidence will be available to improve these exams based on early experience. In the meantime, SREB states have an opportunity to innovate with practice-based assessment while collecting systematic data on outcomes.

Practice-based licensure exams may also pose challenges. Requiring practice-based assessments may negatively affect the diversity of the teacher workforce. In some states that require edTPA licensure exams, evidence has shown a disproportionately negative impact on pass rates for groups historically underrepresented in the teaching workforce. Given the importance of preparing a teaching force that better reflects the diversity of students, states have a unique opportunity, as they put these tests into practice, to examine how they influence the effectiveness as well as the diversity of teachers.



Tiered licensure

The labor market for effective teachers is very tight in some states, especially in certain subjects. As a result, efforts to raise standards to improve teacher quality are often in tension with calls to minimize barriers to entry to increase the pool of teachers.

Systems of tiered licensure allow for rigorous but not overly restrictive requirements for all incoming teachers — regardless of their pathway into teaching — that can be increased over time as teachers renew their licenses. Teachers continue to develop, especially in the early years of their careers. Some states have tiered licensure based on graduate coursework, years of teaching experience, and teacher evaluation and student achievement data. In some states, teachers at higher tiers of certification earn higher salaries or additional responsibilities, such as mentoring or coaching.

Tiered licensure could also help new educators see teaching as a professional career. It signals to teacher candidates that being highly prepared and effective can further their careers.



The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has led efforts to develop a trajectory of the skills teachers should demonstrate across a career. States can build on this work for tiered licensure systems that expect and promote ongoing professional development and improvement.

Policy should not unintentionally encourage prospective teachers to opt for shorter or less costly alternative certification programs, some of which may be subpar in quality. State licensure policies can be strengthened to ensure that all preparation programs, including alternative routes, prepare student teachers with the skills critical for beginning teachers.

[Licensure recommendations, page 15](#)

Clinical Experiences

Prospective teachers need plenty of opportunities to practice key skills, in their education courses as well as in K-12 classrooms. And they need specific, targeted feedback to help them improve. Clinical practice — the chance to do the work of teaching in schools, with support from teacher-educators — is a hallmark of teacher education. The SREB Teacher Preparation Commission concluded that the need to provide teachers with high-quality clinical practice is the clearest implication of the research on teacher preparation. From urban teacher residencies to partnerships between colleges of education and local school districts, the Commission focused on clinical experiences in K-12 schools, under careful guidance of skilled teacher-educators.

Not all clinical experiences are equally effective. The schools where prospective teachers develop their skills are enormously influential, as are the mentor teachers who work with them and curriculum resources available to students in their classrooms.

The answers to these questions are consequential once teachers enter the classroom:

- Are the schools where teachers do their clinical teaching well-organized and supportive?
- Are experienced teachers available to mentor teacher candidates?
- Do the mentor-teachers demonstrate high-quality teaching practices?
- Is there a strong school leader who promotes a systematic approach to classroom instruction design and execution?
- Does the school's vision of instruction align with what teacher candidates learn in their preparation coursework?

Though some educator preparation programs use specific criteria to carefully place candidates in clinical experiences likely to foster their success, states do not have policies that make such experiences the norm. States should use clinical experiences strategically, to cultivate the knowledge and skills prospective teachers will need in the specific kinds of schools in which they anticipate working.

[Clinical teaching requirements in your state, page 20.](#)

Clinical experience: *A practice opportunity in a K-12 school where candidates develop teaching skills by working with students under the supervision of a mentor-teacher. Includes residency models as well as more traditional student teaching.*

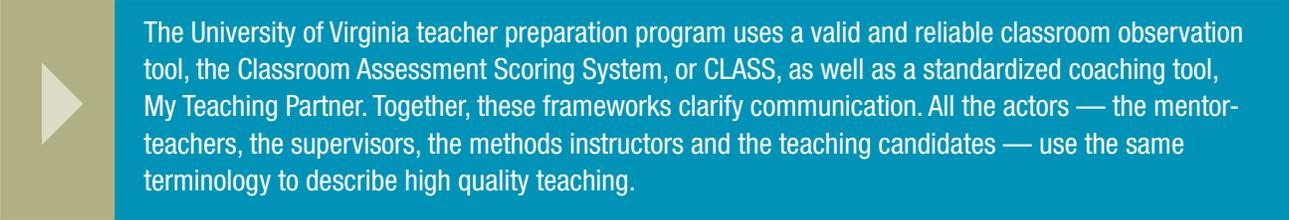
Mentor-teachers: *Experienced practicing teachers who model high-quality teaching and give candidates feedback on their skills.*

Promising Practices for Clinical Experiences

High-quality clinical experiences can be structured in several ways — from semester-long student teaching to year-long intensive residencies. Evidence suggests that attention to the quality of experience, rather than its structure or duration, is most important.

Clear expectations

Teacher preparation programs are focusing on how to clearly articulate their expectations for clinical experiences and how to track growth in teaching skills during clinical training. Programs and their K-12 partners need clarity around the specific teaching skills candidates need to develop and what demonstration of these skills looks like.



The University of Virginia teacher preparation program uses a valid and reliable classroom observation tool, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, or CLASS, as well as a standardized coaching tool, My Teaching Partner. Together, these frameworks clarify communication. All the actors — the mentor-teachers, the supervisors, the methods instructors and the teaching candidates — use the same terminology to describe high quality teaching.

Mentors

Our next generations of teachers need to learn and refine their craft alongside skilled mentors who demonstrate effective teaching. States, districts and schools can improve how they select, train, support and even license mentor-teachers. Mentors might be selected, for example, based on evidence of their own effective teaching, such as National Board Certification or performance on teacher observations and evaluations. Evidence of mentoring skill, years of experience, involvement in school committees and principal recommendations are other criteria schools might consider in selecting strong mentor-teachers.



The Louisiana Department of Education provides statewide mentor training to ensure high-quality support during residencies in K-12 schools.

Massachusetts has developed licensure programs for mentor-teachers, to promote uniformly strong clinical experiences.

Residency programs

Recent innovations in teacher education have revamped the clinical experience to provide prospective teachers opportunities to learn in settings similar to those in which they anticipate taking their first teaching positions. In particular, the teacher residency model has spread rapidly in the last 10 years from three programs in Boston, Chicago and Denver to scores of residencies nationwide. In the SREB region, the Relay Graduate School of Education has programs in **Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Tennessee** and **Texas**.

A residency typically lasts longer than traditional clinical experience and involves a small stipend for the residents. The resident teacher generally makes a commitment to teach in a particular district following the residency. This grow-your-own approach to teacher training holds promise. Novices learn the specifics of the curriculum and student population as well as the approach to teaching in the school districts where they intend to work.



Relay Graduate School of Education residents train for two years, earning two years of full-time work experience and a master's degree. Relay partners with local schools, and teacher-residents receive expert supervision from mentors in their schools.

There is no magic formula. Attention to the quality of the clinical experience is more important than its structure or duration.

Louisiana is pioneering a statewide effort to transform clinical experiences. The state department of education worked with preparation programs to mandate high quality residency experiences — and measure their effects — in all teacher preparation programs in Louisiana. The state provided guidance about best practices for clinical experiences without mandating a particular structure or form.



Through Louisiana's Believe and Prepare program, local school systems partner with preparation providers and collaborate on the design, implementation and evaluation of residency programs. All require intensive, year-long residencies in local schools. All residents are evaluated based on a common set of Louisiana teacher competencies, which articulate the knowledge and skills teachers need to teach all students and impact their learning.

States considering more extended clinical experiences will need to consider the challenges. Requiring longer clinical training of all students in traditional preparation programs could increase preparation time and cost. This could unintentionally drive prospective teachers to alternate certification programs, some of which will be subpar in quality. Funding for stipends to defray student costs during a longer clinical experience, and funding to compensate mentor-teachers, may be a challenge for states considering longer clinical experiences statewide.

There is no magic formula for a high quality clinical experience. Year-long residencies hold promise, but they are costly, and a poorly crafted year-long residency can be less effective than a well-designed one-semester experience. Ultimately, what is important is the quality of the experience.

[Clinical Experiences recommendations, page 16](#)

Data Systems

To inform more effective teacher preparation programs, states need data systems on the preparation and careers of teachers. Well-designed systems inform conversations — among a state’s department of education, teacher preparation programs and school districts — that promote substantial improvement in teacher education. A few states have developed such systems, but data’s potential to improve teacher preparation goes unrealized in most states today.

For example, few programs track where their graduates accept teaching positions, what they teach, how their students perform, or how long they remain in the profession. What data do exist are often specific to the individual program, collected for accreditation or compliance only and not readily accessible. Consequently, they are of little use in comparing programs that operate within the state or in assessing the effectiveness of their characteristics.

Without a robust and accessible data system, state policymakers lack evidence on which to base teacher licensure, program approval and accountability, and researchers are unable to explore best practices. Aspiring teachers and school districts must rely on anecdote rather than evidence in choosing a program or hiring new teachers. And perhaps most important, public performance data can motivate programs to improve.

Promising Practices for Data Systems

Some states are pioneering teacher preparation data systems intended to inform improvement. Though much remains to be learned about how to design and use these systems, these states offer promising models on which others can build. Several features are common among their efforts.

1. Model systems track teachers from graduation to the schools where they teach. This may seem simple, but it has profound effects. These data encourage preparation programs to engage with school districts where most of their graduates teach, forging a more seamless connection between teacher preparation, new teacher mentoring and ongoing professional development.



The University of North Carolina Educator Quality Dashboard tracks data for all traditional and alternative preparation programs offered by the public university system.

2. Innovative data systems focus on outcome measures. Systems should have the capacity to link student outcomes, such as achievement test scores, with the teachers who taught them and the programs from which the teachers graduated. Linking teacher performance and retention to preparation programs is another important component. Well-designed teacher preparation data systems will help us understand how preparation can improve growth on the job and lessen attrition.



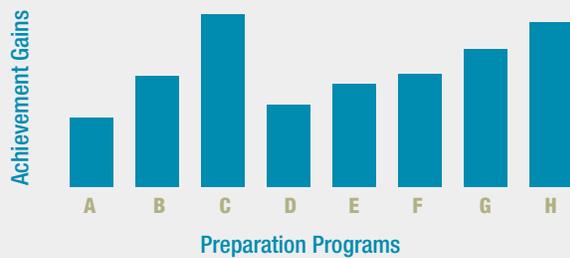
Tennessee and Louisiana publish annual preparation program report cards that include impact on student outcomes.

“Data from the dashboard form the basis for conversations among faculty and partners that improve our programs.”

~ Diana Lys, Assistant Dean, Educator Preparation and Accreditation, University of North Carolina

Data form the basis of productive conversations

Average Student Achievement by Preparation Program



How can programs A or D learn from program C so that their graduates can foster greater gains in the achievement of the students they teach?

Average Teacher Retention by Preparation Program



What can programs G and H learn from programs C and D about how to recruit and train teachers who persist in the classroom?

- Pioneering state data systems bridge data silos. It is not uncommon for different elements of data about a program’s graduates — their first jobs, their persistence in teaching, and the achievement of their students, for example — to come from different databases, controlled by different state or local agencies. Connecting these data at the level of the individual teacher can be challenging, but states like **Delaware, Louisiana, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Rhode Island** and **Tennessee** are doing it. This requires moderate financial investment and political will.
- Robust data systems are accessible and transparent. Voluminous data are useful only when they are organized in intuitive, accessible ways that answer essential questions about improving teacher preparation. For example, knowing the achievement test scores of one teacher’s students is not very helpful by itself since many factors, in and out of school, influence those scores. But knowing how the yearly gains in student achievement differ among programs whose teachers teach comparable students could be very enlightening.

Teacher Preparation Data Elements

Enrollment trends

Districts that employ the most graduates

District partnerships

Employment

- placement rates
- 3- and 5-year retention rates
- attributes of schools and students in schools where graduates teach

Teacher

- demographics
- clinical experiences
- degrees and certification areas
- licensure exam scores
- performance on state and district evaluations

For more on data systems, see the Commission’s 2017 report, *More Than the Numbers: Teacher Preparation Data Systems State Policy and Recommendations*.

[Data Systems recommendations, page 17](#)

Partnerships

Teacher preparation has been criticized for being too focused on theory, with inadequate emphasis on the realities of the classroom and a lack of coordination with local schools. A promising alternative approach is active cooperation between preparation programs and school districts, so that teacher preparation programs tailor their learning experiences to the skills teachers need to be successful in local schools.

Promising Practices for Partnerships

The success of partnership models is founded on effective, intentional collaboration, including data sharing about program graduates. The Commission looked to examples of intentional bridge-building between teacher education programs and their local K-12 schools. The keys to success are the conversations, working relationships and data sharing that result from these partnerships.

For example, the Teacher Preparation Commission heard from school districts partnering with university programs in SREB states through US PREP. A key feature of this model is shared governance meetings. University faculty, principals and school mentors share vital information about the performance of teacher candidates and mentor-teacher support. College of education faculty and K-12 partners consistently examine data together to create solutions that support teacher growth and student learning. Preparation programs develop a clear sense of what it means for their teacher candidates to be classroom-ready for local schools and can adjust their instruction accordingly.



The US PREP model shows that close partnerships are possible when they are grounded in trust and consistent communication. An essential ingredient: site coordinators, faculty member coaches from the university college of education who oversee candidate performance and cultivate close relationships with principals, mentor-teachers and central office officials. The site coordinators create a sense of joint accountability through frequent feedback loops.

Effective collaboration between teacher preparation programs and K-12 schools typically produces better clinical experiences for student teachers. Partners can also work together to collect and share data about what contributes to an effective clinical placement, such as the characteristics of schools or mentor-teachers that are associated with better results. With more information, programs could place candidates in schools most likely to promote their growth, and schools would gain more new teachers ready to enter their schools with the skills they need to be effective.

Members of the Commission acknowledged that such partnerships may be challenging in some situations. When a preparation program provides graduates across many school districts, for example, or when a district partners with many preparation programs, it may be difficult to build strong, rewarding partnerships.

“The partnership with Texas Tech creates teachers who know the culture and dialect of our local families. Texas Tech grads do not want to leave this local community, and now they get to add value to it.”

~ Michael Hinojosa, Superintendent, Dallas Independent School District

Partnerships recommendations, page 18

Recommendations

The SREB Teacher Preparation Commission recommends that states take these steps to improve the preparation of new teachers, address disparities in the effectiveness of early-career teachers and improve learning outcomes for their students.

How each state addresses the recommendations will depend on the structure of its oversight of the teaching profession and which agencies or individuals lead the changes. The policy levers to improve teacher preparation include licensure of teachers and approval and accreditation of preparation programs. But the governance structure — who is responsible for standards, approvals and licenses — is different in each state. A state-level department of education, board of education or higher education agency might be the entity that approves which programs may operate in a state, while a licensure board or certification agency grants licenses to teachers.

If these responsibilities are disconnected within a state, leaders should work toward a system that aligns performance expectations for providers and those who complete their programs — and a coherent system of common standards for new teachers. Preparation programs, state education departments and licensing agencies should work together to design and coordinate accountability. A durable plan to transform educator preparation will connect all the actors to focus on one outcome: a competent teacher in every classroom.

Licensure

Hold all new teachers to the same standard, no matter their route into the profession.

1. Require all teacher candidates to meet the same high criteria for initial licensure, whether their preparation is traditional or alternative, undergraduate, post-baccalaureate or graduate.

Licensure requirements should be the same for all teachers a state licenses, regardless of the route they take into the profession. State licensing agencies and boards should require all teachers to meet well-defined licensure requirements within one year of becoming a teacher in order to earn their initial licenses.

This will reduce the motivation for prospective teachers to choose shorter or less rigorous certification programs. Establishing a phase-in period for this requirement should allow all preparation programs time to adjust so their graduates can meet the common initial standard. Standard licensure requirements statewide could also pave the way for states to work together on reciprocity.

2. Adopt practice-based assessments of teacher readiness.
 - State licensing agencies should require practice-based assessments that directly reflect the work teachers do in classrooms.
 - States should establish a phase-in period to introduce practice-based assessments, allowing preparation programs time to adjust their programs so their graduates are prepared for the exams.

3. Identify a continuum of teacher development and link it to the licensure system.
 - State licensure requirements should align with existing state standards on teacher evaluation and development so that teachers follow a continuum from teacher preparation through the early years of teaching and on to increasingly skilled performance.
 - States should require their teacher licensing agencies or boards to develop a system of tiered professional licensure, particularly for early stages of a teacher's career.
 - States should create aligned systems of licensure exams that delineate what skilled performance looks like across a teacher's career, starting with pre-service preparation.
 - States should explore induction, mentoring and professional development programs for the first three years of a teacher's career and align them with the tiered licensure and exams.

Clinical Experiences

Place all teacher candidates in high-quality clinical experiences.

1. Require programs to place candidates in high-quality clinical experiences.

The length of student-teachers' supervised classroom teaching is less important than the schools and mentors to whom they are assigned.

- Program approval standards should require teacher preparation programs to place teacher candidates with strong, experienced mentor-teachers. Criteria might include, for example, demonstrated evidence of effective teaching (such as National Board Certification, performance on teacher observations and evaluations, or impact on student outcomes); evidence of mentoring skill; years of experience; or involvement in school committees and principal recommendations.
- Clinical experiences should feature clear communication about what quality teaching looks like, such as rubrics that define good teaching practices.

2. Develop and offer support and training for mentor-teachers to effectively guide prospective teachers.

State departments of education, school districts and preparation programs can train mentor-teachers in specific strategies for giving good feedback to candidates.

3. If states fund stipends for full-year residencies, prioritize any available funding for candidates who intend to teach in hard-to-staff schools.

Some states or programs may require year-long clinical experiences and may offer stipends to help teaching candidates choose these full-year residencies. Since states, universities and schools are unlikely to have funding to serve all candidates statewide, they should prioritize available funding for candidates who are preparing to teach in low-performing or hard-to-staff schools.

4. Require programs to report on the quality of clinical experiences.

- Preparation programs should report, each year, evidence about the quality of mentor-teachers for clinical practice experiences, the attrition rates of teachers in schools, and the match between student demographics in clinical schools and first jobs.
- Preparation programs should survey graduating students on components of their clinical experiences and share these reports with state policymakers.

Data Systems

Bring together data from across state and local agencies to inform improvement.

1. Implement a statewide data system that synthesizes data on teacher development from various state and local education agencies.

- Base data on common definitions and formats, preferably shared across states.
- Include, at minimum:
 - Program data on admissions requirements, course requirements, qualifications of graduates (licensure field or certification exam scores, for example) and demographic attributes of graduates
 - Evidence about the quality of clinical experiences
 - Teacher placement data and student socio-demographics at teachers' first positions
 - Data on teaching effectiveness and teacher retention during the first five years

2. Disseminate the data widely, tailored to the needs of specific audiences.

Policymakers, programs and the public will make use of data in different ways. To use data effectively, target reports to different audiences.

- Provide the public with general information: a description of the performance of teacher preparation programs on basic performance measures, the number and characteristics of graduates of teacher preparation programs, their job placements and their retention rates in education over five years.
- Provide preparation programs with data and information that will help them manage and improve teacher preparation.
- Provide state policymakers with information on teacher preparation programs based on the performance of the program's graduates.

3. Empower change and expect improvement.

States should ensure that preparation programs are informing decisions about their content and structure with data that can lead to improvements.

- States should pursue ways to help programs and school districts analyze, discuss and use data to improve teacher preparation. For example, states might form advisory boards with representatives from teacher preparation programs, school districts and the state department of education.
- States should ultimately hold all teacher preparation programs responsible, to state-determined benchmarks, for the performance of their graduates in their jobs as teachers. States should work with preparation programs, state education departments and school districts to design accountability systems that focus on improvement and outcomes and fairly reflect expectations for novice teachers.

Partnerships

Encourage strong partnerships between teacher preparation programs and local school districts.

1. States should provide incentives and support for strong partnerships between teacher preparation programs and local school districts.

States might take steps such as these to encourage partnerships:

- Offer competitive grants to school districts and preparation programs to support partnership activities, especially with high-need school districts with high teacher turnover rates. For example, small grants might fund staff time to facilitate consistent communication or convene shared governance meetings between preparation programs and local districts.
- Host regional convenings to provide time and space for collaboration among preparation programs and school district leaders — and to offer guidance about ways to work together.
- Make available data to support partnership efforts. Assign a state department of education staff member to facilitate conversations and help districts and preparation programs use data to build productive partnerships. For example, as schools assess the effectiveness of early-career teachers, conversations with preparation programs about the causes of weaknesses in teaching could be useful.

Opportunity and Action

States have an unusual opportunity today to improve how teachers are prepared for their profession. Leaders have come to recognize that policies must do more to ensure that new teachers meet a minimum threshold and are on trajectory for continued development throughout their careers. At the same time, promising practices have emerged, at the intersection of research and innovation, showing the way for state policymakers to act. The research is clear: teachers make a real difference in students' lives and learning. The job is harder than ever as teachers prepare increasingly diverse students to higher standards for college and careers. So it's all the more important that teachers have every tool they need to succeed. Just as every student deserves a good teacher, every teacher deserves effective preparation for the classroom.

Just as every student deserves a good teacher, every teacher deserves effective preparation for the classroom.

The SREB Teacher Preparation Commission calls on states to embrace its recommendations and develop the details of how to put them into action at home. The Commission's consensus is that states can improve teacher preparation by more broadly adopting the promising practices in this report: holding all new teachers to initial licensing standards, requiring strong clinical teaching experiences, building data systems to inform improvement, and forging partnerships among educator preparation program and school districts. As preparation programs monitor the results and improve practices with what they learn, they move us toward proven best practices for preparing teachers. SREB stands ready to help states find their own unique ways to implement these strategies.

We put our best foot forward in every school when all new teachers are ready to draw the best from each student entrusted to them. The stakes couldn't be higher, because the education we provide our children and grandchildren will determine the world they leave to their own.

“Use your power as leaders to really raise the quality of beginning teaching in your states by 2020.”

*~ Deborah Lowenberg Ball, Professor of Education, University of Michigan, and
Founding Director, TeachingWorks*

Appendix A: Minimum Requirements for Initial Teacher Licensure

State	Background Check?	Basic Skills Assessments	Subject & Pedagogical Assessments	Clinical Experience
Alabama	Yes	Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators	Praxis II Subject Tests edTPA ¹	Full-time, semester internship
Arkansas	Yes	None	Praxis II Subject Tests Principles of Learning and Teaching OR edTPA	Determined by education preparation provider
Delaware	No	Varies ²	Praxis II Subject Tests edTPA OR Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers (PPAT)	<i>Options include:</i> Student teaching program One year of teaching (≥ 91 days) Enrollment in alternative program Completion of special institute
Florida	Yes	Florida General Knowledge Test	Florida Teacher Certification Subject Exams	<i>Options include:</i> Six-semester credit experience One year of full-time teaching
Georgia	Yes ³	Georgia Assessment for Certification of Educators (GACE) Program Admission Assessment	GACE content area exam edTPA performance assessment or alternative pedagogy assessment	Semester residency or internship required Yearlong residency recommended
Kentucky	No	Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators	Praxis II Subject Tests Principles of Learning and Teaching	One semester of at least 70 full days
Louisiana	No	Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators or ACT	Praxis II Subject Tests Principles of Learning and Teaching	Full-year residency for traditional teacher candidates Job-embedded internship for alternative-route candidates
Maryland	No	Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators, Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers, ACT, SAT or GRE	Praxis II Subject Tests Principles of Learning and Teaching	<i>Options include:</i> Completion of supervised experience One year of full-time teaching One school year of long-term substitute teaching experience
Mississippi	No ⁴	Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators	Praxis II Subject Tests Principles of Learning and Teaching Foundations of Reading ⁵	Minimum of 12 weeks of student teaching
North Carolina	No	None ⁶	Praxis II Subject Tests Pearson (K-6 and Special Ed)	Determined by education preparation provider

State	Background Check?	Basic Skills Assessments	Subject & Pedagogical Assessments	Clinical Experience
Oklahoma	Yes	Oklahoma General Education Test	Oklahoma Subject Area Tests Oklahoma Professional Teaching Exam OR the Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers (PPAT)	Options include: Twelve weeks of full-time student teaching Completion of supervised experience (for alternative routes)
South Carolina	Yes	Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators	Praxis II Subject Tests Approved Pedagogy Assessments: • edTPA • Principles of Learning and Teaching • Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers (PPAT)	Twelve weeks or 60 Days
Tennessee	No	Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators	Praxis II Subject Tests edTPA ⁷ Principles of Learning and Teaching	Three options: Semester of student teaching Internship lasting at least 100 Days One-year, job-embedded experience
Texas	Yes	Pre-Admission Content Test	Texas Examinations of Educator Standards Subject Tests TEXES Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities Test	14 weeks of full-day clinical training OR internship for one full school year
Virginia	No	Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment	Praxis II Subject Tests Praxis Reading for Virginia Educators Assessment ⁸	Supervised classroom experience lasting a minimum of 300 Clock Hours OR One year of full-time teaching experience
West Virginia	Yes	Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators	Praxis II Subject Tests Principles of Learning and Teaching	12-week clinical experience

Source: SREB review of state law and state agency websites

¹ Required for individuals applying for licensure on or after September 1, 2018.

² Licensure applicants must submit qualifying scores for a state board-approved general knowledge exam.

³ Applicants must undergo a criminal background check to qualify for the pre-service certificate.

⁴ Applicants must undergo a criminal background check to apply for the Mississippi pre-service teacher license.

⁵ Required for individuals applying for elementary (K-3 and K-6) and alternate route (4-6) licensure.

⁶ Degree-seeking students produce valid Praxis I Core scores at the point of program admission.

⁷ Beginning January 1, 2019, edTPA will replace Principles of Learning and Teaching in certain licensure areas.

⁸ Required for individuals applying for elementary and some special education certification areas.

Appendix B: State Teacher Licensure Information

State	License Fees	License Types	Approved Alternative Routes to Licensure
Alabama	\$30	Emergency certificate Provisional certificates Professional certificates, organized by degree level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class B (Baccalaureate) • Class A (Master's) • Class AA (Specialist/Doctorate) 	Provisional certificate in teaching field Alternative Class A Program
Arkansas	\$75	Provisional license Standard license ⁹ Lifetime teaching license	Arkansas Professional Pathway to Educator Licensure Master of Arts in teaching programs Provisional professional teaching license Five other approved programs or pathways, including Arkansas Teacher Corps and Teach for America
Delaware	\$100	Emergency certificate Certificates of eligibility (special education) Standard certificate, with tiered licensure levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial License • Continuing License • Advanced License 	Relay Graduate School of Education Teach for America University of Delaware Alternative Routes to Certification Program
Florida	\$75	Temporary, non-renewable licenses Professional license	District certification programs Educator preparation institutes Preparation via college coursework Professional training option
Georgia	\$20 ¹⁰	The state has eight credential types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Service • Induction • Standard Professional • Performance-Based Professional • Advanced Professional • Lead Professional • Life • Retired Educator 	Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy program
Kentucky	\$85	Emergency certificate Provisional certificates Professional certificates, organized by degree level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rank III (Baccalaureate) • Rank I (Master's) • Rank I (Master's + 30) 	Eight alternative pathways, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District training programs • Programs for career-switchers, veterans, and college faculty • Teach for America • University-based programs

State	License Fees	License Types	Approved Alternative Routes to Licensure
Louisiana	\$50	<p>The state issues seven standard certificates and five non-standard teaching authorizations.</p> <p>Individuals enrolled in an alternative pathway have practitioner licenses.</p> <p>Individuals who have completed a preparation program apply for professional level certificates.</p> <p>Teaching candidates completing their yearlong residency work under a Resident Teacher Certificate, which is a non-standard authorization.</p>	<p>Three alternative pathways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification-only program • Master's degree program • Practitioner teacher program
Maryland	\$10	<p>Provisional licensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditional certificate • Resident teacher certificate <p>Professional licensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional eligibility certificate • Standard professional certificate • Advanced professional certificate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District certification programs • Transcript analysis¹¹
Mississippi	None	<p>Pre-service teacher license</p> <p>Alternative route license</p> <p>Five-year educator licenses (type denotes degree level)</p> <p>Class A = Bachelor's</p> <p>Class AA = Master's</p> <p>Class AAA = Specialist</p> <p>Class AAAA = Doctorate</p>	<p>American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence</p> <p>Master of Arts in teaching alternate route</p> <p>Mississippi Alternate Path to Quality Teachers</p> <p>Teach for America</p> <p>Teach Mississippi Institute</p>
North Carolina	\$70 ¹²	<p>Emergency license</p> <p>Provisional licenses, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lateral entry license (for alternative routes)¹³ • Resident license <p>Professional educator license, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial professional license • Continuing professional license 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional alternative licensing center • Teach for America • University-based alternative programs
Oklahoma	\$50	<p>Emergency certificate</p> <p>Standard certificate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence • Alternative placement program • Career development program for paraprofessionals • Teach for America • Three content-specific programs • Troops to Teachers

State	License Fees	License Types	Approved Alternative Routes to Licensure
South Carolina	\$105	Alternative route certificate International and adjunct certificates Initial certificate Professional certificate ¹⁴	American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence Adjunct certification Career and technical education work-based certification District-based certification Program of Alternative Certification for Educators Teach for America Teachers of Tomorrow
Tennessee	None	Practitioner license (for beginning teachers, including those enrolled in alternative certification programs) Professional license	Approved programs are Nashville Teacher Residency and Teach for America-Memphis.
Texas	\$78	Intern certificate Probationary certificate Standard certificate	The State Board for Educator Certification has approved over 200 alternative certification programs. Program entities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter schools & networks • Community colleges • Counties • Districts • Education service centers • Private providers • Universities
Virginia	\$50 ¹⁵	Provisional license Collegiate professional license Postgraduate professional license	Alternative programs hosted by universities Experiential learning route Four career-switcher programs
West Virginia	\$35 ¹⁶	Alternative teaching certificate Temporary certificate Professional licensure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial, three-year teaching certificate • Five-year renewable professional certificate • Permanent professional teaching certificate 	The state board of education allows districts to start alternative program partnerships

Source: SREB review of state law and state agency websites

⁹ Effective July 1, 2019, the Arkansas State Department of Education will issue standard licenses with one of the following designations: Early Career Professional Educator, Career Professional Educator, Lead Professional Educator or Master Professional Educator.

¹⁰ Applicants graduating from state-approved educator preparation programs are exempt from paying the fee.

¹¹ Individuals with a content-area degree qualify for professional certification after completing coursework, assessment, and teaching experience requirements.

¹² \$100 for out-of-state applicants

¹³ The lateral entry pathway will end June 30, 2019.

¹⁴ Educators may advance their certificate classification by completing advanced degree or postsecondary coursework.

¹⁵ \$75 for out-of-state applicants.

¹⁶ \$100 for out-of-state applicants.

Appendix C: Teacher Preparation Enrollment by Program Type

State	Total Enrollment	Percentage Enrolled in Traditional Routes	Percentage Enrolled in Alternative Routes
Alabama	5,189	72%	28%
Arkansas	3,737	62%	38%
Delaware	1,892	93%	7%
Florida	13,815	70%	30%
Georgia	9,898	85%	15%
Kentucky	4,634	80%	20%
Louisiana	4,618	53%	47%
Maryland	5,184	89%	11%
Mississippi	2,795	66%	34%
North Carolina	15,649	54%	46%
Oklahoma	4,829	87%	13%
South Carolina	6,011	83%	17%
Tennessee	6,301	84%	16%
Texas	68,731	29%	71%
Virginia	10,206	96%	4%
West Virginia	3,231	100%	0%
SREB	166,720	57%	43%

Source: 2017 Title II Reports, National Teacher Preparation Data

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The SREB Teacher Preparation Commission

Members of the SREB Teacher Preparation Commission met during 2016, 2017 and 2018 to develop practical and effective statewide recommendations to improve teacher preparation programs. Their focus was state-level policy for university and alternative programs that prepare new classroom teachers.

John Bel Edwards, Governor of Louisiana, *Chair*
Rita A. Allison, State Representative, South Carolina
Wayne D. Andrews, Former President, Morehead State University, Kentucky

Alan Baker, State Representative, Alabama

Melanie Barton, Executive Director, Education Oversight Committee, South Carolina

Hugh Blackwell, State Representative, North Carolina

Peggy Brookins, President and CEO, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Terry Burton, State Senator, Mississippi

Robert Caret, Chancellor, University System of Maryland

Terri Collins, State Representative, Alabama

Tom Dickson, Former State Representative, Georgia

Bill Ferguson, State Senator, Maryland

Erik Fresen, Former State Representative, Florida

Brandon Gosey, Member, Rutherford County School Board, North Carolina

Mary Gunter, Director, Center for Leadership and Learning, and Professor of Educational Leadership, Arkansas Tech University

Joy Hofmeister, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Oklahoma

R. Edward Houck, Former State Senator, Virginia

Teresa Inman, District Instructional Technology Coordinator, Paris School District, Arkansas

Roger Kane, State Representative, Tennessee

Eric Luedtke, State Delegate, Maryland

James Machell, Dean, College of Education and Professional Studies, University of Central Oklahoma

Jennifer McClellan, State Senator, Virginia

Robert W. Rescigno, Assistant Vice President, Academic Affairs, Wilmington University, Delaware

Scott Ridley, Dean, College of Education, Texas Tech University

Benjamin Riley, Founder and Executive Director, Deans for Impact

Johnnie Roebuck, Former State Representative and Educator, Arkansas

Freddie Powell Sims, State Senator, Georgia

Molly Spearman, State Superintendent of Education, South Carolina

Francis Thompson, State Senator, Louisiana

Lindsey Tippins, State Senator, Georgia

Donnie Whitten, Superintendent, Arkadelphia Public Schools, Arkansas

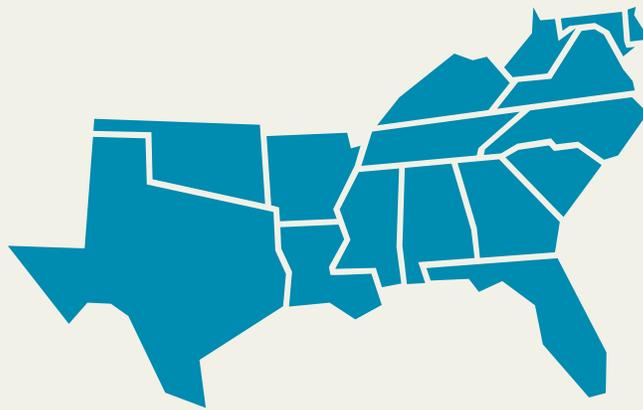
L. Anthony Wise, President, Pellissippi State Community College, Tennessee

Jamie Woodson, Executive Chairman and CEO, Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education



Members of the SREB Teacher Preparation Commission at their final meeting in 2018. From the back, left to right: Lindsey Tippins, Jim Machell, Melanie Barton, Ben Riley, Molly Spearman, Donnie Whitten, Jennifer McClellan, Terri Collins, Freddie Powell Sims, Alan Baker, Anthony Wise, Teresa Inman. Front row: Dave Spence, Johnnie Roebuck, Rob Rescigno, Peggy Brookins, Ed Houck, Mark Emblidge.

The Southern Regional Education Board is an interstate compact created in 1948 by Southern governors and legislators. A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Atlanta, SREB works cooperatively with state leaders and educators to improve education from pre-K through Ph.D. SREB states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.



SREB

Southern Regional Education Board
592 10th St., N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30318-5776
(404) 875-9211

SREB.org

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