

Texas and SREB

SREB

■ SREB and its mission

The Southern Regional Education Board is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with 16 member states to improve public education at every level — from pre-K to postdoctoral study. The nation's first interstate compact for education, SREB was created in 1948 by governors and legislators who recognized the link between education and the economic vitality of the region.

SREB's expertise in policy and research, its nationally recognized school improvement programs and its other services enable the member states to share resources, partner on initiatives and achieve results that would be impossible individually. SREB advises state government and education leaders on key issues; reports progress on important benchmarks; and works directly with colleges, public schools and states to improve instruction, student achievement, teacher quality and school leadership. Through its *High Schools That Work* and *Making Middle Grades Work* programs, SREB trains and assists more than 12,000 educators each year in research-based school improvement strategies.

SREB's current areas of focus include: helping states increase students' readiness for postsecondary education and college-degree completion; and the Middle Grades Commission, led by North Carolina Governor Beverly Perdue.

SREB's work is guided by its *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education, which call for SREB states to lead the nation in educational progress. Meeting these goals means that SREB states must continue to raise the quality of education students receive at all levels, close achievement gaps, vastly improve high school graduation rates, and increase the numbers of adults who complete postsecondary degrees and certificates.

SREB is governed by a Board of five members from each of the 16 states: the governor and four gubernatorial appointees (including at least one state legislator and one educator), who serve four-year, staggered terms. Each state is represented on the Executive Committee, which can act for the Board between meetings. The SREB Legislative Advisory Council includes legislators from each state and is the largest standing committee advising the Board.

■ Texas Board and Legislative Advisory Council members

Board terms for appointed members expire June 30 of the specified year. Board members are: Governor Rick Perry; Representative Rob Eissler (2012); Representative Geanie W. Morrison (2011); Robert P. Scott, commissioner of education (2014); and Senator Florence Shapiro (2013). As

legislative members of the Board, Senator Shapiro and Representatives Eissler and Morrison serve on the Legislative Advisory Council. Representative Dan Branch and Senator Royce West also serve on the Council as governor-appointed members.

2011

Southern
Regional
Education
Board

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■ Where does financial support come from?

Basic operating support comes from annual appropriations from each member state, but the bulk of the operating budget of more than \$43 million includes funds from foundations and federal sources. In addition, SREB administers the Regional Contract

Program for students in medicine, dentistry, optometry, veterinary medicine, osteopathic medicine and other fields. The operating budget for the Regional Contract Program is approximately \$12 million.

■ Preparing for college and careers

Building a well-educated and well-trained work force is a top state priority. National research suggests that most states need to increase dramatically the number of degrees and postsecondary certificates required to meet economic development and work force needs — some estimates place this gap at nearly eight million nationally. SREB's special projects on college readiness and college completion help states address these concerns.

SREB's college- and career-readiness agenda outlines specific steps to establish or expand a statewide readiness initiative. With a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in 2008, SREB's **State College and Career Readiness Initiative** has supported efforts in six states — Florida, Kentucky, Maryland, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia — to ensure that all students leave high school prepared for college courses and the workplace. A critical first step was to adopt a single set of statewide college- and career-readiness standards in reading and math. SREB helped each state examine its standards and senior-year curricula and worked with each to ensure that end-of-course exams measure whether students meet the standards. Most states are now looking at curricular changes so that students unprepared for college-level work have access to senior-year transitional courses in math and English/language arts and can master these skills before leaving high school. The states also are tackling the difficult task of helping teachers know the standards and incorporate them into the classroom.

Reports and other products of this initiative are available on SREB's College and Career Readiness Web pages:

- Individual progress reports for the six states
- *Statewide Transitional Courses for College Readiness*

- “Teacher Development to Increase College and Career Readiness” — a set of state guidelines and promising practices

- Video clips of state leaders' comments on their college-readiness work

The Gates Foundation awarded SREB a new planning grant to explore ways to continue this work.

SREB's **College Completion Initiative** centers on success in degree and certificate completion.

Nationally, less than 60 percent of degree-seeking, full-time freshmen in public four-year institutions graduate in six years with a bachelor's degree. To highlight this problem and identify solutions, SREB released *Promoting a Culture of Student Success: How Colleges and Universities Are Improving Degree Completion* (2010), to show how public higher education institutions can help more students earn bachelor's degrees. SREB also released *No Time to Waste: Policy Recommendations for Increasing College Completion* (2010), which challenges states to work toward a bold goal: To increase significantly the numbers of students who complete postsecondary career certificates and associate's and bachelor's degrees. The report calls on states to set a statewide priority and direction to:

- increase students' access to higher education.
- increase the rates at which students complete postsecondary education at all levels.
- make the path to degrees and certificates more cost-efficient, both for the student and the state.

Ten broad recommendations provide a framework to make college completion a top priority. These projects are geared toward stronger academic preparation and higher college-completion rates, which are critical to SREB states' future prosperity.

Several states also participated in a regional conference SREB co-sponsored (with Jobs for the Future) to examine college-completion issues.

■ Charting states' educational progress

SREB's central focus is helping member states meet the *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education. The set of 12 goals, adopted in 2002, begins with an ambitious statement: "SREB states can lead the nation in educational progress." To do this, students at every level must be ready to learn: in first grade, the middle grades, high school, college and the workplace. Schools and colleges must close gaps in academic achievement among groups of students. And every state must ensure that its educational agencies and institutions work together as a single system so that students can transition smoothly from one level to the next.

SREB completed the first series of 12 reports on the *Challenge to Lead* goals — one per goal — by 2006. Since then, SREB has issued many other goals and focus reports on topics related to the goals.

SREB also has issued four sets of customized, biennial state progress reports that highlight the progress of individual SREB states in meeting the goals, point out significant improvements by most SREB states in many areas, and make recommendations on next steps to pursue. Under the theme *Moving Ahead*, the latest set of state progress reports was issued in June 2010. Other recent reports include:

- *A Smart Move in Tough Times: How SREB States Can Strengthen Adult Learning and the Work Force*
- *Measuring Success by Degrees: The Status of College Completion in SREB States*
- *Strengthening Attend 'n' Drive Laws to Reduce Truancy and Dropouts*

Look for upcoming reports on effective data use, dual enrollment, teacher effectiveness and other topics. All reports are available at www.sreb.org.

■ Encouraging more students to stay in school

SREB's *Go Alliance* is a partnership of SREB states that share marketing strategies to encourage more students — particularly minority students and those from low-income families — to complete high school and go to college.

Representatives from SREB states meet each fall, and the *Go Alliance* hosts a workshop series that provides professional development in college access marketing strategies. The series has focused on general campaign planning, evaluation strategies, engaging community-based organizations, and using "new media" (media other than radio and TV) to reach students. *Go Alliance* owns and manages the national College Access Marketing website, and www.goallianceonline.org is hosted within this site.

These sites help states save dollars and time by producing, replicating and sharing marketing ideas that urge students to pursue further education.

Go Alliance has provided technical assistance to SREB states in implementing their federal, noncompetitive College Access Challenge Grants (CACG). Six states, with *Go Alliance*, used CACG funds to build three professional development training modules for middle grades and high school counselors to promote high school completion and college access among students. (A fourth is under development.) The online, trainer-facilitated modules are fully implemented in those states, have been enthusiastically received and currently are being evaluated.

■ Improving schools

SREB's *High Schools That Work (HSTW)* program works in partnership with states, districts and schools to provide professional development, technical assistance, coaching, assessments, surveys and materials that support comprehensive high school reform. These services are aimed at ensuring more students complete a college-ready academic core

combined with a high-quality career/technical (CT) or academic concentration, so more students are prepared for college, advanced training and careers. Active in 1,200 schools in 30 network states and the District of Columbia, *HSTW* is America's largest high school improvement effort. Texas has 54 schools in the network.

Texas state, district and school leaders and teachers participated in a variety of SREB's professional development opportunities in 2010-2011, including Technical Assistance Visits (TAVs), national workshops, more than 100 site-based workshops, the 2010 *HSTW* Staff Development Conference and the 2010 State Leaders' Forum. SREB partnered with the Texas Education Agency to provide six statewide workshops for teachers and school leaders to address priority needs and administered on-site coaching to high schools through the Texas Enhanced *HSTW* Network. A recent SREB publication highlights the successes and improvement efforts taking place in the Enhanced Network schools. Texas high school graduates who participated in the 2010 *HSTW* Assessment are completing the Follow-Up Survey of Graduates about how prepared they were for their next step after high school.

Through its *Making Middle Grades Work* (*MMGW*) program, SREB works with states, districts and schools to ensure more students leave the middle grades prepared for rigorous high school studies and, ultimately, for postsecondary studies, careers and responsible citizenship. SREB supports more than 450 *MMGW* schools in 23 states with professional development, technical assistance, coaching, assessments and surveys. In Texas, 24 schools participate in the *MMGW* network through TAVs, national workshops, site-based professional development and webinars. In 2010-2011, the Texas Education Agency partnered with SREB to support 15 middle grades schools in developing a college- and career-readiness culture in the schools.

SREB's *Technology Centers That Work* (*TCTW*) initiative assists shared-time technical centers in raising academic and technical achievement and improving collaboration with sending high schools to prepare students for both careers and further studies. Since the initiative began in 2007, the network has grown to nearly 160 sites in 17 states. Texas currently does not participate in the *TCTW* network.

In 2009, SREB and 11 states formed the *Preparation for Tomorrow* (*PFT*) consortium. Through *PFT*, each participating state is designing a sequence of four CT courses in a high-wage, high-skill career field that is important to the state's economy. These courses, built around authentic project units, will teach related Common Core academic standards through real-world projects. Each course will include end-of-project and end-of-course assessments that measure both academic and technical achievement. SREB and consortium states will provide training to enable CT teachers, math and science teachers, principals and counselors to implement and teach the courses effectively. Collaborating states will share the curricula and accompanying assessment and training materials. Texas currently does not participate in the *PFT* initiative.

SREB's Learning-Centered Leadership Program (LCLP) works with states to redesign school leadership preparation systems and certification policies and conducts research on school leadership topics to inform practices and policies. The LCLP also assists states, districts and schools to design succession plans for principals and to improve training for principals so that they are able and ready to improve schools. To support current and aspiring school leaders and leadership teams, the program develops and provides both face-to-face and online training on strategies for effective instructional leadership.

Texas state education leaders worked closely with SREB and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to recruit exceptional Texas principals to participate in a two-year field test of the National Board Certification of Accomplished Principals assessment. Texas leaders also participated in SREB's 2011 Leadership Forum, which focused on realizing the vision of school leaders who can raise student achievement. SREB now is preparing to provide region-wide professional development on assessing academic rigor in school and classroom practices for the Region One Education Service Center.

■ The most current comparative information for state leaders on colleges

For 42 years the annual **SREB-State Data Exchange** has provided Texas officials in government and higher education with timely, comparative information on postsecondary education enrollments, state and local appropriations, faculty salaries and benefits, degrees awarded, student persistence and progression toward graduation, tuition and fees, and higher education revenues. Most recently, comparisons on e-learning, college credits taken by high school students, and time- and credits-to-degree have been added. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board furnishes campus-by-campus information to the Data Exchange. States use Data Exchange information in planning and coordinating activities, in making budget decisions about higher education and in setting tuition and fees. The Data Exchange also enables states to work together to

develop new interstate comparisons to measure progress.

The biennial *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education* (to be released in summer 2011) has been a standard reference for policy-makers since 1956. The *Fact Book* provides information on national, regional and 50-state trends in population, schools, the economy, enrollments, degrees awarded, student finance, college budgeting, and salaries and benefits for faculty and administrators. State leaders and planners who access the *Fact Book* online can see trends graphically highlighted and retrieve the latest updates.

Fact Book Bulletins update and emphasize key items, and SREB also publishes customized state *Featured Facts* reports. The “Education Data” section at www.sreb.org gives states access to SREB’s extensive databases and comparative reports.

■ SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program: Creating a Pipeline of Qualified Professors in Texas

For 18 years, SREB states have supported the nationally recognized **SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program**. The program demonstrates what states and institutions can accomplish when they share resources and work together toward a common goal: to increase the number of minority faculty members on college and university campuses. The program has produced more than 560 Ph.D. graduates and currently supports more than 300 Ph.D. candidates.

The program is one of the most successful of its kind in the country. It has a retention/graduation rate of almost 90 percent — about double the national average. By mentoring and other support, the program also decreases the time it takes to earn a Ph.D. More than 80 percent of program graduates work in an academic setting, more than 70 percent are employed in SREB states, and 52 have achieved tenure.

■ Using technology to improve teaching and increase learning

The **SREB Educational Technology Cooperative** brings together state-level technology leaders representing more than 3,400 school districts and nearly 800 two- and four-year postsecondary institutions across the 16 SREB states. The Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board are members.

Now in its 16th year as a nationally recognized leader in educational technology, the Cooperative communicates research and trends, collaborates across

states, and catalyzes projects and educational technology policy leadership. It has published more than 60 updates for state policy- and decision-makers. The Cooperative addresses ongoing and emerging technology issues through conferences and other events for its member network; provides innovative websites with the information that state leaders, educators and online teachers need; and assists with state planning, helping members identify opportunities and obstacles.

The **SREB-State Virtual Schools** initiative helps states work together to share information on policy and finance issues and ensure quality online teaching and courses. State progress is updated in the annual *SREB Report on State Virtual Schools*, and the Cooperative also published the nation's first *Standards for Quality Online Teaching* — which have been adapted nationally and internationally — plus *Standards for Quality Online Courses* and *Guidelines for Professional Development for Online Teachers*.

The Cooperative is especially active in quality professional development for online teachers — helping improve teaching and student learning through the use of the Web, guidelines and materials. In 2009, the Cooperative established the **SREB/iNACOL National Online Teacher of the Year** program for K-12 online teachers. In partnership with the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL), the program recognized its second awardee, Kristin Kipp of Colorado, in March 2011. The Cooperative also co-sponsored the Online Learning Institute with the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) and the Educational Development Center at the ISTE conference in June 2011.

The 2011 Annual Symposium on Teaching and Learning focused on what it takes to conceive and achieve high-quality virtual learning experiences. With funding from the National Science Foundation, the Cooperative is developing **SREB/NSDL Backpack** — a student portal to the National Science Digital Library (NSDL). By providing direct access to more than \$100 million worth of digital STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) content, the Backpack will increase the ability of students to succeed in classroom and science competition settings. **Gaining Online Accessibility Learning Through Self-Study (GOALS)**, funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), enables students with disabilities to use Internet-based resources.

The *Electronic Campus*, one of the nation's leading distance learning initiatives, enables students to pursue college studies on the Internet and across state lines. It provides online access to more than 30,000 courses and 1,000 degree programs from colleges and universities throughout the SREB region and now offers a wider range of services, especially for adults and e-learners. Users easily reach specialized services

such as online applications, financial aid, career planning, and searches for courses and programs. It also provides opportunities to help persons of any age who need a college course, degree program or additional education/training to get or keep a job. Visit the *Electronic Campus* at www.ElectronicCampus.org.

The **SREB-State Teacher Center**, part of the *Electronic Campus*, provides one-stop access to courses, programs, services and information for the nearly 2.5 million educators in SREB states. It offers direct links to state departments of education and certification/licensure agencies, alternative paths to teaching in each state, and professional development opportunities, among other services. Visit the SREB-State Teacher Center at www.TheTeacherCenter.org.

The **Academic Common Market/Electronic Campus (ACM/EC)** program combines the best of two SREB programs and enables students in SREB states to enroll in selected online degree programs offered by institutions outside of their home states — but at in-state tuition rates. More than 81 degree programs are available, and nearly 121 students were certified by their home states for study during the past year. The program provides working adults with the flexibility and affordability they need to earn a degree. Visit the ACM/EC at <http://home.sreb.org/acm/ecinitiatives/acmintroduction.asp>.

With support from Lumina Foundation for Education, SREB will launch **TheAdultLearner.org** site in 2011. This regional (and later, national) portal will build on efforts under way in several SREB states to reach the more than 20 million working adults ages 25 to 55 in the region who have some college credit but never completed a degree. The portal will help them access specialized degree-completion programs and services designed to meet their needs.

The **Distance Learning Policy Laboratory** remains an important forum for member states to review and develop policies for expanding distance learning. SREB's aim is to increase access to high-quality, affordable postsecondary education by identifying barriers to distance learning; to support the development of innovative programs to test distance learning models and interstate partnerships; and to encourage colleges, universities and legislatures to make necessary policy changes. A current focus is helping states respond to changes in federal regulations that require institutions with online programs to have

approval in states where they enroll students. SREB is working closely with states to monitor changes and to promote reciprocal agreements, which have been in place since the creation of the *Electronic Campus*.

SREB's "free trade zone" will be a model for other regions as these new regulations are enacted. Visit the Distance Learning Policy Laboratory at www.sreb.org.

■ States and students save money as SREB helps Texas residents earn specialized college degrees

What happens to residents of a state who want to earn undergraduate, graduate or professional degrees — such as broadcast meteorology, nursing practice or osteopathic medicine — but must leave the state to study these programs? Can they afford out-of-state tuition to pursue the programs they have dreamed about that are not offered in their home state? Two longstanding SREB programs can help.

The **Regional Contract Program** makes it possible other SREB states to contract with the University of Houston College of Optometry and Texas A&M's Baylor College of Dentistry for their students to pursue certain professional degrees at those institutions. For providing these contract services, Texas institutions currently receive more than

\$200,000 from other SREB states. SREB is the fiscal agent for the Regional Contract Program and handles administrative duties for the states.

The **Academic Common Market (ACM)** enables Texas residents to pursue graduate degrees in programs of study available in other SREB states, but not in their home state, at in-state tuition rates. Both the states and students save significantly: States save the cost of creating specialized programs, and students save by paying in-state tuition for ACM programs. Through the ACM, Texas residents have access to 104 programs, including 10 online programs, in other SREB states. Texas institutions offer 194 programs to residents of other SREB states.

■ Preparing the nurses and nurse educators that SREB states need

Fourteen of Texas' college-based nursing programs are members of the **SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing**. The Council — unique in America — enables nurse educators to address trends in nursing education and health care.

The theme for the annual meeting in November 2011 is "Digital Wisdom in Nursing Education." Nine institutions in the SREB Nurse Educator Consortium offer teacher preparation courses for graduate students and novice faculty.

■ Legislators play major roles

Legislative involvement in SREB is extensive:

- Legislators serve as members and officers of the Board.
- Legislators are members of the Board's Executive Committee.

- Legislators are members of the Board's Finance Committee, which is chaired by the treasurer, who is a legislator.
- Legislators also serve on other SREB program committees, panels and task groups.

Legislative Advisory Council, 2011

The SREB Legislative Advisory Council is the largest standing advisory body to the Board. The Council advises the Board on legislative matters, serves as a permanent steering committee for the annual Legislative Work Conference and sponsors special seminars on timely topics.

Senator Jack Westwood, Kentucky, *Chair*
Representative Jeannie McDaniel, Oklahoma, *Vice Chair*

JD Alexander, <i>State Senator</i> , Lake Wales, Florida	Thomas A. Greason, <i>State Delegate</i> , Potomac Falls, Virginia	Frederick M. Quayle, <i>State Senator</i> , Suffolk, Virginia
Austin J. Badon Jr., <i>State Representative</i> , New Orleans, Louisiana	Jack Hill, <i>State Senator</i> , Reidsville, Georgia	Jody Richards, <i>State Representative</i> , Bowling Green, Kentucky
Larry M. Bell, <i>State Representative</i> , Clinton, North Carolina	Sheila Ellis Hixson, <i>State Delegate</i> , Silver Spring, Maryland	Johnnie J. Roebuck, <i>State Representative</i> , Arkadelphia, Arkansas
Dan H. Branch, <i>State Representative</i> , Dallas, Texas	R. Edward Houck, <i>State Senator</i> , Spotsylvania, Virginia	Carl Rollins II, <i>State Representative</i> , Midway, Kentucky
Cecil C. Brown, <i>State Representative</i> , Jackson, Mississippi	Jimmy Jeffress, <i>State Senator</i> , Crossett, Arkansas	Teresa L. Schooley, <i>State Representative</i> , Newark, Delaware
Charlotte Burks, <i>State Senator</i> , Monterey, Tennessee	Linda P. Johnson, <i>State Representative</i> , Kannapolis, North Carolina	Nikki G. Setzler, <i>State Senator</i> , West Columbia, South Carolina
Thomas W. Campbell, <i>State Delegate</i> , Lewisburg, West Virginia	Jan Jones, <i>Speaker Pro Tempore of the House</i> , Alpharetta, Georgia	Florence Shapiro, <i>State Senator</i> , Plano, Texas
Videt Carmichael, <i>State Senator</i> , Meridian, Mississippi	Edward J. Kasemeyer, <i>State Senator</i> , Arbutus, Maryland	Timothy T. Shaughnessy, <i>State Senator</i> , Louisville, Kentucky
John "Bam" Carney, <i>State Representative</i> , Campbellsville, Kentucky	Richard C. Lerblance, <i>State Senator</i> , Hartshorne, Oklahoma	Jabar Shumate, <i>State Representative</i> , Tulsa, Oklahoma
Jared Carpenter, <i>State Senator</i> , Berea, Kentucky	Gerald Long, <i>State Senator</i> , Winnfield, Louisiana	F. Gary Simpson, <i>State Senator</i> , Milford, Delaware
Eddie L. Cheatham, <i>State Representative</i> , Crossett, Arkansas	Evelyn J. Lynn, <i>State Senator</i> , Ormond Beach, Florida	David P. Sokola, <i>State Senator</i> , Newark, Delaware
Mark L. Cole, <i>State Delegate</i> , Fredericksburg, Virginia	Eric Mansfield, <i>State Senator</i> , Fayetteville, North Carolina	Robert Tata, <i>State Senator</i> , Virginia Beach, Virginia
Norman H. Conway, <i>State Delegate</i> , Salisbury, Maryland	John W. Matthews Jr., <i>State Senator</i> , Bowman, South Carolina	Reginald Tate, <i>State Senator</i> , Memphis, Tennessee
Tricia Ann Cotham, <i>State Representative</i> , Matthews, North Carolina	Jeannie McDaniel, <i>State Representative</i> , Tulsa, Oklahoma	Francis C. Thompson, <i>State Senator</i> , Delhi, Louisiana
Lois M. DeBerry, <i>State Representative</i> , Memphis, Tennessee	Geanie W. Morrison, <i>State Representative</i> , Victoria, Texas	Jerry W. Tillman, <i>State Senator</i> , Archdale, North Carolina
Nancy C. Detert, <i>State Senator</i> , Venice, Florida	Martin L. Nesbitt Jr., <i>State Senator</i> , Asheville, North Carolina	Johnny Ray Turner, <i>State Senator</i> , Prestonsburg, Kentucky
Tom Dickson, <i>State Representative</i> , Cohutta, Georgia	Ben W. Nevers, <i>State Senator</i> , Bogalusa, Louisiana	Royce West, <i>State Senator</i> , Dallas, Texas
Rob Eissler, <i>State Representative</i> , The Woodlands, Texas	Susan Paddack, <i>State Senator</i> , Ada, Oklahoma	Jack Westwood, <i>State Senator</i> , Erlanger, Kentucky
Joyce Elliott, <i>State Senator</i> , Little Rock, Arkansas	Paul G. Pinsky, <i>State Senator</i> , University Park, Maryland	Kenneth W. Winters, <i>State Senator</i> , Murray, Kentucky
Vivian Davis Figures, <i>State Senator</i> , Mobile, Alabama	Robert H. Plymale, <i>State Senator</i> , Huntington, West Virginia	
Herbert D. Frierson, <i>State Representative</i> , Poplarville, Mississippi	Roman W. Prezioso Jr., <i>State Senator</i> , Fairmont, West Virginia	

The Southern Regional Education Board states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.