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West Virginia Shows Gains in Education Outcomes, Policy

High School Graduation Rate Exceeded Nation

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

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

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

Notable outcomes for West Virginia students

- The state is one of seven states in the nation to serve more than half of its 4-year-olds in state-funded pre-K.
- The state-funded pre-K program met all 10 of the National Institute for Early Education Research standards of quality — one of six programs in the nation to do so.
- Fourth-graders *outpaced* the region and nation in gains in math achievement on NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) at the Proficient level. They also *outpaced* the region in reading gains.
- Eighth-graders outpaced the nation in gains in reading achievement on NAEP at the Proficient level.
- West Virginia's high school graduation rate exceeded the nation.
- The percentage of students with disabilities who graduated with standard diplomas exceeded that of the peer group nationwide.

Strong policy in West Virginia

- The state is one of 10 in the nation — all in the SREB region — that require school districts to offer full-day kindergarten programs.
- The state was one of four states nationally recognized for increasing its transparency on state education data privacy policies.
- The state requires readiness courses for high school students who do not meet its college- and

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

[West Virginia: Gauging Progress, Accelerating Pace](#) details:

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

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

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The Southern Regional Education Board works with 16 member states to improve public education: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. Based in Atlanta, SREB was created in 1948 by Southern governors and legislatures to help leaders in education and government advance education and improve the social and economic life of the region.

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