

SREB

65 Years

HELPING STATES IMPROVE EDUCATION

Southern
Regional
Education
Board

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This is the story of a national pioneer. Founded in 1948 as America's first interstate compact for education, the Southern Regional Education Board was created as a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization by Southern governors and legislators who recognized that — working together — states could improve public education and increase the social and economic vitality of the region.

SREB has expanded its innovative services over the decades to help make that happen. Today, SREB partners with its 16 member states to improve public education **at every level**, from pre-K through Ph.D., by conducting research, developing policy recommendations and providing school improvement programs that raise student achievement across the region — and beyond. Several key SREB efforts have influenced national reform, and SREB states now **lead the nation** in many measures of educational progress.

The SREB Board includes the governors and their appointees (legislators, educators and other leaders) from the member states — Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. Financial support comes from the states, with supplementary funding from private foundations, grants and contracts.

SREB Milestones

1940s and 1950s

Originally focused on higher education alone, SREB developed a way to enable member states to share specialized graduate-level and professional education programs to **combat shortages** of trained professionals in those areas in the region.

TODAY: More than 25,000 doctors, dentists, optometrists, veterinarians and other health professionals have received their professional education through SREB's Regional Contract Program since it began in 1949. More than 700 students participate each year.

SREB initiated a major research program to study the region's higher education needs and how to meet them.

TODAY: SREB is a leading **information resource**, with decades of national, regional and state data on finance, participation, student progress and completion, affordability, faculty salaries, and key demographic and economic factors affecting higher education. In 2007, SREB published the 50th anniversary edition of the *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education*, which is published every two years and updated continually online.

At the request of the Southern Governors' Conference, SREB established a program to expand training and research in mental health professions.

TODAY: The SREB program has refocused on **nursing education**. For decades, the SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing has led activities that strengthen nursing education in the region's colleges and universities. It works to reduce the critical shortage of registered nurses and the nurse educators to teach them.

1960s

Creating a special Goals Commission of distinguished citizens, SREB **advanced long-term goals** for higher education in the region, stressing that colleges and universities in SREB states must measure themselves against nationwide standards of excellence.

TODAY: Through continual goal-setting with state leaders, SREB has helped the region move beyond its early emphasis on accommodating vast numbers of new students. SREB works with states not only to increase access to education — but to create policies and implement programs that increase student achievement and improve education quality in the region at every level, in the classroom and on the Web.

Expanding its consultation and reports to state leaders, SREB became an advocate for effective statewide **planning and coordination** among higher education agencies.

TODAY: SREB provides information and assistance to states in establishing, restructuring or strengthening state higher education coordination and governance and linking it to workforce development whenever possible.

In 1969-1970, SREB founded the SREB-State Data Exchange to share key **higher education data** among member states.

TODAY: The Data Exchange is widely used by state leaders and is one of the nation's oldest, most comprehensive sources of comparative data on public higher education. It collects, compiles and publishes the most up-to-date statistics on postsecondary education in the 16 SREB states each year — including unique comparisons on the extent of e-learning and college credits taken by high school students, as well as time- and credits-to-degree. It is the backbone of the *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education*.

SREB launched a comprehensive program to expand and improve postsecondary educational opportunities for black students in historically black and other institutions.

TODAY: SREB works with states to improve the academic success of students in **all minority groups** at every education level. In addition to creating an SREB program specifically to encourage and support minority doctoral scholars, SREB monitors and reports regularly on states' progress in closing achievement gaps among all groups of students and makes specific recommendations to state leaders based on national, regional and state-level research.

1970s

SREB initiated the SREB-Kenan Trust program, funded by the William R. Kenan Jr. Charitable Trust, to help **historically black colleges** strengthen their instructional programs. Through this work, many students gained the skills to succeed in professional fields and graduate study.

SREB established the Academic Common Market to expand interstate and inter-institutional sharing of specialized academic degree programs such as meteorology and medical illustration, reducing tuition costs for students and **saving each state** the cost of creating all of these programs.

TODAY: The Academic Common Market continues to enable students to enroll in specialized graduate and undergraduate programs in out-of-state institutions while paying in-state tuition rates. More than 2,500 students are certified to participate each year, at more than 140 colleges and universities.

SREB released *Priorities for Postsecondary Education in the South*, outlining how states and institutions could sustain higher education as enrollment stabilized and resources became more scarce.

TODAY: SREB's State Services office provides lawmakers and others with critical information and reports on state budgets, legislative actions and issues at every level of education. Created in the 1970s, the office holds the annual SREB Legislative Work Conference for the region's legislative leaders and fields numerous requests from state officials each year for information on pre-K-12 and higher education issues.

1980s

SREB **added K-12 education** to its scope of work — becoming the nation's only educational compact to address both pre-K-12 and higher education issues. With this wider focus, SREB's work and the leadership of key governors, legislators and others in the region moved member states to the cutting edge of national education reform and improvement. Priorities included setting statewide academic standards and tests, and later, holding schools accountable for improvement.

In 1981, SREB advanced **the nation's first proposals for education reform** through statewide academic standards and closer ties between schools and colleges.

SREB and the National Assessment of Educational Progress developed **the nation's first program to test student achievement** so that results could be compared nationally, regionally and state-to-state.

This three-year pilot program became the model for the nationwide student assessment program known today as NAEP, the Nation's Report Card.

In 1987, SREB created the *High Schools That Work* school improvement program, stemming from a 1985 report of the Board. *HSTW* began as a partnership with 28 school sites in 13 states to improve career/technical education.

TODAY: *HSTW* and its related initiatives in the middle grades and career/technical education form **the nation's largest and most recognized school improvement network**. *HSTW* now encompasses school principal training, urban education, small learning communities and other efforts. Extensive SREB reports focus on K-12 issues and share the best school and classroom practices to prepare students for college and careers.

In 1988, the SREB Commission for Educational Quality adopted the 12 Goals for Education: Challenge 2000, which became **the basis for the national education goals** adopted by the nation's governors. SREB's recommendations urged states to improve teaching, undergraduate education and secondary vocational education programs. SREB's goals work with the states has continued strong, including creating a new set of goals in 2002 for every education level.

TODAY: SREB has updated the goals through 2020 to reflect state progress, higher expectations and changing conditions in the states.

SREB brought colleges and high schools together to develop model programs that encourage and **prepare disadvantaged minority students** to go to college.

TODAY: The SREB Go *Alliance* is an interstate cooperative that works to boost enrollment and completion rates of students who would be the first in their families to enroll in post-secondary education. It focuses on improving college access policy, helping students prepare for and apply to college, and developing communications strategies that inform and motivate them to attend.

The SREB-State Vocational Education Consortium became **the nation's first multi-state effort** to raise the competencies of high school vocational students through model programs that use applied, or hands-on, instruction.

TODAY: Efforts focus on strong career/technical programs that embed rigorous academic standards into projects and classroom study to build students' college and career readiness.

1990s

SREB reported each year in depth on **state progress** in meeting the educational goals that members set in the previous decade. SREB also began to urge states to create or expand state-funded prekindergarten programs to boost school readiness — an area in which the region leads the nation today.

SREB initiated one of the nation's **first 24/7 online comparative data archives** for state leaders, their staffs, education officials and their staffs, and the media. It was the first ever developed by a regional education compact.

In 1993, SREB created the SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program to increase the number of minority faculty members at colleges and universities. Its mission is to encourage more **minority doctoral scholars** to complete their studies and join the professoriate.

TODAY: The program has helped more than 650 minority scholars earn their Ph.D.s. Participants have a graduation rate of nearly 90 percent — nearly double the national average for minority graduate students. Eighty percent of program graduates are employed in education — 92 percent of them on campuses as faculty, administrators or postdoctoral researchers.

SREB took the lead in recognizing the impact of computers and other **technology** on education.

TODAY: The SREB Educational Technology Cooperative of state higher education and K-12 coordinating and governing boards represents more than 800 colleges and universities and 3,100 school districts in SREB's 16 member states. It guides SREB states in increasing technology resources for students and teachers and developing high-quality online classes. SREB is a national leader in supporting state work in the use of digital content, expanding professional development for educators, and establishing quality standards for online teaching and courses. The SREB region led the nation in the creation of state virtual (or online) schools.

Begun in 1998, the SREB *Electronic Campus* became one of the nation's leading distance learning programs, greatly **increasing student access** to education anytime, anywhere.

TODAY: The *Electronic Campus* partners with colleges and universities to give students access to more than 30,000 online courses and 1,800 online degrees in all 16 SREB states. All member states have the opportunity to opt into the SREB Electronic Campus Regional Reciprocity Agreement (SECRRA).

With a grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, SREB launched *Making Middle Grades Work* — **the nation's first large-scale effort** to engage state, district and school leaders in partnerships with teachers, students, parents and the community to raise student achievement in the critical middle grades.

TODAY: *MMGW* provides research, assessments and other services to more than 500 middle grades schools in 23 states — including 11 SREB states — to better prepare students to succeed in high school.

2000s

Recognizing that public schools need strong leaders, SREB created a program in 2000 to prepare **school principals** to lead school improvement aggressively in curriculum, instruction and student achievement.

TODAY: The SREB Learning-Centered Leadership Program works with universities, state agencies and schools to improve leadership preparation and certification programs. It has helped prepare more than 2,600 aspiring school leaders in 35 states and has large training programs in both Tennessee and Florida. It provides face-to-face and online training, research, benchmark reports on leadership reform, technical assistance and other services. SREB also formed a partnership with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) to field-test and pilot a new national assessment for the certification of highly accomplished principals.

In 2000, SREB began providing direct **support to low-performing schools** across the region and country.

TODAY: SREB has supported improvement efforts at more than 1,000 middle grades and high schools through on-site school improvement coaching, content-specific professional development, job-embedded content coaching and leadership professional development. Schools use the support to jump-start efforts and transition into state networks.

SREB created the Distance Learning Policy Laboratory to overcome policy barriers facing distance learners. It also developed the Adult Learning Campaign to improve adult education and launched a special website to assist educators.

TODAY: SREB continues to encourage state policies and actions that widen **access to education**. In addition to its distance learning work with specific states, SREB has made numerous recommendations to help state education leaders and policy-makers assist adults in returning to their studies.

In an ambitious move, in 2002 the SREB Commission on Education Goals (including state leaders from all 16 member states) created the *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education, a landmark set of 12 goals that called for SREB states not just to reach national averages in education but “to lead the nation in educational progress” at every level, from pre-K to college and beyond.

TODAY: The SREB Education Policies team monitors the region’s education progress regularly and in great detail. SREB tracked and reported each SREB state’s progress on each of the 12 goals from 2002 to 2012. In 10 years, the region took the **lead nationally** in state-funded public prekindergarten for 4-year-olds and in raising student achievement in several subjects and grade levels.

High Schools That Work continued to expand and facilitate school improvement. In 2007, it launched *Technology Centers That Work*, which helps the centers work closely with their local high schools to improve academic instruction and prepare more students for college and career training.

TODAY: *HSTW* has earned national recognition for effectiveness in helping schools raise student achievement. About 1,200 high schools in 30 states now use the program. *HSTW* also provides thousands of school assessments in SREB states and others each year, and it conducts workshops and training for nearly 10,000 educators. *TCTW* has grown to nearly 200 sites in 19 states.

SREB formed special commissions to focus state leaders’ attention on two critical education issues in the region related to the *Challenge to Lead* goals:

- In 2007-2008, the SREB Committee to Improve High School Graduation Rates and Achievement, led by Governor Sonny Perdue of Georgia (and SREB chair), tackled the need to improve high school **graduation rates** while also raising student achievement. It developed a major report with 10 key recommendations states can follow to ensure more students earn a diploma and are ready for college and careers.
- In 2008-2009, Governor Tim Kaine of Virginia (and SREB chair) led a committee to determine the policies needed to make **adolescent literacy** a major priority in every state. The SREB Committee to Improve Reading and Writing in Middle and High Schools report provides specific solutions to guide SREB state leaders in the years ahead so students are better prepared for further study.

Recognizing that the 21st-century workplace requires most Americans to have some form of education beyond high school, SREB accelerated its work to assist states in increasing high school students’ **college and career readiness**. With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, SREB launched an initia-

tive in 2008 with six member states to establish statewide readiness standards and help students meet them. SREB created and implemented a model action agenda that identifies the key steps all SREB states should take to improve students' readiness.

TODAY: With additional support from the Gates Foundation, SREB works closely with states to implement statewide college- and career-readiness initiatives that strengthen students' transition to postsecondary education through practices that promote greater disciplinary literacy and deeper learning.

Among its efforts, SREB is working with educators in a number of states to develop transitional courses to prepare academically unprepared high school juniors and seniors for success in college and/or career training after graduation. This is a key action strategy to **reduce remediation** and get more students ready to complete postsecondary study.

As a national recession ensued, SREB worked to boost **college completion** rates to support states' economic and workforce needs. The Board chairmanship of Governor Joe Manchin of West Virginia in 2009-2010 focused on completion.

TODAY: SREB brings together statewide education agency leaders, legislators and other policy-makers to define the statewide policies needed to increase the percentage of a state's population with postsecondary credentials. These convenings have generated targeted reports that outline the essential elements of state policy for college completion in several areas, such as outcomes-based funding, transfer and dual enrollment. The work is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation.

2010s

In 2011, the *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education* expanded to include data for all 50 states.

TODAY: The historic archive of information is updated regularly and available online 24/7, and SREB continues to publish the *Fact Book* every other year.

Recognizing that students' academic success often derails in the first year of high school, SREB carried the need for deeper learning into **the critical middle grades**. The SREB Middle Grades Commission, led by Governor Beverly Perdue of North Carolina (and SREB chair), issued a major 2011 report with

a comprehensive roadmap for change. It calls for SREB states to improve student achievement in the middle grades through hands-on projects, STEM learning and other efforts, so that students are better prepared for rigorous high school courses and high school dropout rates will fall.

SREB created the innovative *Preparation for Tomorrow* initiative to deepen learning in **career/technical education** and boost students' success after high school. SREB teamed with states to build course sequences that form a career pathway in real-world, high-demand areas (such as clean energy technology and informatics). The goal is to combine a rigorous academic core with job-ready technical skills so that all students graduate from high school prepared for as many options as possible — both in postsecondary education and the workplace.

TODAY: After field-testing and other launch steps, plans call for these four-course sequences to be available to schools across the country.

In addition to SREB's many programs and initiatives, a multifaceted grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation includes these efforts and others:

Benchmarking State Implementation of the **Common Core State Standards** (CCSS) — Today, SREB is tracking indicators of how and to what extent more than a dozen states are implementing the Common Core State Standards. The multi-year study includes a series of meetings plus regional and state-level reports to help states learn from one another.

Educator Effectiveness — SREB is working with states to create systems of feedback, evaluation and support in which **teachers continue to improve** their instruction so students learn at the higher levels demanded by the CCSS.

Literacy Design Collaborative and Math Design Collaborative — SREB is helping implement these two **revolutionary frameworks** to help teachers teach the more rigorous standards of the CCSS. SREB is helping Arkansas implement the frameworks statewide. SREB created a first-of-its-kind event, the Common Core State Standards Networking Conference, to help educators from many states learn how to use these tools to advance students' mastery of deeper literacy and math skills across all subjects.

SREB updated the region's education goals for changing times. The long economic downturn, shifts in national policy, swings in population, better data and a critical need for attention to emerging issues demanded a refocusing of states' efforts in the years ahead. In 2012, SREB reframed the education goals from 2002 into the **Challenge to Lead 2020** Goals for Education — organized concisely by a student's age or point in the education pipeline.

TODAY: These six goals focus state leaders' attention on key areas that have been central to SREB's work since the mid-1980s: improving the full educational career, from pre-K through college and beyond; helping students make the critical transitions from one education level to the next; and closing achievement gaps among groups of students.

The goals set outcome measures, or targets, for student achievement at each level. And they lay out the essential policies that will bring results. SREB is monitoring and will report to all 16 member states regularly on their progress on these goals.

Through these and many other initiatives, SREB continues to assist states as they develop the standards, goals, policies and programs that improve the quality of public education across the region. SREB's commitment remains strong to provide state leaders with the information and services that assist them in making informed decisions for educational progress and leadership in the years ahead.

Southern Regional Education Board Chairs

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, 2012-2013
Virginia Governor Robert F. McDonnell, 2011-2012
North Carolina Governor Beverly Perdue, 2010-2011
West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin III, 2009-2010
Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine, 2008-2009
Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue, 2006-2008
Louisiana Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, 2004-2006
Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, 2004
Mississippi Governor Ronnie Musgrove, 2002-2004
Georgia Governor Roy E. Barnes, 2000-2002
West Virginia Governor Cecil H. Underwood, 1998-2000, 1958-1960
Kentucky Governor Paul E. Patton, 1997-1998
Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening, 1995-1997
Florida Governor Lawton Chiles, 1993-1995
Georgia Governor Zell Miller, 1992-1993
West Virginia Governor Gaston Caperton, 1991-1992
Tennessee Governor Ned McWherter, 1990-1992
Oklahoma Governor Henry Bellmon, 1989-1990
Mississippi Governor Ray Mabus, 1988-1989
North Carolina Governor James G. Martin, 1987-1988
Georgia Governor Joe Frank Harris, 1986-1987
Kentucky Governor Martha Layne Collins, 1985-1986
South Carolina Governor Richard W. Riley, 1984-1985
Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander, 1983-1984
Mississippi Governor William F. Winter, 1982-1983
Maryland Governor Harry Hughes, 1981-1982
Florida Governor D. Robert Graham, 1979-1981
West Virginia Governor John D. Rockefeller IV, 1978-1979
North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt Jr., 1977-1978
Virginia Governor Mills E. Godwin Jr., 1976-1977, 1968-1969
Arkansas Governor David Pryor, 1975-1976
North Carolina Governor James E. Holshouser Jr., 1974-1975
South Carolina Governor John C. West, 1973-1974
Virginia Governor Linwood Holton, 1972-1973
Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter, 1971-1972
North Carolina Governor Robert W. Scott, 1970-1971
Tennessee Governor Buford Ellington, 1969-1970, 1960-1961
South Carolina Governor Robert E. McNair, 1967-1968
West Virginia Governor Hulett C. Smith, 1966-1967
Georgia Governor Carl E. Sanders, 1965-1966
Virginia Governor Albertis S. Harrison Jr., 1963-1965
North Carolina Governor Terry Sanford, 1961-1963
North Carolina Governor Luther H. Hodges, 1957-1958
Florida Governor LeRoy Collins, 1955-1957
Tennessee Governor Frank G. Clement, 1954-1955
Kentucky Governor Lawrence W. Wetherby, 1952-1954
Tennessee Governor Gordon Browning, 1951-1952
Florida Governor Millard F. Caldwell, 1949-1951

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