

SREB

SREB States

Can Challenge to Lead the Nation

Southern
Regional
Education
Board

GOALS

The *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education are supported by the entire SREB staff.

The Southern Regional Education Board was the first education organization in the nation to stress that states not only should set goals for education but also should measure progress toward those goals and monitor trends.

Now, the SREB *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education in the 21st century make a dramatic assertion: “*SREB states can lead the nation in educational progress.*”

That bold statement and the accompanying goals are a set of challenges to every state. Students at every level need to be ready for learning — ready to learn in first grade, ready for the middle grades and high school, and ready for college and the workplace. Achievement gaps need to be closed. Schools and colleges need to be ready for students. States need to provide leadership through one system of quality schools and colleges and universities for all the South’s citizens.

In support of these goals, SREB staff have traveled to member states for state-customized *Challenge to Lead* presentations. Customized reports have been published for every SREB state, and reports are available on the SREB Web site in a variety of formats. SREB will continue to report on each state’s progress toward these goals. There will be comprehensive reports on each goal every two years, updated reports on each SREB state and numerous short reports on various indicators. (See the Educational Policies section of this report for more details and publications.)

Challenge to Lead Goals for Education

1. All children are ready for the first grade.
2. Achievement in the early grades for all groups of students exceeds national averages and performance gaps are closed.
3. Achievement in the middle grades for all groups of students exceeds national averages and performance gaps are closed.
4. All young adults have a high school diploma — or, if not, pass the GED tests.
5. All recent high school graduates have solid academic preparation and are ready for postsecondary education and a career.
6. Adults who are not high school graduates participate in literacy and job-skills training and further education.
7. The percentage of adults who earn postsecondary degrees or technical certificates exceeds national averages.
8. Every school has higher student performance and meets state academic standards for all students each year.
9. Every school has leadership that results in improved student performance — and leadership begins with an effective school principal.
10. Every student is taught by qualified teachers.
11. The quality of colleges and universities is regularly assessed and funding is targeted to quality, efficiency and state needs.
12. The state places a high priority on an education *system* of schools, colleges and universities that is accountable.

ABOUT SREB

The Southern Regional Education Board is America's first interstate compact for education. SREB was created to provide specific services to its 16 member states, to create ways to share resources, and to enable states to achieve together educational programs and improvements that would be impossible or financially impractical for a single state.

Among SREB's programs:

- The SREB-State Data Exchange (with more than 35 years of service to SREB states) and the *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education*: the longest-standing and most timely interstate higher education data reports in the nation.
- The Academic Common Market (with more than 30 years of service to SREB states). Students from SREB states enroll in specialized graduate and undergraduate programs offered by institutions in other SREB states. Students save by paying in-state tuition. States gain tuition revenues and can reduce duplication by sharing programs rather than creating new ones.
- *High Schools That Work*, America's largest school improvement network, now helping schools in more than half of the nation's states.
- The SREB Legislative Work Conference, the first annual forum for legislators on education issues facing states. In 2005, the chair of the Legislative Advisory Council (Representative Stephanie Ulbrich of Delaware) and the vice chair (Senator Roman Prezioso Jr. of West Virginia) gavelled to order the 54th Legislative Work Conference, which met in conjunction with the SREB annual Board meeting in June.
- Educational Technology Cooperative, the largest and most productive educational technology collaborative of state K-12 and postsecondary education agencies in the United States.
- SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program. With its 250th graduate in 2005, it is a nationally recognized model to produce minority Ph.D.s and encourage them to seek faculty positions.
- The *Electronic Campus*, the nation's most comprehensive distance-learning marketplace, with more than 250 colleges and universities offering more than 10,000 courses and 450 degree programs online.
- The SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing, the nation's only regional council on collegiate nursing education, with 175 colleges and universities as members.

Created in 1948 by 16 states determined to improve education, the Southern Regional Education Board helps government and education leaders work cooperatively to advance education and, in doing so, to improve the social and economic life of the region. SREB works to pursue longer-term solutions that are more likely to produce lasting effects. SREB helps state leaders build visions for education in their states and shares its analyses of state actions with government and education leaders in order to help them prepare for issues that lie ahead.

SREB deals with education at all levels, from prekindergarten through colleges and universities. Top policy-makers in the region have set *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education, which are monitored and reported on regularly by SREB. These Goals challenge schools and colleges and universities to pursue excellence. They also challenge state leaders to provide support and oversight.

SREB provides a wealth of information. It maintains an extensive database about education in all 16 SREB states. Staff members respond daily to requests from governors, legislators, educators and the news media. SREB-sponsored meetings enable policy-makers and educators to share information within their states and across state lines. SREB publications range from the short and timely *Legislative Reports* to the biennial *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education*, which is updated regularly online.

SREB's 16 member states are Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. SREB is governed by a Board that consists of the governor of each member state and four other individuals from the state, at least one of whom must be a state legislator and at least one an educator. All appointments are made by the governors for four-year, staggered terms.

SREB is supported by appropriations from its member states and by funds from foundations, businesses, and state and federal grants and contracts.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



GOVERNOR KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO

Southern Regional Education Board Chair Kathleen Babineaux Blanco was elected governor of Louisiana in 2003. A former high school teacher, she served two terms as Louisiana's lieutenant governor. She also has served the state as a legislator and as an elected member and chair of the Public Service Commission.

This is the year of the teacher. At SREB, this also means that it is the year of the adult learner, for every teacher must be an adult learner.

I launched the SREB-State Teacher Center last fall. TheTeacherCenter (TheTeacherCenter.org) has online resources for both current and aspiring teachers. They can learn about each state's requirements (a big item with *No Child Left Behind*) and search SREB's *Electronic Campus* for the online courses they need. (The *Electronic Campus* has more than 10,000 credit courses and 450 degree programs, all taught online by accredited colleges and universities in SREB states.) We created a one-stop source of information and resources for teachers, administrators, counselors, librarians, teacher aides and others who are, or want to become, teachers.

SREB is also providing online help to another group of college-educated professionals: nurses. You've been reading about shortages of nurses. The big nursing problem you may not hear about — one that was uncovered by the SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing — is the shortage of people to teach the next generation of nurses in our states. The Council, the *Electronic Campus* and a consortium of five universities in the region created

a program of online courses for nursing professionals who want to become teachers of nursing. Other programs will follow, and eventually there will be a Nurses Center online — much like TheTeacherCenter. This outreach initiative for teachers of nurses is part of a major SREB effort to reach many more adults — including those who have not graduated from high school or attended college.

In my home state of Louisiana, I am working to raise teacher salaries, expand prekindergarten programs and reform high schools. SREB's assistance with the Louisiana Adult Learning Task Force, with a major grant from Lumina Foundation for Education, is helping us all do more for these younger and middle-aged adults.

As governor, I see the connection between educational improvement and economic development. Louisiana must improve its economy, education and training to allow us to do just that. To act on this reality requires many things, including upgrading the skills of our people, both those in (or headed for) school and those adults who thought they had left formal education years ago. You know that I am not alone in this. Governor after governor and state after state are facing the same problems.

This is where SREB is so valuable. When our Adult Learning Task Force needed help, SREB was there. In these tight budget times, it makes sense to share programs and costs, to borrow good ideas from our neighbors and to do together those things that we can't, or shouldn't, do alone.

And there are *many* things that SREB states now do together. We have included some of them in this report, and during this year we will create new ways to address problems and opportunities in 2006.

The SREB Educational Technology Cooperative and SREB's *Electronic Campus* are making our region number one in the nation in the use of educational technology in many areas. SREB's *High Schools That Work*, America's largest high school improvement effort, can point to more than a decade of research on successful initiatives now that the nation is turning its attention to our high school problems. Many SREB programs help our states multiply their resources while dividing costs, such as the Academic Common Market with a record "enrollment" of students — from every SREB state.

More than four decades ago, the first SREB goals commission challenged Southern leaders to "cast away forever the traditional double

standard" that caused the South to set lower expectations. The South, SREB said then, must be "measured against the same criteria of excellence which are applied everywhere."

In 1988, SREB adopted tough goals that pointed the way to the national education goals. SREB's efforts aimed at "closing the gaps" are reflected in the aim of today's *No Child Left Behind* Act. SREB's new *Challenge to Lead* Goals do just that: They challenge us to move to the front and lead the nation in educational progress.

SREB's *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education — extending from before grade school to after college — are demanding. But our states can reach them.

As my predecessors at SREB have said, education is the foundation for everything else we do, from economic development to health care. The problems may change, but we have the right goals and the right mission for our states.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



MARK MUSICK

Mark Musick is president of the Southern Regional Education Board where he has served for nearly 30 years, including 16 years as president. He came to SREB from Virginia, where he served in the governor's office and with the Virginia Community College System and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. In July 2005, he completes his service as president of SREB.

Will we challenge the future? Will we challenge trends that forecast shortfalls in educational attainment and quality of education and therefore unacceptable standards of living?

These were the first two sentences of my report to the Southern Regional Education Board in 1990 after my first year as President.

Will we challenge the future? Will we challenge trends ... that forecast shortfalls in educational attainment and quality of education and therefore unacceptable standards of living?

These were also the words that began the final section of SREB's *Goals for Education*, proclaimed in 1988 in what became the "first shot heard around the country" on the need for specific goals for education.

There were other questions in my first report to the Board that are appropriate in this, my last report.

Do we have the will? Do we have the staying power to put long-term actions up against deep-seated problems?

These were questions asked then, but that first report was not all questions. By then we knew how state leaders were responding to SREB's *Goals for Education*. We already had a "yes" answer that states would set goals for education. They would set specific, measurable goals. They would set goals that were substantially beyond their grasp. They would set goals to tackle problems that had been around for years and had shown little sign of improvement.

We knew in 1990 that progress would not be consistent and dramatic; we knew that every year would not bring progress everywhere. I cautioned then "for every encouraging sign there may be an offsetting discouraging trend — the dropout problem; the growing number of students from poor families who begin school behind and too often never catch up; and the financial support for education that seems to spurt and then sputter without building up real momentum." In 1990 we did not know that a recession lay just beyond the horizon. After it was over, we all agreed that it could have been worse, but it marked two years of a slowing in momentum for improvements in education.

Leading the staff in the decade of the 1990s in SREB's work on the goals and benchmarks was an honor and a privilege. It was also hard work for all involved. SREB provided to leaders of its member states an unprecedented amount of information focused on educational improvement and state-by-state reports on progress or the lack of progress in meeting educational goals. In the history of this country, there has never been such an intensive and continuous focus on improvement in education by a single group.

And at the end of the decade, SREB states did something that no other group of states in America could do. First we took a comprehensive look at the progress we had made toward those original Goals for Education. In a series of state-by-state reports on each of the 12 goals, we took stock and sought to present unvarnished facts.

Then in 2002 SREB again adopted 12 long-term education goals and did something so extraordinary that in my opinion it qualifies as perhaps the Board's most incredible action in more than 50 years. The Southern Regional Education Board answered with certainty the first question posed in my first report to the Board: **Will we challenge the future?** To that question, which echoed from me and from the last lines of the 1988 *Goals for Education*, came the answer: "SREB states can lead the nation in educational progress."

It is now the first sentence of today's *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education — and a more forceful answer than could have been hoped for in 1990.

Do we have the will? Do we have the staying power to put long-term actions up against deep-seated problems?

These questions may be as appropriate in 2020 as in 1990. When SREB states asserted that they can lead the nation in educational progress, they could not answer definitively the questions about "will" and "staying power," but there is no doubt about their intent. Pessimists or cynics may claim that since the same questions are appropriate in 1990, or 2005, or 2020, that this is a sign for despair. The guidance of one of the earliest leaders of the religion with which I am most familiar seems appropriate here. That leader, writing to a group of believers struggling with the problems of their day, implored them, "Brothers and sisters, do not grow weary in doing what is right."

Brothers and sisters in SREB states, do not grow weary. Challenge to lead the nation in educational progress.

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Educational Goals and Indicators

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SREB tracks the progress of states in meeting the 12 *Challenge to Lead* Goals. The goals address school and college readiness, achievement gaps, and the efficiency and effectiveness of state educational systems. Indicators of progress have been identified for each goal, and these help state policymakers and educational leaders know if their states are making progress.

SREB reports on each of the goals in a two-year cycle. The first reports were issued in spring 2004, and in 2005 the initial 12 reports to state leaders will be completed and a new set of reports begun, as part of SREB's continuous evaluation of progress and improvements in education. SREB also provides each state with a customized report on the progress it is making on key indicators for each goal. These are available in a variety of formats on the SREB Web site. New customized reports will be published in summer 2006.

National benchmarks, as well as measures of improvement, are important in these reports. If SREB states are to lead the nation, they must be measured in a national context and make continuous gains.

In addition to reporting on the goals, SREB continues to give special attention to issues that have been important to SREB states over the years. These include, for example, the health and academic factors related to school readiness; student achievement (particularly in reading and mathe-

matics); remediation in college; college accountability and students' readiness; financial aid and college affordability; and teacher quality.

Publications:

Higher Education Studies, Reports and Surveys in the SREB States

High School to College and Careers: Aligning State Policies

Getting the Mission Right in the Middle Grades

Progress Being Made in Getting a Quality Leader in Every School

Mastering Reading and Mathematics in the Early Grades

Resolve and Resources to Get a Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom

Creating College Opportunity for All: Prepared Students and Affordable Colleges

Building a Foundation for Success by Getting Every Child Ready for School

Investing Wisely in Adult Learning is Key to State Prosperity

Getting Serious About High School Graduation

Focusing on Student Performance Through Accountability

Getting Serious About Readiness for College and Careers (Summer 2005)

Quality Teachers

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“Every student is taught by qualified teachers.” This goal carries on a theme that SREB claimed was paramount in 1981: Preparing teachers is the number one topic that schools and colleges need to address together.

SREB’s work to ensure a qualified teacher for every classroom deals not only with preparing new teachers. It also involves calling for better data about supply, demand and quality of teachers; licensure focused on performance; and professional development that helps teachers improve student achievement.

Technology can be better used to support new and veteran teachers. TheTeacherCenter.org — an online SREB-state resource for teachers, in partnership with member states — provides easy access to information about teaching in the 16 states. The site is geared toward those considering a career in teaching or for teachers in the classroom. Are scholarships, grants or loans available if I want to become a teacher in my home state? In my neighboring state? What do I need to do to become a teacher through an alternative route? What are the *No Child Left Behind* “highly qualified” standards for special education teachers? More-focused resources are needed to help beginning teachers develop the skills and knowledge to improve student achievement and reduce the numbers leaving classrooms in the first five years. Qualified teachers are especially needed in low-performing schools.

Resolve by states, districts and schools is needed to hire a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. Resources will be needed to make it happen.

Teacher compensation remains one important part of putting a high-quality teacher in every classroom. How teachers are paid — not just how much — has become more important in light of today’s emphasis on the performance of all students. Salaries and benefits should recognize teachers with more expertise and higher student performance, and who meet state needs and take on additional or different roles to improve curriculum and instruction. State policies should reward and encourage hard work, and they should recognize marketplace differences and professional improvement in knowledge and skills. Every state, district and school must make sure that all children — regardless of location, wealth or any other factor — meet educational standards and that every child has a high-quality teacher.

Publications:

Resolve and Resources to Get a Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom

SREB States Continue to Lead the Nation in Teachers with National Board Certification

Quality Teachers: Can Incentive Policies Make a Difference?

Focus on Teacher Pay and Incentives: Recent legislative actions and update on salary averages

Spinning Our Wheels: Minority Teacher Supply in SREB States

Web site: TheTeacherCenter.org

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES (CONTINUED)

Education Data Services

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The *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education* is a source of comparative data widely used throughout the SREB region and the nation. Published in hard copy since 1956, the *Fact Book* now is also interactive, online, updated continually and, of course, available 24/7. It includes more than 90 tables and has information about the SREB region, each SREB state and the United States. In most cases, data for each of the 50 states are available. *Featured Facts* publications for each SREB state are compiled from this information. *Fact Book Bulletins* are issued periodically.

Since 1970 the **SREB-State Data Exchange** has brought together the higher education governing and coordinating boards in SREB states to produce comparative information critical to the annual decision-making needs of higher education boards, governors' offices and legislative committees. Agencies' staff members meet annually to review results and plan initiatives. In addition to the most up-to-date statistics on postsecondary education graduates, enrollment, progression and graduation rates, tuition and fees, funding and faculty compensation, the annual survey now includes comparisons of the first-year persistence rates of college freshmen and the nation's first interstate profile on the extent of instruction through e-learning.

In 1991 SREB established the SREB Data Library, one of the nation's first online education data centers. The library contains all of the databases used for the *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education*, the *Goals for Education* reports and the SREB-State Data Exchange — as well as databases on health professions education — all regularly updated.

Publications:

SREB Fact Book on Higher Education

SREB Fact Book on Higher Education Web edition: www.sreb.org

Featured Facts (state-by-state reports from the *SREB Fact Book*)

SREB-State Data Exchange Highlights (annual)

SREB Fact Book Bulletins

SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program

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The SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program was established to increase the number of minority students who earn Ph.D.s and seek careers as college faculty. The program celebrated its 250th graduate in 2005. Eighty percent of these graduates are employed at colleges and universities.

Colleges and universities recognize the need to create a diverse faculty to address the increasingly diverse student population and are developing strategic plans to do so. In 2005, the SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program designed an online Scholar Directory to assist them in identifying a more diverse candidate pool for faculty searches. The online directory, which includes more than 700 potential faculty members in all disciplines, is available by subscription on the SREB Web site. The database includes over 400 current scholars who will be earning Ph.D.s. Universities may also post jobs on the site at no charge.

The SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program is a success in many ways. Its retention/graduation rate of almost 90 percent is remarkable — more than double the national persistence rate for minority doctoral students. The Doctoral Scholars Program was designed to be “more than a check and a handshake.” The program follows a simple approach: Identify minority graduate students who are committed to becoming faculty members, provide them with intensive support as they pursue Ph.D.s, and help them secure faculty positions so that they may prepare and mentor the next generation of scholars.

The SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program continues to track scholars throughout their careers. Former scholars and tenured faculty members continue the mantra of “more than a check and a handshake” by serving as mentors and advisers to current scholars and by participating in the Compact for Faculty Diversity’s annual Institute on Teaching and Mentoring.

SREB hosts this event, which is America’s largest gathering of minority Ph.D. candidates who plan to become faculty. It is a nationally recognized and award-winning meeting of doctoral scholars and their faculty advisers from all over the nation. The 12th annual Institute will be held October 27-30, 2005, in Arlington, Virginia.

Publications:

Milestone Graduates — The First 100

Pathways to the Professoriate

A Decade, A Difference ... But Still Far to Go

Milestone Graduates: 200 and Counting

Online Scholar Directory

Distance Learning Policy Laboratory and Adult Learning Campaign

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SREB's **Distance Learning Policy Laboratory** was established to discover and promote solutions to a number of policy barriers facing distance learners. Seven reports have been published. Each report detailed a policy problem in distance learning; provided in-depth background information and analysis of the problem; and concluded with a set of recommendations targeting specific actions by states, colleges and universities, and SREB. A capstone report — *Technology Can Extend Access to Postsecondary Education: An Action Agenda for the South* — outlines and defines an aggressive agenda.

The agenda includes an objective to use technology to expand the reach and effectiveness of adult education. The number of young adults with too little education is a huge and growing problem in SREB states. The **Adult Learning Campaign**, supported by a \$1 million grant from Lumina Foundation for Education, is helping SREB states tackle this problem. The campaign is working to help three groups:

- adults (ages 18 to 24) who can get a GED credential and then move to additional training or postsecondary education.
 - More than 2.6 million of these adults in SREB states did not have a high school diploma in 2000.
- adults (ages 25 to 44) who may need a GED and/or college preparation to pursue postsecondary certificates, diplomas or degree programs.
 - More than 5 million of these adults in SREB states did not have a high school diploma in 2000.
 - Nearly 7 million of these adults in SREB states have attended college but do not have a degree.
- adults (of any age) who have at least an associate's degree and who are seeking to advance their postsecondary education via supplemental courses (both credit and noncredit), certificates or degree programs.

One of the primary objectives of the Adult Learning Campaign is to help more adults take advantage of the expanded *Electronic Campus*, including, in particular, associate's and baccalaureate degree-holders (such as nurses and teachers) who seek continuing education and advanced degrees. The Adult Learning Campaign can also help reach under-served minority and ethnic groups and support state efforts to increase Adult Basic Education services.

The Adult Learning Campaign:

- developed an Adult Learning Policy Review Framework that helps states pinpoint weaknesses in their policies and piloted the framework in Louisiana;
- participated in (and staffed) the Louisiana Adult Learning Task Force;
- completed a second SREB *Challenge to Lead* report on adult learning;
- drafted an Adult Learning Toolkit that will become part of SREB's Go Alliance and College Access Marketing Web site;
- initiated two Industry-State Pilots (in Virginia and Louisiana);
- planned for the launch of an Internet campaign to help educators;
- completed research on state financial assistance for adults; and
- developed state profiles on adult learning.

Publications:

Targeting the Adult Learning Challenge in SREB States

Investing Wisely in Adult Learning is Key to State Prosperity

The Adult Learning Campaign Web site

STATE SERVICES

Jim Watts, served as vice president 1997-2004; deceased August 2004.

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Serving member states is the intent of all SREB programs. State services are at the heart of everything that SREB does best.

Staff members in State Services often are SREB's initial link to executive and legislative officials and staff in the 16 SREB states. Staff members respond to questions with timely, concise information, and they prepare reports on pressing issues.

SREB is known for its commitment to helping policy-makers accurately analyze trends and issues. Reports have addressed such subjects as teacher pay and incentives, employee benefits, school accountability, policies allowing retired teachers to return to teaching, and scholarship programs that help paraprofessionals become certified teachers.

The annual series of *Legislative Reports* follows the events in the 16 SREB legislatures, beginning with governors' legislative and budget proposals and ending with final legislative actions. The final report of the series each year, the *Legislative Briefing*, is a topical summary of final legislative and budget actions. These reports are shared with officials throughout the SREB region and are available on the SREB Web site.

State Services staff members work closely with the SREB Legislative Advisory Council, which is composed of state senators, representatives and delegates from all SREB states. SREB staff members regularly make presentations to legislative and educational groups and also coordinate the annual Legislative Work Conference and meetings of the Legislative Advisory Council and legislative and executive staff.

Other meetings and efforts respond to continuing and emerging issues, including accountability for schools and colleges. SREB states have worked together to compare state policies on school accountability and testing. SREB convened state education officials to discuss issues related to the use of high school assessments as a part of graduation requirements. Another effort brought together policy-makers and staff from states with recent or impending school finance court decisions. These activities exemplify interstate sharing, a cornerstone of what SREB is about.

Publications:

Legislative Report series

Legislative Briefing

Focus on Teacher Pay and Incentives: Recent legislative actions and update on salary averages

State Notes (published annually)

TECHNOLOGY

Educational Technology Cooperative

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The **Educational Technology Cooperative**, now in its 11th year, brings together state K-12 and postsecondary coordinating and governing boards from the 16 SREB states to address educational technology issues and topics from a K-20 perspective in education. More than three dozen state agencies participate in the Cooperative. The word “unique” gets used too much in education, but this truly is a unique, multistate program.

State Virtual Schools are just one important area of emphasis. Many SREB states have implemented some form of program to provide Web-based (online) courses to students within their states. Through the SREB Educational Technology Cooperative, these states are able to share information and support one another in establishing state virtual schools. BellSouth and the George Lucas Educational Foundation have supported SREB efforts to get the word out on online learning.

EvaluTech, another initiative of the Cooperative, provides teachers with free, up-to-date and reliable resources. These include:

- more than 10,000 reviews of recommended software and other resources;
- Web resources in language arts, mathematics, social studies and science;
- links to lesson plans, real-world teaching examples and other learning resources provided by SREB states’ departments of education;
- accessible technology resources for students with disabilities; and
- links to online learning and online professional development resources.

Multi-State Online Professional Development (MOPD) is an initiative that provides training for online professional development and helps to share course content among participating states. The need for high-quality professional development is greater today than ever. Online instruction has

proven to be especially effective because it can reach teachers regardless of where they live or teach. MOPD, an initiative of the SREB Educational Technology Cooperative, works closely with all SREB states’ departments of education.

The goals of **Sharable Content Object Repositories for Education (SCORE)** are to improve the quality of digital learning course content (learning objects and tools), improve teaching and learning, and achieve cost savings. This Cooperative undertaking began over a year ago as a Proof of Concept project to determine whether K-12 and higher education could place digital content in repositories (databases) and share content with each other across multiple states.

Digital Learning Content is a new area of work of the Educational Technology Cooperative. Use of digital learning content by schools and colleges is rapidly increasing. To help ensure quality course development and address cost issues, it is important for these institutions to access and use digital content with a minimum of time and effort. Digital learning content includes sharable content objects, learning objects and media materials.

The **American TelEdCommunications Alliance (ATAlliance)** links education and telecommunications to provide schools, colleges and state education agencies, libraries and other nonprofit groups with benefits in telecommunication services. It provides low-cost access to telecommunication products and services and helps guide technology policy and standards. The ATAlliance contracts for online course management software were initiated by SREB and are now in use by many SREB states, resulting in savings for virtually everyone. The ATAlliance was formed by SREB, the other three regional educational compacts and a successful national nonprofit telecommunications organization (MiCTA).

Publications:*SREB State Virtual Schools Report**Principles of Effective Learning Objects**Why Are Wireless Services Important to State and Education Leaders?**Technology Use in Rural High Schools Improves Opportunities for Student Achievement**Online Professional Development: Why SREB States Should Use It**What's an online course? Do middle and high school students take online courses? Should you care?**Standards for Online Professional Development**Why Statewide Educational Networks are Important to State and Education Leaders*

Electronic Campus

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SREB's expanded ***Electronic Campus*** (ElectronicCampus.org) is a gateway to e-learning opportunities and online services in SREB states. The *Electronic Campus* partners with colleges and universities throughout the SREB region to make online courses and programs available to e-learners around the world. The *Electronic Campus* currently provides access to more than 10,000 courses and 450 degree programs from regionally accredited public and private colleges and universities in all 16 SREB states. These include 3,500 "e-rate" courses that do not have out-of-state tuition rates.

The *Electronic Campus*, a regional "learning network" for SREB states, is America's first fully integrated Web site that focuses on the needs of e-learners and adult learners. It provides regional-level services and connectivity across the 16 SREB states and their colleges and universities. The *Electronic Campus* takes advantage of existing state Mentor™ systems, currently in place in 11 of the 16 SREB states, and extends services to distance learners across state lines. The *Electronic Campus* creates new learning opportunities — and easier access to those opportunities — whether for a traditional-aged student, a midcareer professional, a working single parent, a "late-bloomer" or a senior citizen seeking to enrich retirement years.

A new initiative, the **SREB-State Teacher Center** (TheTeacherCenter.org), provides a convenient "one-stop shop" of online resources designed to help the 2.2 million educators in the 16 SREB states. TheTeacherCenter's integra-

tion with the *Electronic Campus* provides access to professional development, financial assistance, licensure and certification information, testing and "highly qualified" teacher requirements at one site.

The **Regional Consortium for Nurse Educators**, which provides master's and doctoral online courses to nurse educators, grew out of the work of the Distance Learning Policy Laboratory and can be reached through the *Electronic Campus* Initiatives Web site (www.ECInitiatives.org). It began offering courses last fall.

A pilot initiative, building on the successful, five-year-old Academic Common Market/*Electronic Campus* program, is being expanded. The new effort adds technically oriented, online associate's degree programs to the Academic Common Market. These programs fit with the needs of working adults who cannot leave family, job or other commitments to undertake needed study. This pilot effort will expand student access at in-state tuition rates, a central objective of the Academic Common Market.

Resources:Web site: ElectronicCampus.orgWeb site: TheTeacherCenter.orgWeb site: www.ECInitiatives.org

HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK

High Schools That Work

Gene Bottoms, senior vice president: gene.bottoms@sreb.org

High Schools That Work (HSTW) is the nation's largest effort to combine challenging academic courses and modern career/technical studies to improve student achievement. More than 1,000 high school sites in 31 states (including all 16 SREB states) are involved in *HSTW*.

The American Institutes for Research selected *HSTW* in 1999 as the nation's only initiative to reform high schools that shows "strong evidence" of raising student performance. *HSTW* has received national recognition for its effectiveness in guiding schools to successfully raise student achievement. *HSTW* is noted for its design, emphasis on using data for continuous improvement, numerous national staff development opportunities for school and district staff, and technical assistance to participating schools.

HSTW was recently recommended as one of the five possible reform efforts for the American high school in a position paper presented by the K-12 Committee of the National Association of Scholars to the governors of the 50 states at the 2005 National Summit on High Schools in Washington, D.C. In the fall 2004 research brief *The Challenge of Reinventing High School* by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, *HSTW* was cited as the only comprehensive, whole-school reform effort that calls for extra help, timely guidance, focused staff development, district support, formal alignment with both the middle grades and postsecondary institutions, and students' access to a structured system of extra help and extra time. In January 2005, the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement acknowledged *HSTW* as the number one high school reform model by high schools receiving comprehensive school reform grants. In addition, the Association for Career and Technical Education describes *HSTW* on its Web site as a high school reform model showing promising results.

In 2004 *HSTW* assessed 63,000 high school seniors with reading, mathematics and science exams referenced to the National Assessment of Educational Progress. SREB asked more than 44,000 high school teachers about their perceptions of the schools' efforts to improve students' academic and technical achievement.

HSTW also hosts an annual Staff Development Conference for more than 6,000 high school and middle grades administrators, academic and career/technical teachers, and counselors. During the 2005 academic year, *HSTW* held 17 national workshops on 11 topics for 3,500 educators. In November 2004, a state leadership forum was held to examine the statewide initiatives that are needed to improve both student achievement and high school graduation rates.

The nationally recognized successes of *High Schools That Work* are made possible by the support of the Wallace Foundation and member states, and by income generated by staff development and other services.

Publications:

Research Briefs:

Linking Career/Technical Studies to Broader High School Reform

Raising Achievement and Improving Graduation Rates: How Nine HSTW Sites Are Doing It

Factors Affecting Science Achievement in Rural Schools (Summer 2005)

Research and Policy Reports:

High School Reform Works — When Implemented

Strengthening the Preparation and Certification of Career/Technical Teachers (Summer 2005)

Rigor, Relevance and Relationships Matter in Improving Student Achievement in Rural High Schools (Summer 2005)

Case studies, site guides and brochure

Making Middle Grades Work

Toni Eubank, director: toni.eubank@sreb.org

Sondra Cooney, special consultant: sondra.cooney@sreb.org

Grants from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation made it possible to begin this nationally important effort. Currently, 236 middle grades sites in 21 states are using the *Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW)* framework for school improvement.

The smooth transition from the middle grades to high school continues to be the focus of *MMGW*, with the delivery of workshops on the high school readiness guides for Algebra I and college-preparatory English and science.

In April 2005, a state leaders' forum was held, with representatives attending from the 16 SREB states. The forum focused on what states were doing to get qualified teachers for core academic subjects in the middle grades, to align middle grades curriculum and classroom instruction and assessments to readiness standards for doing challenging high school studies,

and going to scale to improve middle grades students' preparation for high school.

More than 100 middle grades schools and 12,700 eighth-graders participated in the Middle Grades Assessment — which is referenced to the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Students at schools participating in the *MMGW* network that more deeply implement the *MMGW* framework demonstrate significant improvement in achievement.

Publications:

Site development guides, case studies, and research briefs and reports

Urban Network of High Schools That Work Sites

Linda Dove, director: linda.dove@sreb.org

The *HSTW* Urban Network is now helping teachers, principals and superintendents in 93 schools in 12 urban districts. The major emphasis of the network is to assist school and district leaders as they align policies, resources and district initiatives to improve student achievement.

More than 100 days of technical assistance and technical review visits to network schools were conducted during the 2005 academic year. The Urban Council had its largest number of participants in its eight-year history — 96 representatives shared their successes and challenges with each other during a two-day meeting.

A major focus of the Urban Network in 2005 is planning and/or implementing small learning communities, since several districts (Atlanta,

DeKalb County [Georgia], Houston, Little Rock and New Orleans) have earned small learning-communities grants.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation and the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation support the Urban Network and the dissemination of the important results from these 93 schools in 12 urban districts to urban districts across the South and to the nation.

Publications:

Three Professional Development Modules for School and Teacher Leaders on *Implementing High Schools That Work Through Small Learning Communities*
Case study, *Grady High School, Atlanta, Georgia* (Summer 2005)

HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK (CONTINUED)

Project Lead The Way

Carolyn Helm, director: carolyn.helm@sreb.org

Project Lead The Way (PLTW) is helping 345 high schools in SREB states — with assistance from eight universities — provide students with a pre-engineering program that can prepare them to earn associate's or bachelor's degrees in engineering, which is increasingly important to America's economy. This nationally recognized program, which began as an initiative by business, works because it develops meaningful and challenging curriculum materials, builds support from counselors and faculty, helps reduce the cost of materials and equipment, and provides college-credit opportunities for high school students. In 2005, eight higher education institutions in SREB states are participating as affiliate universities for PLTW. Their involvement ranges from recruiting quality students — especially more

minority and female students — to offering college credit for engineering courses to high school students. The universities also provide professional development for high school teachers through two weeks of summer training for each new Project Lead The Way course taught in the fall. The PLTW organization provided almost \$550,000 over three years to help make the program available to schools in SREB's *High Schools That Work* network.

Publications:

Research Brief:

Project Lead the Way: A Pre-engineering Curriculum That Works

High Schools That Work Contracted Schools Network

Scott Warren, director: scott.warren@sreb.org

High Schools That Work and *Making Middle Grades Work* are helping teachers and staff in more than 125 low-performing schools that receive federal Comprehensive School Reform and/or Small Learning-Communities grants. Schools receiving the grants have the choice of contracting with several school improvement models. More schools receiving Comprehensive School Reform grants have chosen SREB's *High Schools That Work* and *Making Middle Grades Work* than any other models. The support included more than 600 on-site coaching visits by consultants, 46 technical assistance visits, 37 technical review visits, 176 on-site professional development workshops, and working with more than 1,100 teachers and leaders from these schools in SREB national workshops. This intensive support resulted in 46 percent of schools improving in reading, mathematics and science on the *HSTW* Assessment, while 23 percent improved in two of these areas.

Twenty-one sites will complete grant funding in 2005 and transition into state *HSTW* networks. Many of these schools have already indicated that they will use local funding sources to maintain contracts with SREB for more intensive support as they continue to implement the *HSTW* design. The intensive support helps schools accelerate improvement efforts and provides valuable lessons for SREB and states about what works in improving low-performing schools. A study of 50 *HSTW* contracted services sites revealed that these schools made significant gains in reading, mathematics and science achievement from 2002 to 2004.

Publications:

Professional development module and fact sheet

Making Schools Work

Caro Feagin, director

The **Making Schools Work** research project was completed in 2005, and its results show that student achievement increases when schools rigorously implement the key practices and conditions of *High Schools That Work* and *Making Middle Grades Work*. Seventy-five clusters of high schools and their feeder middle grades schools from 16 states participated. These schools have been mainstreamed into *High Schools That Work* and *Making Middle Grades Work*.

Making Schools Work's purpose was to determine the effect on student achievement of implementing the key practices and key conditions of *High Schools That Work* and *Making Middle Grades Work*. The study used eighth-

and 12th-grade assessments in reading, mathematics and science referenced to the National Association of Educational Progress, as well as information from student and teacher surveys, to determine the depth of the model's implementation and the impact of changes in school and classroom practices.

Publications:

Research Report:

Making High Schools and Middle Grades Work (Summer 2005)

High School to College and Career Transitions Initiative

Ann Benson, director: gben@brightok.net

Fifteen postsecondary institutions and their high school partners have received technical assistance to help them get more students successfully from high school to college, and the lessons learned from this effort will be shared with hundreds of colleges and high schools.

All of this is made possible by support from the U.S. Office of Adult and Vocational Education and a working agreement with the League for Innovation in the Community College. Each local partnership includes a college, one or more feeder high schools and business/industry partners. The project sites, now in 13 states, focus on five career clusters: education and training; health science; information technology; law, public safety and security; and science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Nine states will receive assistance to host statewide forums of key leaders and policy-makers in developing strategies to improve the ability of students to make successful transitions from high school to postsecondary education

and careers. These forums will include actions and policies to accelerate these transitions on a statewide basis and strategies for expanding the number of high school and postsecondary partnerships in each state.

SREB is assisting sites and states to:

- decrease the need for remediation at the postsecondary level;
- increase enrollment and persistence in postsecondary education;
- increase academic and skill achievement at secondary and postsecondary levels;
- increase attainment of postsecondary degrees, certificates, or other recognized credentials; and
- increase entry into employment or further education.

Successful Transitions: Urban Middle Grades to High School Transition Initiative

Jinan N. Sumler, school improvement consultant: jinan.sumler@sreb.org

For three years, 27 clusters of urban schools have worked to help more students successfully make the critical transition from middle grades to high school. These schools have laid the foundation for future students to be successful in the ninth grade and significantly increase their chances for graduating from high school by increasing expectations and upgrading the academic curriculum. With support from The Goldman Sachs Foundation, these schools are demonstrating the pathway to success.

Every two years, *HSTW* assesses eighth- and ninth-graders and conducts surveys of teachers in the middle grades and high school clusters. In the last year, six technical assistance visits by highly qualified teams were conducted

at participating middle grades and high schools. Twenty of the schools received site-specific professional development, and all continue to share ideas through monthly conference calls. Teachers and leaders from nearly one-fourth of the schools presented at the *HSTW* Staff Development Conference.

Publications:

Fact Sheet:

Successful Transitions: What Works in Urban Middle Grades to High School Transitions Initiative

HSTW and *MMGW* Special Project

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This project, funded by a three-year grant from the U. S. Department of Education, focuses on the critical transition points from middle grades to high school and from high school to college and careers. Rural schools in nine SREB states are working to more deeply implement the *HSTW* and *MMGW* improvement designs in 25 high schools and 17 feeder middle grades schools by addressing five aspects of comprehensive reform.

SREB school improvement consultants and subject-area specialists provide on-site coaching and professional development. Anecdotal information is collected through frequent follow-up conference calls and electronic

messaging from students and teachers who are pilot-testing the catch-up courses. Measures of student achievement, engagement and success, and placement test information for students wishing to enter credit-bearing courses immediately upon admission to community and technical colleges are also being collected.

The development of a series of products — including readiness indicator guides and course development tools — is planned.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership Initiative

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Kathy O'Neill, director: kathy.oneill@sreb.org

David Hill, coordinator, leadership academies network: david.hill@sreb.org

The **SREB Leadership Initiative** — supported by a \$3 million, three-year grant from the Wallace Foundation — is aimed at redesigning the preparation and development of school principals. Accountability has changed everything; the emphasis in training leaders must be on student learning. A university network of 11 institutions and a state network of eight leadership academies are at the core of this redesign work.

Two network universities have graduated classes of more than 20 candidates, and a number of these graduates are being placed in school leadership positions in partner districts. Four other universities have their first groups moving through redesigned programs. Faculty from five of the universities have participated in training on the SREB Leadership Curriculum Modules and in integrating new content and assignments from the modules into their courses. One university received state approval of its program redesign.

Seven SREB states — Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Texas and West Virginia — have formed state or regional leadership academies modeled on the SREB Leadership Academy Network redesign framework. Selected urban and rural districts in Georgia and South Carolina have created district leadership academies also modeled on this redesign framework. West Virginia and Arkansas have created leadership academies for

low-performing schools, and Florida has adopted SREB's Leadership Curriculum Modules as part of its training for school leaders in the state.

SREB has been assisting Louisiana and Alabama in strengthening their capacities to develop and implement a redesigned educational leadership program.

In May 2005, a state leadership forum was held for state education and higher education leaders, members of state boards of education, college deans and professors of education leadership.

Publications:

Progress Being Made in Getting a Quality Leader in Every School

Preparing a New Breed of Principal: Leadership from the University President's Office

Principal Internships: How Can We Get It Right?

Are Universities in the SREB States Making Progress in Redesigning School Principals' Preparation? (Summer 2005)

Professional development modules

Urban LEAD Districts and Their University Partners

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Gloria Talley, director: gloria.talley@sreb.org

The **SREB LEAD Initiative** — supported by a \$1 million, three-year grant from the Wallace Foundation — is assisting in redesigning school leadership programs so that they better prepare school leaders who can contribute to school improvement and increase student achievement.

The LEAD Initiative has offered the 12 participating districts and their university partners training in the SREB Leadership Curriculum Modules

to help them begin revising their leadership programs. LEAD also provided technical assistance to the districts and shared information on conditions of redesign and critical success factors that result in improved student achievement.

REGIONAL CONTRACT PROGRAM AND ACADEMIC COMMON MARKET

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The **Regional Contract Program** enables states to share and reduce their costs for health-professions education and to postpone — or even avoid — duplicating some of these programs. At the same time, it enables states to give their residents access to programs that are not available in their state. The Regional Contract Program, which began in the early years of the Southern Regional Education Board, is the model that other regional compacts in the United States have adopted or adapted.

Thanks to the SREB Contract Program, thousands of people in states without schools of dentistry, optometry, osteopathic medicine, podiatry and veterinary medicine have earned degrees at nationally recognized colleges and universities. Each year, more than 900 contract spaces are awarded to SREB states participating in the Contract Program.

The Regional Contract Program benefits states, students and participating institutions in several ways:

- States that contract for spaces through SREB's Regional Contract Program for their qualified residents avoid the expenses of new programs.
- Students who live in SREB states without certain health programs may be able to enroll in other states' programs.
- States and universities that reserve spaces for other states' students receive outstanding students and per student subsidies from students' home states. These fees are in addition to tuition and help maintain operations and strengthen programs.

The **Academic Common Market** has for more than 30 years been a winning plan for states, students and universities by allowing students from participating states to enroll in specialized graduate and undergraduate programs offered by institutions in other SREB states. The students pay in-state tuition and fees. States benefit because they can increase enrollments with qualified students from other states and can operate more efficiently, especially with these specialized programs that typically do not have large enrollments. States also benefit because they can avoid creating programs that are available to their residents through the Academic Common Market. More than 2,000 students are certified each year for the Academic Common Market, making its four-year enrollment equal to that of many universities.

The **Academic Common Market/Electronic Campus** combines the tuition benefits of the Academic Common Market with the distance-learning capacity of the *Electronic Campus*. The program makes selected distance-learning degree programs available at in-state tuition rates. The Academic Common Market programs available on campuses in the 16 SREB states are available via the *Electronic Campus* and also can be found at the Academic Common Market Web site at www.sreb.org.

COUNCIL ON COLLEGIATE EDUCATION FOR NURSING

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The **SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing** is the only regional organization for nurse educators in the nation that is affiliated with an interstate compact. It works to strengthen nursing education and nursing research in colleges and universities in SREB states.

All 16 SREB states continue to experience a major shortage of qualified nurse educators. The 2004 SREB regional survey confirmed the existing shortages and revealed shortages to be expected in the next decade as more faculty leave — whether because of career changes or retirement. The SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing, in collaboration with SREB's *Electronic Campus*, has initiated a pilot project to help ease the faculty shortage in nursing education.

Five universities started a regional consortium to prepare nurse educators. The graduate nursing programs at these universities began offering online courses through SREB's *Electronic Campus* in the fall of 2004. The universities are Alcorn State University (Mississippi), Delta State University (Mississippi), Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. Twelve graduate students enrolled in courses during the academic year.

Representatives from each of the SREB states and the District of Columbia attended the 2004 annual meeting in Atlanta. Its theme was "The Legal Kaleidoscope in Nursing Education." Nurse educators discussed some of the critical issues encountered in academic and clinical settings, including criminal background checks, violence in the workplace and multi-state licensure.

The Council will continue to achieve its mission, in collaboration with the SREB *Electronic Campus*, through the:

- development of a portal for nursing education and an online curriculum to prepare educators. The online curriculum will build upon the expected competencies that were validated in the Council's earlier study.
- development of core Web-based courses for undergraduate programs. This is a method that may ease problems facing nursing education units in SREB states. An ad hoc committee, led by Linda C. Hodges (University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences), is developing a plan of action.
- development of online courses that help faculty to introduce genetic concepts in the nursing curriculum. An ad hoc committee, led by Sue Donaldson (professor at Johns Hopkins University), is exploring methods and strategies for implementation.

Publications:

2004 SREB Survey Highlights and State-by-State Results

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* *Finance Committee member* — The Finance Committee, a subcommittee of the Executive Committee, prepares an annual budget and presents it and other financial policy matters to the Executive Committee.

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