

2004
Annual Report

SREB

For SREB States —

Information and Actions

to Lead the Nation in Educational Progress

Southern
Regional
Education
Board

GOALS

In one way or another, the entire SREB staff supports the *Challenge to Lead* Goals

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 statement: “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.

Staff have traveled to member states for state-customized SREB Goals presentations. SREB will continue to report on each state’s progress toward these goals. There will be comprehensive reports on each goal every two years, 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 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 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 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 by tuition revenues and can reduce duplication by sharing programs rather than creating new ones.
- *High Schools That Work*: now in more than half the nation's states, the largest school improvement network in America.
- SREB Legislative Work Conference: the first annual forum for legislators on education issues facing states. In 2004, the chair (Senator Jack Hill of Georgia) and the vice chair (Representative Stephanie Ulbrich of Delaware) will gavel to order the 53rd Legislative Work Conference.
- 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: now with more than 200 graduates, 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 200 colleges and universities offering 9,000 courses and 400 degree programs.

- The 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 Southern states, 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 that are monitored and reported on regularly by SREB. These SREB 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 *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 CHAIRMAN



GOVERNOR MIKE HUCKABEE

Southern Regional Education Board Chairman Mike Huckabee, one of America's most-experienced governors, is now in his eighth year as governor of Arkansas. Governor Huckabee's Southern colleagues recognized his leadership by electing him chairman of the Southern Governors' Association. Governor Huckabee's leadership nationally has been recognized by the National Governors Association and in his selection as chairman-elect of the Education Commission of the States.

*“To get a job ... to earn a degree ... to keep a job ...
to get more education ... to get a better job. To help persons with all these goals.
That's why we are here today to launch Ways In Mentor.”*

Governor Mike Huckabee
Press Conference, February 25, 2004
University of Arkansas at Little Rock

For me, this year has been marked by school-finance and school-governance issues affecting the 450,000 children in Arkansas' public schools. But for long-term job-related and education reasons, I thought it was important to launch SREB's Ways In Mentor, an online initiative that's especially designed for adults seeking to further their education. Next for Ways In Mentor will be the SREB Teacher Center, which is designed to meet the needs teachers have for more education. SREB's Ways In Mentor is a symbol of our belief that education is the key for all residents of the South.

We can see the progress in education even though we face nagging problems. This year's budget issues aren't unprecedented, but they have been extraordinary. Special legislative sessions to pass state budgets have become almost commonplace. A longer view, however, convinces me that the tide is in favor of progress.

I see that tide in the work of SREB. I see it in the new applications of technology that spring from the SREB Educational Technology Cooperative and the SREB *Electronic Campus*. I see it in the groundbreaking programs of SREB's *High Schools That Work*, America's largest high school improvement effort. I see it in the SREB programs that help our states multiply their resources while dividing costs in tight budget times, such

as the Academic Common Market and the SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program.

I see the tide in favor of progress when I look back more than four decades to when the first SREB goals commission challenged Southern leaders to “cast away forever the traditional double standard” that caused the South to set lower expectations for itself. The South, SREB said then, must be “measured against the same criteria of excellence which are applied everywhere.”

In 1988, SREB adopted tough goals to point the way to the national education goals. SREB reports called for “closing the gaps” — reflected in the aim of today’s No Child Left Behind Act. While implementation of the federal act has been imperfect, the goals are right and necessary. Still pushing the South, SREB updated its education goals in 2002 and challenged the region to lead the nation.

SREB’s current *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education extend from before grade school to after college. Yes, they’re demanding. But the reading and mathematics tests given in all 50 states last year by the National

Assessment of Educational Progress showed Southern states leading the nation in educational progress. That’s right. The message from America’s first report on reading and mathematics achievement that used the same measure in all 50 states is that SREB states led the nation in progress.

SREB will continue to report and celebrate our successes. It also will continue to point out when we fall short and help us solve common problems. That’s in large measure what SREB does when it sponsors the South’s largest education meeting: the *High Schools That Work* summer staff development conference. More than 6,000 educators meet to learn from colleagues who are solving the problems we all face.

Education is the foundation for everything else we do, from economic development to health care. We’re facing some different challenges today, but one of the key solutions to these challenges remains the same.

Be measured by national standards. Reach national standards. Exceed national standards. Lead the nation in educational progress. 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, an organization he has served for nearly 30 years. 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.

“SREB states can lead the nation in educational progress.”

That opening statement from our *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education is not merely wishful thinking. As Governor Huckabee said, the tests given in every state in 2003 by the National Assessment of Educational Progress prove it. The Southern Regional Education Board will provide examples of the actions and the information needed for SREB states to continue to lead the nation in educational progress.

This has been a difficult year for state leaders. Budget issues are obvious; so are the realities of implementing the federal No Child Left Behind Act. And the backdrop for both is America's war against terrorism. These are not the first tough times for the South: In 1938, for example, President Franklin Roosevelt said that “the South presents right now the nation's No. 1 economic problem.”

SREB's long-range goals for education are even more important when immediate problems demand and consume our attention. It is important that SREB states stay focused on where we want to go and what we want to achieve. We know that education is the only long-term solution to the economic challenges we face.

The list of SREB *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education is more than can be accomplished this year or next. People facing real budget problems worry about keeping what they have, not about doing more. Yet the South must remember where it is headed. SREB will continue to report honestly and dispassionately on how Southern states are doing.

As Governor Huckabee points out, SREB will help. But the real action takes place in our states. It is policy-makers — particularly governors and legislators — who must set the direction and the spending. It is schools, universities, and community and technical colleges that must provide the education that people need.

SREB states have America's best record and longest history of working together, of sharing resources and ideas. This report shows some of what the 16 states have built. Cooperation that enables states to divide costs while multiplying services to their residents is especially important when budgets are tight. We began this year under an SREB banner proclaiming the “Challenge to Lead in Challenging Times.” Working together, especially in challenging times, is how SREB states will lead the nation.

STATE SERVICES

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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 salaries, 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. The 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. One priority is accountability for schools and colleges. SREB states continue to work together to compare state policies in school accountability and testing. This year, SREB will convene state department of education officials to discuss issues related to the use of high school assessments as a part of graduation requirements. These activities exemplify interstate sharing, a cornerstone of what SREB is all about.

Publications:

2004 Legislative Report series

Legislative Briefing

Focus on Teacher Salaries: Recent Actions in the SREB States

State Notes (published annually)

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Educational Goals and Indicators

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SREB tracks the progress of states in meeting *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 policy-makers and educational leaders know if their states are making progress.

SREB will issue the first report on each of the goals by June 2005. SREB will also provide each state a customized report on the progress it is making on key indicators for each goal. These customized reports will be published every other year, beginning with 2004. 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 mathematics; remediation in college; college accountability and readiness; financial aid and college affordability; and teacher quality.

Publications:

State Reports (state-by-state reports based on *Challenge to Lead* Goals)

Getting the Mission Right in the Middle Grades

Progress Being Made in Getting a Quality Leader in Every School

Resolve and Resources to Get a Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom

Mastering Reading and Mathematics in the Early Grades

Getting High School Graduation Test Policies Right in SREB States

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

Challenge to Lead in 2004: Marking Progress, Facing Challenges

Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology: Changing the way teachers are prepared

Higher Education Studies, Reports and Surveys in the SREB States

College Affordability (Summer 2004)

Quality Teachers

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

SREB’s work on ensuring a qualified teacher 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 deliver high-quality professional development to support new and veteran 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 be aimed at recognizing expertise, student performance, state needs and taking on additional or different roles to improve curriculum and instruction. State policies should reward and encourage hard work, and recognize market-place 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.

Education Data Services

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The *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education* is a source of comparative data widely used throughout the region and the nation. Published since 1956, the *Fact Book* is now interactive, online, updated continually and, of course, available 24/7. It includes more than 85 tables and has information about the SREB region, each SREB state and the United States. *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 current-year statistics on postsecondary education, tuition and fees, public funding and faculty salaries, comparisons of the first-year retention rates of college freshmen and the nation's first comprehensive

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

Focus on "Highly Qualified Teachers": SREB States Take Action

2003 Study of Teacher Supply and Demand in Tennessee

Focus on Teacher Salaries: Recent Actions in the SREB States

interstate profile on e-learning enrollments have been added to the annual survey.

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 (Condensed edition)

SREB Fact Book on Higher Education (Online edition, available 24/7)

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

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES (CONTINUED)

SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program

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200 and Counting. ... The **SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program** has reached another milestone — more than 200 Ph.D. graduates and counting.

The Southern Regional Education Board formed the Doctoral Scholars Program in 1993 because in many states the number of minority Ph.D. graduates was zero, or close to it, in several key disciplines. Now in its 11th year, the program is helping more than half of the SREB states. Designed to be “more than a check and a handshake,” the Doctoral Scholars Program follows a simple approach: identify minority graduate students who are committed to careers in academia; provide them with intensive support as they pursue Ph.D.s; and help them secure tenure-track faculty positions so that they may prepare and mentor the next generation of scholars.

Colleges and universities throughout the South and across America have recognized the need to diversify their faculties to serve an increasingly diverse student population. The SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program — which is represented on more than 83 campuses — has become an important resource for efforts to increase the region’s faculty diversity. However, even with a decade of success and more than 200 graduates, we have not produced enough graduates to place one minority faculty member in each state-supported institution in the region.

The program’s “strong support = staying power” philosophy is working; the outstanding statistics prove it. The retention and graduation rate is almost 90 percent; nationwide, only about 37 percent of minority doctoral scholars eventually earn their Ph.D.s. More than 500 minority scholars will have received support from the Doctoral Scholars Program by the end of 2004; nearly 225 will have earned Ph.D.s. Some 70 percent of the program’s graduates have found jobs as faculty, postdoctoral researchers or administrators at colleges and universities. Another 260 scholars are in the SREB pipeline, and new students are accepted each year.

More than 700 scholars, faculty and guests attended the 10th annual Compact for Faculty Diversity’s Institute on Teaching and Mentoring, which was held in Miami, Florida. SREB is hosting the 11th annual institute in Atlanta; it should be the largest ever, with more than 800 participants. This is America’s largest gathering of minority Ph.D. scholars. Participants are provided with seminar and workshop opportunities to gain skills and knowledge that will assist them in earning the Ph.D. and succeeding as junior faculty members on college and university campuses.

The SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program has taken advantage of several grants that increase opportunities and allow the Doctoral Scholars Program to deliver support services to more than 200 additional minority Ph.D. scholars. Grants have been given by the National Science Foundation Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate, the National Institutes of Health Minority Access to Research Careers, The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Minority Ph.D. Program and the Philadelphia Foundation Wright-Hayre Fund.

Publications:

Milestone Graduates: 200 and Counting

A decade, a difference ...

Pathways to the Professoriate

Doctoral Scholars: Online Directory

Distance Learning Policy Laboratory

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SREB's **Distance Learning Policy Laboratory** (DLPL) was established in 1999 as a forum for addressing and promoting solutions to a number of policy barriers facing distance learners. Seven reports were 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 that includes four overarching objectives:

- Extend citizen and student access to infrastructure, programs, services and training.
- Take advantage of regional resources that can be shared.
- Use state and institutional financing policies to more effectively support distance learning.
- Provide more and better information for quality improvement and accountability.

The Distance Learning Policy Laboratory set forth six initiatives for SREB in 2003-2004:

- Establishing a teacher portal embedded within the broader Ways In initiative.
- Developing a Regional Consortium for Nurse Educators (master's and doctoral online degree programs and services provided through the Ways In initiative).
- Using the Electronic Campus to respond to the urgent needs to increase capacity in higher education in colleges and universities in SREB states.

- Using technology to expand the reach and effectiveness of adult education.
- Creating a plan and developing a pilot project for the “degree completer institution” concept.
- Planning a regional financial aid clearinghouse through the Ways In initiative.

Several of these are detailed in the Electronic Campus section of this report. For the current year, the Distance Learning Policy Laboratory will flesh out several of those objectives:

The launch and expansion of the SREB Teacher Center

A regional financial aid clearinghouse.

A system for transferring credit hours, including the concept of a “degree completer institution” and the idea of a “learning bank” or “learning inventory.”

Publications:

Technology Can Extend Access to Postsecondary Education: An Action Agenda for the South

Reports in the Distance Learning Policy Laboratory series:

Distance Learning and the Transfer of Academic Credit

Anytime, Anyplace Services for the 21st Century Student

Creating Financial Aid Programs That Work for Distance Learners

Using Finance Policy to Reduce Barriers to Distance Learning

The Challenges of Quality Assurance in a Distance Learning Environment

Empowering Faculty to Utilize Technology

Universal Access to Technology and Support

HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK

High Schools That Work

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High Schools That Work 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 30 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.

In 2004, *HSTW* assessed 63,000 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 hosts an annual Staff Development Conference for more than 6,000 high school and middle grades administrators, academic and career/technical teachers, and counselors. In 2003-2004, *HSTW* also held 11 national workshops for 3,500 educators. In most cases, the representative on the *HSTW* board is the state director of career/technical education. This board and SREB work together to plan, coordinate and monitor the *HSTW* initiative.

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 Brief: Raise Academic Standards and Get More Students to Complete High School: How 13 Georgia Schools Did It

Outstanding Practices 2004: Using Rigor, Relevance and Relationships to Improve Student Achievement: How Some High Schools Do It

High School Reform Works — When Implemented: A Comparative Study of High- and Low-implementation Schools

Research Brief: Linking Career/Technical Studies to Broader High School Reform: What can school districts, states and the nation do to get more high schools to implement comprehensive high school reform?

Doing What Works: Moving Together on High Standards for All Students

Update Newsletter: Positive School Culture

Technical Assistance: A Guide for Local Sites

Successful Transitions: Urban Middle Grades to High School Transition Initiative

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Help more urban students successfully make the critical transition from the middle grades to high school. With ground-breaking support from The Goldman Sachs Foundation, SREB has mobilized 27 clusters of middle grades and high schools to make this help a reality for students and to create a proven pathway for other schools and their students. That pathway must lead successfully to and through the ninth grade for these urban students.

Every year *HSTW* assesses eighth- and ninth-grade students and conducts surveys of teachers in the middle grades-high school clusters.

In the last year, 15 technical assistance visits by highly qualified teams were conducted at participating middle grades and high schools.

There is progress to report in 2004, and nearly one-fourth of the schools will present findings at the *HSTW* Staff Development Conference in July 2004.

Publications:

The 2003 Ninth-grade Student Survey Data Report (Fall 2004)

Making Middle Grades Work

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Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) began in 1997 with a two-year grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation to assess middle grades education in the 16 SREB states. A second grant from the foundation helped SREB launch a network of middle grades schools in 13 states. Currently 202 middle grades sites are using the *Making Middle Grades Work* framework for school improvement.

Making Middle Grades Work uses an assessment referenced to the tests given by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Schools participating in the *Making Middle Grades Work* network in 2000 and 2002 made significant improvement in reading and mathematics achievement on the NAEP-referenced assessment.

Urban Network of High Schools That Work Sites

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A determined coalition of 93 schools in 11 urban districts forms the Urban Network of *High Schools That Work*, and these schools and district leaders are aligning policies, resources and district initiatives to improve what is taught, how it is taught and how well students are learning.

More than 30 visits were conducted during the 2003-2004 school year. More than 125 teacher leaders, local school administrators and district personnel participated in one of the three leadership workshops.

Three training modules dealing with small learning communities were made available. Teacher leaders, local school administrators and district personnel attended the *HSTW* national workshop on developing small learning communities. *HSTW* school improvement consultants assisted eight New

Orleans schools made more progress between 2000 and 2002 on the NAEP-referenced assessment than the nation made between 1998 and 2002 on the NAEP tests themselves in increasing the percentages of students who scored at the Basic and Proficient levels in reading.

Publications:

Getting the Mission Right in the Middle Grades

What Works to Improve Student Achievement in the Middle Grades: A Making Middle Grades Work Research Report

Research Brief: Making Middle Grades Work: School and Classroom Practices That Improve Student Achievement

Orleans schools preparing to implement small learning communities at the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation and the Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation fund the Urban Network. *HSTW* provided contractual services to eight urban districts — Little Rock (Arkansas), DeKalb County (Georgia), New Orleans (Louisiana), Jackson (Mississippi), Houston (Texas), Bibb County (Georgia), Chatham County (Georgia) and Austin (Texas).

Publications:

Research Brief: 2002 High Schools That Work Assessment: Progress in Improving Urban High Schools (Fall 2004)

HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK (CONTINUED)

Project Lead The Way

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Project Lead The Way is one of the most successful — if not the most successful — program of its kind in America. It is a pre-engineering program to improve the academic and technical achievement of students in the middle grades and high schools. Project Lead the Way's success is that 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. During the 2004-2005 school year, 223 high schools in 14 SREB states will offer PLTW courses to their students.

This year, seven higher education institutions in SREB states became affiliate universities for Project Lead The Way. These institutions are

Arkansas Technical University, Duke University, the University of Houston, the University of Maryland — Baltimore County, the University of South Carolina, the University of South Florida and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. 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 PLTW course taught in the fall. The Project Lead The Way organization provided \$542,000 over three years to make the program available to schools in SREB's *High Schools That Work* network.

High Schools That Work Assistance to Low-performing Schools

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High Schools That Work provides assistance to low-performing schools that receive Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) grants. In 2003-2004, *HSTW* consultants provided support to 131 schools in 36 states. These schools contracted with the Southern Regional Education Board for assistance in implementing the *High Schools That Work* and *Making Middle Grades Work* improvement designs. Contracted support included more than 500 on-site coaching visits by *HSTW* consultants, 126 on-site professional development workshops and more than 1,000 attendees at *HSTW* national workshops. Providing intensive support — on-site coaching by qualified school improvement consultants, on-site staff development and national staff development aligned to school improvement plans — resulted in 41 percent of these sites making gains in all three assessed areas (reading, mathematics and science), compared with 32 percent in all *HSTW* sites.

The 41 *HSTW* sites that complete their contracts as grant funding ends will transition into state *HSTW* networks. It is expected that additional sites will be added as states award a new round of CSR grants. The intensive support provided by *HSTW* helps schools make accelerated strides in implementing the improvement designs and provides valuable lessons to SREB and states about what works in improving low-performing schools.

Publications:

Site Development Guide: Ten Strategies for Creating a Classroom Culture of High Expectations

Site Development Guide: Student Scheduling and the Course-selection Process

Professional Development Series: Using Small Learning Communities to Implement the High Schools That Work Design

Making Schools Work

Caro Feagin, director: caro.feagin@sreb.org

Making Schools Work (MSW) is a rural initiative funded through a grant from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education. This initiative is aimed at assisting high schools and feeder middle grades schools in 75 school districts across SREB states that use the *HSTW* and *MMGW* designs to raise student achievement. Its primary goals are to smooth the transition between the middle grades and high school and to increase the percentages of eighth- and 12th-graders who achieve at the Proficient level on exams referenced to the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The Proficient level indicates that eighth-graders have skills needed to be successful in rigorous high school studies and that 12th-graders have important skills needed for postsecondary education and learning in career-track jobs.

Each year, participating schools are offered services that include on-site technical assistance, coaching and professional development — all aligned to the schools' improvement plans. This past year, all 166 schools in the Making Schools Work network received technical assistance and coaching visits, including 210 days of site-specific professional development.

Of the 34 middle grades schools assessed in 2001 and 2003, 91 percent showed gains in student achievement in reading, mathematics or science, with 44 percent improving in all three areas. Of the 35 high schools assessed, 63 percent showed improvement in one or more content areas, with 31 percent improving in all three areas.

Publications:

Site Development Guide #12: Literacy Across the Curriculum: Setting and Implementing Goals for Grades Six through 12

Getting Students Ready for College-preparatory/Honors Science: What Middle Grades Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do

Getting Students Ready for College-preparatory/Honors English: What Middle Grades Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do

Research Brief: Factors Affecting Reading and Writing Achievement in Rural Schools (Fall 2004)

Research Brief: Factors Affecting Science Achievement in Rural Schools (Fall 2004)

Case Study: Paint Valley, Ohio (Summer 2004)

Case Study: Sumter County, Georgia (Summer 2004)

Case Study: Saluda, South Carolina (Fall 2004)

High School to College and Career Transitions Initiative

Ann Benson, director: gben@brightok.net

With support from the U.S. Department of Adult and Vocational Education and a working agreement with the League for Innovation in the Community College, SREB's **High School to College and Career Transitions Initiative** will provide technical assistance services to 15 post-secondary institutions and their high school partners during 2004-2005. The aim is to develop practical assistance that can be shared with many more schools.

Each 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.

SREB will assist sites to decrease remediation; increase academic achievement; increase enrollment and persistence to completion; increase attainment of postsecondary degrees, certificates or other recognized credentials; and increase entry into employment or further education.

Publications:

Brochure: *Improving Student Performance: High School to College and Career Transition Practices That Work* (Summer 2004)

Brochure: *Technical Assistance Services to Support High School to College and Career Transition Practices That Work* (Summer 2004)

HSTW/MMGW Special Project

Susan Henson, director: susan.henson@sreb.org

In this project — part of a joint initiative — *High Schools That Work* will focus on transitions, literacy, numeracy and leadership.

Specifically, *HSTW's* part of the initiative will address five aspects of secondary school comprehensive reform:

- Designing ninth-grade and senior-year catch-up systems.
- Integrating study and literacy skills into content subjects.
- Integrating more real-world problems into core academic subjects and academic content into career/technical courses.
- Having leadership teams implement and sustain comprehensive school reform based on *HSTW* standards.

- Aligning mathematics, science and career/technical studies with a focus on mathematics and comprehensive school reform.

SREB will provide training for district and school leaders, collect and analyze data, develop guides and training materials, and conduct technical and coaching visits. This assistance will be given to school leaders in 26 rural school sites with 28 high schools and 19 feeder middle grades schools in 10 SREB states to more fully implement the *High Schools That Work* and *Making Middle Grades Work* designs.

The initiative is funded by a three-year grant from the U. S. Office of Education. Called the "Consortium on Secondary School Comprehensive Reform," it is composed of three national models — First Things First, *High Schools That Work* and Talent Development.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership Initiative

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The **SREB Leadership Initiative** — supported by a \$3 million, three-year grant from the Wallace Foundation — is attempting to redesign the preparation and development of school principals. The initiative includes a university network of 11 institutions and a state network of eight leadership academies.

Several universities in the University Leadership Development Network are making progress. Three universities redesigned the structure of their programs. Two universities are expected to graduate more than 20 candidates in the summer of 2004. Six universities established strong partnerships with local school districts to prepare new school leaders. Five states are moving to redesign university leadership preparation programs statewide.

Nine SREB states — Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Texas and West Virginia — are forming state or regional academies by utilizing the SREB Leadership Academy Network redesign framework. Four states are training leadership teams from low-

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performing schools. Four states have increased funding for the work of the state leadership academy.

SREB developed 14 leadership curriculum modules designed to support universities, state academies and local school systems as they prepare and develop leaders who can work to improve curriculum, instruction and student achievement. During the year, SREB trained more than 500 persons as instructors in one or more of the modules.

Publications:

Brochure: SREB Leadership Training Modules Engage Leaders in Solving Real School Problems

Progress Being Made in Getting a Quality Leader in Every School

The Quality of Field Experiences in Educational Leadership Programs (Summer 2004)

Urban LEAD Districts and Their University Partners

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The **SREB LEAD Initiative** — supported by a \$1 million, three-year grant from the Wallace Foundation — is to assist in the redesigning of school leadership programs so that they better prepare school leaders who can contribute to school improvement and increase student achievement. It includes a technical assistance effort to 12 urban school districts and their university partners.

The LEAD Initiative offered participating districts and their university partners training in the SREB Leadership 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.

SREB worked with Providence Public Schools to prepare and publish a case study of their work with the University of Rhode Island to redesign a leadership program. SREB also is working with Springfield, Illinois, and Eugene, Oregon, to publish similar case studies. The case studies are designed to inform other institutions of higher education and local districts about the process of redesign, challenges faced, lessons learned and possible actions for closing the gaps between where they currently are and truly redesigned programs.

Educational Technology Cooperative

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The **Educational Technology Cooperative**, now in its 10th 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 Educational Technology Cooperative. “Unique” gets used too much in education, but this is a unique multistate cooperative.

Multi-State Online Professional Development (MOPD) 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 effective, and it can reach teachers regardless of where they live or teach. MOPD is an initiative of the SREB Educational Technology Cooperative, which works closely with all SREB states’ departments of education.

The **American TeEdCommunications Alliance (ATAlliance)** links education and telecommunications to provide schools, colleges, state agencies, libraries and other nonprofit groups with benefits in telecommunications services. It provides low-cost access to telecommunications 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 the Southern Regional Education Board, the other three regional educational compacts and a successful national nonprofit telecommunications organization (MiCTA).

Evalutech, an initiative of the SREB Educational Technology 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.
- Information about numerous major e-learning software companies.
- Analysis of literacy skills and links to 21st century skills initiatives.
- Accessible technology resources for students with disabilities.
- Links to online learning and online professional development resources.

Online Learning is an important emphasis for the SREB Educational Technology Cooperative. With in-person meetings and electronic information sharing, the cooperative members focus on funding and quality issues and what states need to consider in decisions about starting, operating or sharing virtual schools.

The SREB Web page **Statewide Educational Networks in SREB States** provides state-by-state information on 75 networks that provide the high-ways for data, voice and video applications shared within states. Policy and management issues associated with these continually changing statewide networks will be the focus of a new Cooperative white paper.

SREB is one of five organizations in the **SouthEast Initiatives for Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR*TEC)**. This federally funded initiative helps state departments of education and school districts plan uses of technology, share information, review educational technology policies that affect K-12 education, and write proposals to systematically address technology problem they face.

Publications:

Why Statewide Educational Networks are Important to State and Education Leaders

Why is Technology Access for Students with Disabilities Important?

Electronic Campus

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Mary Larson, associate director: mary.larson@sreb.org

Angela Birkes, associate director, Adult Learning Campaign: angela.birkes@sreb.org

As the South's "electronic marketplace" for distance learning courses, programs and services, SREB's *Electronic Campus* provides more than 200 colleges and universities the opportunity to make available online courses for e-learners from around the world. Entering its sixth year of operation, the *Electronic Campus* offers access to more than 9,000 credit courses and 400 degree programs from public and private colleges and universities in all SREB states.

Ways In Mentor, a regional "learning network" for the South, was officially launched February 25 in Little Rock when Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee (the SREB chairman) announced the opening of the new Web site at www.waysinmentor.org. His symbolic switching on of Ways In Mentor established America's first fully integrated Web site focused on the needs of e-learners and adult learners. It is built on the *Electronic Campus* and provides regional-level services and connectivity across the 16 SREB states and their colleges and universities. Ways In Mentor takes advantage of existing state networks, called Mentor™ systems, currently in place in 11 of the 16 SREB states, and extends services to distance learners across state lines. The launch of Ways In Mentor provides increased opportunities for SREB to work with states to address challenges. The first such effort will focus on teachers.

The **SREB Teacher Center**, to be launched in the summer 2004, will provide a convenient one-stop shop for the more than 2.2 million educators in the 16 SREB states. SREB and its states realize the importance of providing opportunities for educators, both new and experienced, in meeting their career goals, to maintain skills and knowledge and to respond to new federal and state requirements. The SREB Teacher Center will provide a variety of online resources and services to help teachers balance work, family and their professional-development requirements.

The **Regional Consortium for Nurse Educators**, a pilot project for master's and doctoral online courses for nurse educators that grew out of the work of the Distance Learning Policy Laboratory, can also be reached

through the Ways In Mentor Web site and will begin offering courses this fall.

Also growing from the work of the Distance Learning Policy Laboratory is the **Adult Learning Campaign**, supported by a \$1 million grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education. The campaign is targeting three groups:

- Young adults who can get a GED and then move to additional training or postsecondary education.
- Adults who may need a GED and/or college preparation to pursue postsecondary certificates, diplomas or degree programs.
- Adults who have at least an associate's degree who are seeking to advance their postsecondary education via supplemental courses (both credit and noncredit), certificates or degree programs at any level.

One of the primary objectives of the project is to increase the use of the new Ways In Mentor Web site. This site will be particularly valuable in reaching associate's and baccalaureate degree holders seeking continuing education and advanced degrees (such as nurses and teachers). But we also expect to reach underserved minority and ethnic groups and to support state efforts targeting adult basic education services.

A new initiative, building on the successful four-year-old Academic Common Market/*Electronic Campus* program, will be launched in 2004. This new effort will add technically oriented online associate degree programs to the Academic Common Market. These courses fit with the needs of working adults who cannot leave family, job or other commitments to undertake needed study. This pilot effort will expand access at in-state tuition rates, a central objective of the Academic Common Market program.

Publications:

Ways In Mentor Web Site (www.waysinmentor.org)

Targeting the Adult Learning Challenge in SREB States

REGIONAL CONTRACT PROGRAM AND ACADEMIC COMMON MARKET

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The **Regional Contract Program** enables states to share costly programs for health professionals and to postpone — or even avoid — duplicating some of these programs. 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:

- States that contract for spaces for their qualified residents avoid the expenses of new programs.
- Students who live in states without 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** this year celebrated 30 years of connecting states, students and universities. The Academic Common Market multiplies benefits and divides costs 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 in several ways. 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. About 2,000 students are certified each year for the Academic Common Market, making the Common Market's "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 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* can all be found at the Academic Common Market site at www.sreb.org.

COUNCIL ON COLLEGIATE EDUCATION FOR NURSING

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

More than 150 deans and directors of nursing education programs in SREB states attended the 2003 annual meeting in Atlanta. Its theme was “Economic Impact of the Registered Nurse Shortage: Macro Perspective.” The focus on the economic impact took a new approach — moving from how the nursing shortage affects individuals needing care to its impact on the economy of communities, counties, states and the nation. State leaders, including legislators proposing specific actions, examined how the lack of registered nurses and diminished access to health care can affect the economy in such areas as tourism and location of new industries.

The SREB states continue to experience a major shortage of qualified nurse educators. The 2003 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. Graduate nursing programs are not producing a sufficient number of graduates to meet the demand for faculty in SREB states.

An ad hoc committee of the Council, led by Jean A. Kelley (professor emeritus at the University of Alabama at Birmingham), has selected five universities to participate in a regional consortium to prepare nurse educators. The graduate nursing programs at these universities will pilot selected online courses through the SREB *Electronic Campus*, beginning 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.

The council’s strategic plan for 2002-2006 focuses on:

- Recruitment and development of faculty.

- Needed curriculum changes to ensure preparation of graduates with the knowledge required for safe and effective practice.
- Use of existing resources wisely in new and creative ways.
- Collaboration and partnerships across institutional and state boundaries.

Current initiatives are:

- Collaboration with the SREB *Electronic Campus* to develop 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 2002 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 considering 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.
- Replication of the Arkansas model on the economic impact of the shortage of registered nurses. A shortage is not simply an issue for hospitals and nurses. It has regional implications for economic development and a community’s quality of life. The Council’s research committee, led by Barbara G. Williams (University of Central Arkansas), will develop and implement the plan.

Publications:

2003 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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