Oklahoma and SREB

SREB and its mission

The Southern Regional Education Board works with 16 member states to improve education at every level — from prekindergarten to postdoctoral study. As the nation’s first interstate compact for education, SREB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization created by visionary governors and legislators who recognized the critical link between education and the economic vitality of the region.

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

The organization’s work is guided by SREB’s Challenge to Lead Goals for Education, which call for SREB states to lead the nation in educational progress. Meeting these goals means that many SREB states must continue to raise the quality of education students receive at all levels, close achievement gaps, vastly improve high school graduation rates, and better prepare all students for college and careers.

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

Oklahoma Board and Legislative Advisory Council members

Board terms for appointed members expire June 30 of the specified year. Board members are: Governor Brad Henry; Nelda Jo Kirk, deputy chief of staff for administration, Office of the Governor (2012); Kara Gae Neal, superintendent/CEO, Tulsa Technology Center (2013); Senator Susan Paddack (2010); and M. Susan Savage, secretary of state (2011). As a legislative member of the Board, Senator Paddack serves on the Legislative Advisory Council. Senator Richard C. Lerblance and Representatives Jeannie McDaniel and Jabar Shumate also serve on the Council as governor-appointed members.
Where does financial support come from?

Basic operating support comes from annual appropriations from each member state. The operating budget of more than $44 million also includes funds from foundations and federal sources. In addition, SREB administers the Regional Contract Program for students in medicine, dentistry, optometry, veterinary medicine, osteopathic medicine and other fields. The operating budget for the Regional Contract Program is approximately $12 million.

Preparing for college and careers

More than ever before, most Americans need some form of education beyond high school to succeed economically. In fact, ensuring that all students are reading for college and work is one of the most important challenges facing public education. SREB has two projects under way to help states prepare all students to enter and succeed in college and the workplace.

The first is the State College and Career Readiness Initiative. In 2008, SREB received a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to accelerate progress in college and career readiness in several SREB states. With this support, SREB is working separately with Kentucky, Maryland, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia to ensure that each state has a single set of statewide college- and career-readiness standards in reading and math that are recognized and applied by all public high schools and colleges in the state.

SREB has developed a model college/career readiness agenda that outlines the specific steps that state leaders need to take to establish or expand an effective, statewide college-readiness initiative. SREB helps each state review existing readiness standards or develop and approve new ones, develop plans for helping teachers know the readiness standards and incorporate them into classroom instruction, and revise senior-year curricula and instruction to strengthen the academic skills of students who need help meeting the standards before graduation. SREB also works with each state to ensure that end-of-course exams specifically measure whether students meet college- and career-readiness standards. SREB will disseminate project results nationally through case study reports and other papers.

The second project is A Focus on Four-Year College Completion. Less than one-third of degree-seeking, full-time freshmen in public four-year institutions in the United States graduate in four years. SREB is exploring successful strategies that states and public higher education institutions are using to help more students achieve bachelor’s degrees — with particular interest in students who enter regional colleges and universities and have academic and/or economic disadvantages. The study includes on-site interviews to identify specific institutional actions that contribute to higher graduation rates. Based on this work, an SREB report with recommendations for policy-makers, practitioners and researchers will be published later in 2009.

These SREB projects are geared toward stronger academic preparation and higher college completion rates, which are critical to SREB states’ future prosperity.

Charting states’ educational progress

SREB’s central focus is helping member states meet the Challenge to Lead Goals for Education, adopted in 2002. The set of 12 goals begins with an ambitious statement: “SREB states can lead the nation in educational progress.” To meet the goals, students at every level must be ready for learning — in first grade, the middle grades, high school, college and the workplace. Schools and colleges also must close gaps in academic achievement among groups of students. And, every state must ensure that its educational agencies and institutions work together as part of a single system so that students can make smooth transitions from one education level to the next.
SREB completed the first series of 12 reports on the Challenge to Lead goals — one per goal — by 2006. In total, SREB now has issued three sets of customized, biennial state progress reports to assist state education leaders and policy-makers. These reports highlight the progress of individual states in meeting the goals, point out significant improvements by most SREB states in many areas, and make recommendations on next steps to pursue.

SREB also has provided state leaders and others with focus reports on topics related to the goals, including school readiness, early grades, middle grades, and school leadership. SREB will issue additional reports on high school graduation, adult literacy and college completion in the months ahead. The fourth set of customized, biennial state progress reports will be issued in June 2010. All reports are available at www.sreb.org. Recent reports include:

- On the Move: State Progress Reports
- Set for Success: Improving Reading and Mathematics Achievement in the Early Grades
- Keeping Middle Grades Students on the Path to Success in High School: Increasing Engagement and Achievement in SREB States

![Encouraging more students to stay in school](image)

SREB’s Go Alliance is a partnership of SREB states that share marketing strategies to encourage more students — particularly minority and low-income students — to complete high school and go to college. In addition to its annual meeting, which draws representatives from SREB states each fall, Go Alliance hosts a successful workshop series that provides professional development in college access marketing strategies. The series has focused recently on general campaign planning, evaluation strategies, engaging community-based organizations, working with Latino groups and using “new media” (media other than radio and TV) to reach youth and others. The events have been praised highly and well attended by all participating states.

Go Alliance owns and manages the national College Access Marketing Web site. The Go Alliance Web site (www.goallianceonline.org) is hosted within this national site. Together, these sites provide specific information about successful campaigns that have been developed to encourage students to pursue more education. The sites help states save dollars and time by producing, replicating and sharing marketing ideas that have proven effective.

![Improving schools](image)

SREB’s High Schools That Work (HSTW) program, active in more than 1,200 schools in 31 network states and the District of Columbia, is America’s largest high school improvement effort. Oklahoma has 26 member schools in the network.

Oklahoma schools participate in a variety of professional development sessions to support continuous school improvement. Three Oklahoma school leaders participated in SREB’s national workshops and leadership series throughout 2008-2009. Five Technical Assistance Visits (TAVs) and three Technical Review Visits were conducted in 2008-2009. Oklahoma worked with SREB to establish a customized, year-long focus on literacy across the curriculum for all HSTW sites, targeting the low-implementation and low-performing sites. In November 2008, three leaders from Oklahoma attended the State Leaders Forum, which focused on making career/technical education an integral part of high school reform. In July 2009, 372 Oklahoma teachers attended the HSTW Staff Development Conference in Atlanta, and Oklahoma’s Lawton High School received the HSTW Gold Award for Improved Implementation during the conference. More than 2,200 12th-graders are expected to participate in the 2010 HSTW Assessment in January.

High Schools That Work and Project Lead the Way® Inc. have formed a partnership to create opportunities for high school students to engage in engineering and biomedical science pathways. During the 2009-2010 school year, HSTW will support 935 schools in SREB states as they implement challenging
curricula to improve students’ achievement in mathematics and science and to interest more students in pursuing engineering- and science-related studies and careers. In Oklahoma, 52 schools are committed to providing students with these challenging academic and career/technical programs of study. Oklahoma State University and the Oklahoma State Department of Education are working together to provide support and college opportunities for these high school students.

SREB’s Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) is active in more than 350 schools in 16 network states. These schools are committed to improving student achievement and readiness for challenging high school studies. Oklahoma does not participate in SREB’s Making Middle Grades Work as a state school improvement initiative.

The Technology Centers That Work (TCTW) initiative was created in 2007-2008 to help career/technology centers embed college- and career-readiness academic standards into instruction and produce graduates who can succeed in postsecondary studies and careers in high-demand, high-skill, high-wage fields. The network currently includes more than 125 sites in 12 states, including 11 centers in Oklahoma. In 2008-2009, SREB provided two TAVs, numeracy workshops and follow-up training related to literacy across the curriculum. A data workshop helped site teams better understand their data, and follow-up training was completed that related to literacy. Four additional centers are expected to join the network in 2009-2010. To further support the new TCTW network, the state will host professional development sessions to follow up on literacy and numeracy as well as training to create effective guidance and advisement systems to address improvement needs.

The SREB Learning-Centered Leadership Program helps states improve principal preparation, professional development and working conditions to focus school leadership on improved student achievement. The program conducts research, publishes reports and tracks states’ progress on indicators of a learning-centered school leadership system. A new report will be published in spring 2010 based on an expanded study that looks not only at state policy and actions, but also at reports of implementation from superintendents and university preparation programs.

SREB’s 19 Leadership Curriculum Modules have been used extensively to prepare leaders to improve curriculum, instruction and student achievement. Nearly 350 participants from the region, including 21 from Oklahoma, have been trained this year as module instructors to use these materials in university programs, state leadership academies, schools and districts.

The Leadership Program convenes annual forums to address critical school leadership issues and spur state leaders and policy-makers to action. One leader from Oklahoma attended the 2009 Leadership Forum, which focused on leading learning through leadership teams.

■ The most current comparative information for state leaders on colleges

For 40 years the SREB-State Data Exchange has given Oklahoma officials in government and higher education timely, comparative information on postsecondary education enrollments, state and local appropriations, faculty salaries and benefits, degrees awarded, student persistence and progression toward graduation, tuition and fees, and higher education revenues. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education furnishes campus-by-campus information to the Data Exchange. States use Data Exchange information in planning and coordinating activities, in making budget decisions about higher education and in setting tuition and fees. The Data Exchange also enables states to work together to develop new interstate comparisons to measure progress. For example, comparisons on e-learning enrollments and time-to-degree are available.

Newly published in June 2009, the biennial SREB Fact Book on Higher Education has been a standard reference for policy-makers for more than 50 years. The Fact Book provides information on national, regional and state trends in population, schools, the economy, college enrollments, degrees awarded, student finance, college budgeting, and salaries and benefits for faculty and administrators.
Using technology to improve teaching and increase learning

The SREB Educational Technology Cooperative brings together technology leaders from 37 state K-12 and higher education agencies across the 16 SREB states to create and expand effective uses of technology in public schools and colleges. More than 3,400 school districts and nearly 800 two- and four-year institutions are represented by the Cooperative membership. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technical Education, and the Oklahoma State Department of Education are members.

Now in its 14th year as a nationally recognized leader in educational technology, the Cooperative connects its members, communicates research and trends, and catalyzes projects and educational technology policy leadership, enabling its members to better achieve their state’s academic goals.

Serving many and diverse roles as it lends support to members, the Cooperative helps them collaborate face-to-face and digitally in meetings, Webinars and other activities; researches, monitors and reports on the latest educational technology issues; and has published more than 60 updates for state policy- and decision-makers since its inception in 1996. It addresses ongoing and emerging technology issues through conferences and other events for its member network; provides several innovative Web sites with the information that state leaders, educators and online teachers need; and assists with state planning in educational technology, helping members identify opportunities and obstacles, providing information and guidance on next steps and budget options, and pinpointing the most effective strategies for improving educational technology.

Above all, the Cooperative provides leadership, helping states share resources and information in fast-growing technology arenas. Assisted in part by the Cooperative, all SREB states now have state-sponsored virtual schools, which provide needed academic Web-based (online) courses to middle grades and high school students regardless of where they live in the state. The SREB-State Virtual Schools initiative helps SREB states work together, sharing information on important policy and finance issues and ensuring quality online teaching and courses. States’ progress is updated in the annual SREB Report on State Virtual Schools, and the Cooperative also published Standards for Quality Online Teaching, the nation’s first standards for quality online teaching, plus Standards for Quality Online Courses. In 2009, the Guidelines for Professional Development for Online Teachers received national news coverage. Today, the quality standards for online teachers developed by the Cooperative have been adapted nationally and internationally.

The Cooperative has been especially active in professional development for online teachers — helping improve teaching and student learning through the use of the Web and providing guidelines and materials for quality professional development. Through funding by the AT&T Foundation, SREB has developed the SREBOnlineTeachers.org Web site. This site provides links to resources (including a custom-developed set of Web 2.0 “Cool Tools” teachers can use to identify and select leading-edge teaching applications) and an online teachers forum where online teachers can find and share information that aids in instruction and boosts student achievement. Also available at the site is the “It Happens Online” video, featuring online teachers from SREB state virtual schools talking about their teaching experiences. This video was co-produced in association with the Pearson Foundation. The Cooperative recognized excellence in online instruction this year by awarding certificates for “High-Quality Online Teaching” to teachers from 11 state virtual schools.

An Online Learning Institute was co-sponsored with the International Society for Technology in Education and the Educational Development Center on July 1, 2009, at the National Educational Computing Conference in Washington, D.C.

The Cooperative’s recently expanded digital content initiative, Sharable Content Object Repositories for Education (SCORE), helps improve teaching and learning and lowers costs to states by sharing quality...
digital content and learning tools among schools, colleges and universities. Many SREB states now are working together to develop and share digital learning content. Over the past four years, the SCORE initiative has developed a prototype learning object repository, created a learning object metadata standard that works for finding content designed for either K-12 or higher education users, and conducted digital content training across 12 SREB states. It will release guidelines for increasing interstate sharability of digital learning content in fall 2009. Learn more about the work of the Cooperative at www.sreb.org.

The Electronic Campus is one of the nation’s leading distance learning programs, enabling students to pursue their college studies on the Internet and across state lines. The Electronic Campus provides online access to 30,000 courses and 800 degree programs from colleges and universities throughout the SREB region. It now offers an even wider range of services, especially for adults and e-learners. Users can easily reach specialized services such as online applications, financial assistance, career planning, and searches for courses and programs. The Electronic Campus is part of the Regional Mentor™ System (in partnership with Xap Corporation) and connects with all State Mentor™ programs for high school students. It also provides opportunities to help persons of any age who need a college course, degree program or additional education/training to get or keep a job. Visit the Electronic Campus at www.ElectronicCampus.org.

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

The Academic Common Market/Electronic Campus program combines the best of two SREB programs and enables students in SREB states to enroll in selected online degree programs offered by institutions outside of their home states at in-state tuition rates. More than 70 degree programs are available, and nearly 130 students were certified by their home states for study in ACM/EC programs during the past year. The program provides a growing number of working adults with the flexibility and affordability they need to earn a degree.

SREB’s Adult Learning Campaign targets the more than 20 million working adults 25-55 years old in the region who have some college experience but no degree. This population is critical to local, state and regional economic development. SREB’s adult learning work has focused recently on a project with the Louisiana Board of Regents: the CALL initiative. CALL connects adult learners with fast-track online degree programs. In less than two years since its inception, more than 200 adults have earned their degrees. Kentucky and Oklahoma also have statewide degree completion efforts.

These efforts in SREB states serve as models for other states both in the South and across the country. Several more SREB states are establishing degree completion programs, including Georgia, Tennessee and West Virginia.

The Distance Learning Policy Laboratory remains an important forum for member states to review and develop policies for expanding distance learning. SREB’s aim is to increase access to high-quality, affordable postsecondary education by identifying barriers to distance learning; to support the development of innovative programs to test distance learning models and interstate partnerships; and to encourage colleges, universities and legislatures to make necessary policy changes. Visit the Distance Learning Policy Laboratory at www.sreb.org.
SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program —
continued success in diversifying college faculty

A new SREB publication, The Progress and the Promise: Producing Future Faculty ... 450 Graduates and Counting, chronicles the growth and celebrates another milestone — the 450th minority Ph.D. graduate of the successful SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program. The goal of this program is for states and institutions in the region to increase the number of minority faculty members on college and university campuses. The program’s achievements over the past 16 years demonstrate what states can accomplish when they share resources, focus attention, and work together toward a common goal.

The SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program is one of the most successful programs of its kind in the country. The nationally recognized program has a retention/graduation rate of almost 90 percent — about double the national average. The program also decreases the time it takes to earn a Ph.D. More than 80 percent of program graduates are working in an academic setting, more than 70 percent are employed in the SREB states, and 17 have achieved tenure.

Each year the central event of the SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program is the annual Compact for Faculty Diversity Institute on Teaching and Mentoring, the nation’s largest gathering of minority Ph.D. scholars seeking faculty careers. The Institute attracts more than 1,000 scholars, their mentors and nationally recognized experts. The conference offers a format for intellectual collaboration and further development of critical skills required for outstanding teaching, mentoring and research.

States and students save money as SREB programs help Oklahoma residents earn specialized college degrees

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

The Regional Contract Program makes it possible for residents of other SREB states to contract for student spaces with the University of Oklahoma (in dentistry), Northeastern State University (in optometry) and Oklahoma State University (in osteopathic medicine and veterinary medicine). For providing these contract services, these Oklahoma institutions currently receive more than $270,000 from other SREB states. SREB is the fiscal agent for the Regional Contract Program and handles administrative duties for the states.

The Academic Common Market (ACM) enables Oklahoma residents to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees in programs of study available in other SREB states, but not in their home state, at in-state tuition rates. Both the states and students save significantly: States save the cost of creating specialized programs, and students save by paying in-state tuition for ACM programs. Through the ACM, Oklahoma residents have access to 96 programs in other SREB states. Oklahoma institutions offer 56 programs to residents of other SREB states.
Preparing the nurses and nurse educators that SREB states need

One of Oklahoma’s college-based nursing programs is a member of the SREB Council on Collegiate Education for Nursing. The Council — unique in America — enables nurse educators to address trends in nursing education and health care. The theme for the annual meeting on October 11-13, 2009, is Faculty Workload: A Fresh Look at an Ongoing Issue. The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center is one of eight institutions in the SREB Nurse Educator Consortium, which makes online courses available for graduate students and clinicians interested in teaching.

Legislators play major roles

Legislative involvement in SREB is extensive:
- Legislators serve as members and officers of the Board.
- Legislators are members of the Board’s Executive Committee.
- Legislators are members of the Board’s Finance Committee, which is chaired by the treasurer, who is a legislator.
- Legislators also serve on other SREB program committees, panels and task groups.

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