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Goals for Education: Challenge 2000

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The SREB Commission for Educational Quality, 1988

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Achievements, Improvements, and What Remains to be Done

Educational Benchmarks have been SREB's way of keeping the spotlight on progress toward 12 important goals for education endorsed by the Southern Regional Education Board in 1988. Those goals presented a vision of what could be accomplished by the year 2000. Now that the year 2000 has arrived, what have SREB states accomplished over the last decade? What improvements have been made? What remains to be done?

SREB states have become national leaders in programs to help children prepare for first grade and have made significant progress toward preparing all children for first grade.

- ◆ In 1989, six SREB states funded prekindergarten programs for 80,000 children. Today, 14 SREB states fund prekindergarten programs for 400,000 children.

In a number of cases SREB states have made larger gains in student achievement over the last decade than the rest of the nation. In some states these gains were impressive. We are still playing catch-up, however, and on most national measures of student achievement our states continue to trail national averages.

- ◆ In reading, two-thirds of the SREB states improved the percentage of fourth-graders who scored at or above the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the most respected national measure of achievement.
- ◆ In 1989 students from 60 percent of the public high schools in five SREB states took Advanced Placement examinations; today students from 60 percent of public high schools in 10 SREB states take Advanced Placement examinations.
- ◆ Vocational students at SREB's *High Schools That Work* sites had significantly higher achievement scores in reading, mathematics and science than vocational students across the nation.
- ◆ In 1999, average ACT and SAT scores were higher in nearly every SREB state than in 1990 and more high school seniors than ever took these tests.

Dropout rates in the SREB region are lower than in the 1980s. They steadily declined until the early 1990s. Progress stalled then, and rates have remained about the same.

- ◆ In 1980, 18 percent of young people in the SREB region dropped out of school. That figure was 13 percent by 1998.
- ◆ Several SREB states are at or very near the goal that 90 percent of young adults (18- to 24-year-olds) will have a high school diploma.
- ◆ The percentage of adults with high school diplomas is higher today in every SREB state than it was ten years ago.

SREB states are making progress in preparing more high school students for college and in increasing the number and percentage of adults attending college. The percentages of adults who have attended college and who have earned two-year, four-year and graduate degrees remain below the national averages in most SREB states.

- ◆ The percentage of high school graduates in the SREB region who completed a college-preparatory curriculum has doubled since the 1980s.
- ◆ In half of the SREB states four of five students entering four-year colleges *are ready* for college-level work. Remedial education needs more attention from state policymakers, educators and parents.
- ◆ In 1987, 26 percent of young adults in America were enrolled in college, but only three SREB states met or exceeded the national average. In 1997, nationwide 31 percent of young adults enrolled in college and seven SREB states met or exceeded the national average.
- ◆ Three SREB states, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, are above the national average in the percentage of adults with bachelor's degrees.

SREB states are doing a better job of assessing the effectiveness of their public schools, colleges and universities. Much more information about performance is available now than a decade ago.

- ◆ Ten years ago, no SREB state regularly issued comprehensive reports on higher education that were directly related to goals for higher education in the state. Now most SREB states do.
- ◆ Every SREB state now produces school-by-school accountability reports. Only eight did in 1990.

Reforms in teacher preparation, licensure and professional development have not been high priorities in most SREB states despite aggressive state efforts to hold schools and teachers more accountable for results.

SREB states have raised salaries for faculty in schools and in colleges and universities significantly during the 1990s. So have other states across the nation. The increases in other states in the 1990s mean that salaries in the SREB region are about where they were in the late 1980s relative to the national average.

- ◆ It is remarkable that the SREB region added nearly half of the new teachers in America in the last decade and at the same time increased teacher salaries at virtually the national rate.
- ◆ Average salaries for public school teachers moved closer to the national average in nine SREB states. Average salaries for public four-year college faculty in six SREB states improved relative to the national average. Half of the SREB states improved their standing relative to the national average for public two-year college faculty.

SREB states have increased funding for education throughout the 1990s. Most of the increase has been used to increase salaries of teachers, to keep up with enrollment increases and inflation, and to accomplish specific objectives tied to raising quality and improving productivity.

- ◆ For the SREB region, spending for public schools and higher education has outpaced the national increases since the late 1980s.
- ◆ Even with dramatic increases, the percentage of state and local government expenditures for public schools was smaller in the late 1990s than a decade earlier in two thirds of the SREB states. Higher education received a smaller percentage in 15 SREB states.

Educational Benchmarks 2000 shows that SREB states did indeed make progress toward the goals established in 1988 and have improved faster than any other region in the country on many indicators of progress. It also documents the work that remains to be done and the challenges to be faced. As one SREB governor said recently, "If we can lead the nation in improving education, which we did in the 1990s, we can someday lead the nation in education." That is the vision and the challenge.

Mark Musick
President

2 *BY THE YEAR 2000...*

All children will be ready for first grade.

Children begin learning long before they enter school. Many children must overcome serious obstacles to develop the skills they will need in first grade. These facts are far more widely understood and accepted today than they were a decade ago. SREB states have become national leaders in implementing programs to help prepare children for first grade.

The SREB states' efforts to help prepare children for school—and schools for all children—are impressive. Fourteen SREB states now fund preschool programs. Only six did a decade ago. In the SREB states the number of children served in Head Start and state-funded preschool programs is 82 percent higher than in 1990. The national increase is 71 percent. Every SREB state now requires school systems to offer kindergarten.

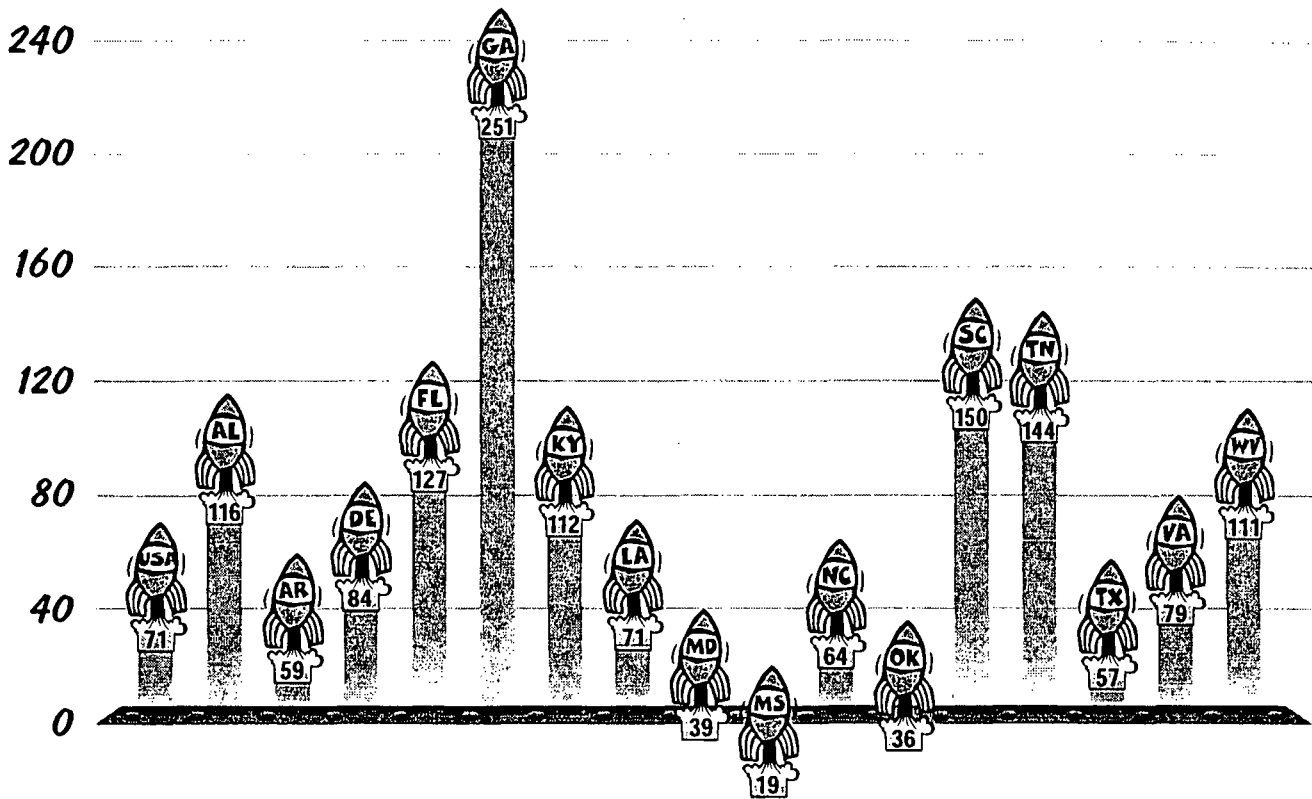
The job, however, is far from done. In six SREB states, the numbers of children served by Head Start and state preschool programs still are less than two-thirds of the 3- and 4-year-olds living in poverty. Five states do not pay for full-day kindergarten in public schools. Seven states do not require all children to attend kindergarten. Every state needs to continue working to make sure that every school is prepared to help children overcome problems that make it more difficult for them to learn to read. More than 20 percent of the region's 3-year-olds have not received all recommended immunizations. Children who are not immunized are at a much greater risk of preventable diseases that can harm them physically and can affect their academic performance by keeping them out of school and causing them to fall behind.

Getting all children ready for the first grade is as important as it is difficult. More and more children are coming to kindergarten without basic knowledge (such as what a word is) and basic skills (such as how to hold a book). There are many causes for this. The most obvious in the public's mind is the number of teenage mothers who lack spouses, education, jobs, and parenting skills. Assigning blame does not relieve us of the responsibility to help prepare these children for school. Research shows that virtually all children can learn—and can learn at high levels. More educators need to believe this fact. Teachers should have the necessary skills and resources to address the solvable problems that affect children before formal schooling begins and that can jeopardize children's health and lives.

Accomplishments and improvements

- ✓ Six SREB states funded prekindergarten programs in 1989. Combined these programs served 80,000 children. In 2000, 14 of the 16 SREB states have prekindergarten programs. They serve more than 400,000 children.

Percent Change in Number of Children in Preschool, 1989 to 1998



- ✓ State-funded preschool programs serve more children in the SREB region than does Head Start.
 - ✓ Head Start enrollment in SREB states has increased by two-thirds since the mid-1980s. Almost 280,000 children are being served through Head Start programs.
- In seven SREB states, the total number of children served by Head Start and state programs equals or exceeds the number of children who live in poverty.
- ✓ Only five SREB states required school systems to offer kindergarten in 1972. Every state requires kindergarten in 2000, and nine make attendance mandatory.
 - ✓ Every SREB state has a reading initiative that helps schools to identify first-graders who are struggling and to intervene to correct those problems.
 - ✓ Thirteen SREB states have immunization rates for 3-year-olds equal to or higher than the national average. This is a significant improvement. Five years ago, only eight SREB states were at or above the national average.
 - ✓ Every SREB state has a federally approved plan to reduce the number of children without health insurance.

Remaining challenges

- ☐ In six SREB states the numbers of children served by Head Start and state preschool programs still are less than two-thirds of the 3- and 4-year-olds living in poverty.
- ☐ Five SREB states do not pay for full-day kindergarten in public schools; seven do not require all children to attend kindergarten of some kind.
- ☐ 300,000 children in the SREB region — more than 20 percent of the region's 3-year-olds — remain vulnerable to preventable health problems because they have not received all recommended immunizations. Many children are not covered by health insurance.
- ☐ States need to pay more attention to quality in preschool programs. Standards for staff qualifications and ratios of staff to children should be consistent with nationally recommended standards.
- ☐ States need to develop ways to assess readiness for school that can be used to provide teachers with useful information about students' individual needs, to reveal how many children are not prepared for first grade and to help measure schools' effectiveness in bringing unprepared students up to speed.
- ☐ States that do not have full-day kindergarten and mandatory attendance in kindergarten of some kind should make these priorities.
- ☐ Too few states monitor and report how many children are promoted or retained in their first years in school. Even in the absence of state policies on promotion and retention, it is important to know how young children are progressing in the early grades.
- ☐ Research shows that children who are not reading at grade level by the end of third grade will continue to fail. Even with the growing emphasis on reading in all SREB states, more attention needs to be focused on intensive early help with reading skills.

SREB states have become national leaders in funding programs to help children prepare for first grade and have made significant progress toward preparing all children for first grade. SREB states have made more progress toward achieving this goal than any of the other 11 goals established in 1988.

For more information, see *SREB States Lead the Way: Getting Children Ready for the First Grade* by David Denton.

2 *BY THE YEAR 2000...*

Student achievement for elementary and secondary students will be at national levels or higher.

Increase student achievement. Better prepare students for further education and the work force. These objectives are at the heart of efforts to improve education.

Several SREB states are at or above the national averages on some measures of student achievement. No SREB state has reached that goal on most national measures of student achievement.

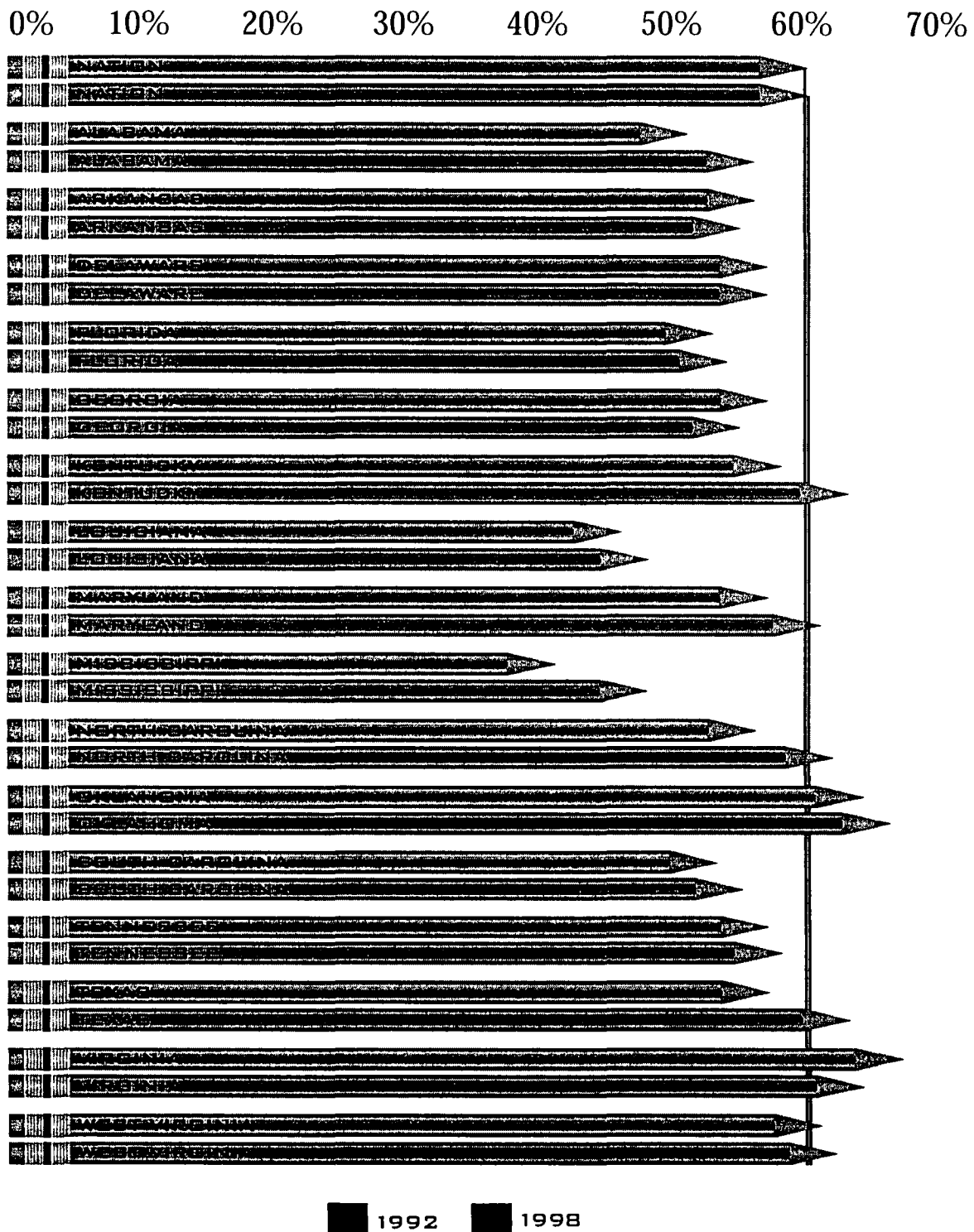
In the late 1980s, there was much skepticism about student achievement results because nearly all states had scores that were "at or above the national average" on some national norm-referenced test. With several "national" tests—each used by only a few states—and with national averages that often changed only once in 10 years, there were statistical explanations of how virtually every state could be above some "national average." Comparable state-by-state results were not available from the National Assessment of Educational Progress until the 1990s.

The 1990s have been very much about trying to answer a key question about student achievement: "How good is good enough?" One important contribution in answering this key question has been made by the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Standards have been established for basic, proficient and advanced levels of performance. These performance standards provide external benchmarks against which states can compare the results of their own testing programs and national norm-referenced tests. Every SREB state participated in the 1998 National Assessment and can compare the performance of its fourth- and eighth-graders with that of fourth- and eighth-graders in other states and across the nation in reading, mathematics, science and writing.

Students from more than 70 percent of the public high schools in half of the SREB states took at least one Advanced Placement examination in 1999; that was true in only three SREB states a decade ago. About 56,000 minority students took Advanced Placement examinations in SREB states in 1999—almost double the number of all students who took Advanced Placement examinations 15 years ago.

States are developing new achievement tests. Some have been put into place. State leaders will need to consider all of the information they can obtain as they determine where their state stands. In the last 10 years, every SREB state has improved on some measure of student achievement. All SREB states are doing a better job of gathering the information necessary to measure changes in student achievement.

Percent of Fourth-Grade Students Who Scored at or Above the Basic Level on the 1992 and 1998 NAEP Reading Assessments



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1999

SREB states are at another critical juncture in improving the achievement of all students. As student assessments become part of states' comprehensive accountability programs, it is important that they be accurate measures of student achievement in coursework and that they be useful for school improvement. Progress has been made in closing the gaps between the achievement of white students and black students, of white students and Hispanic students, and of male students and female students. Much more progress needs to be made.

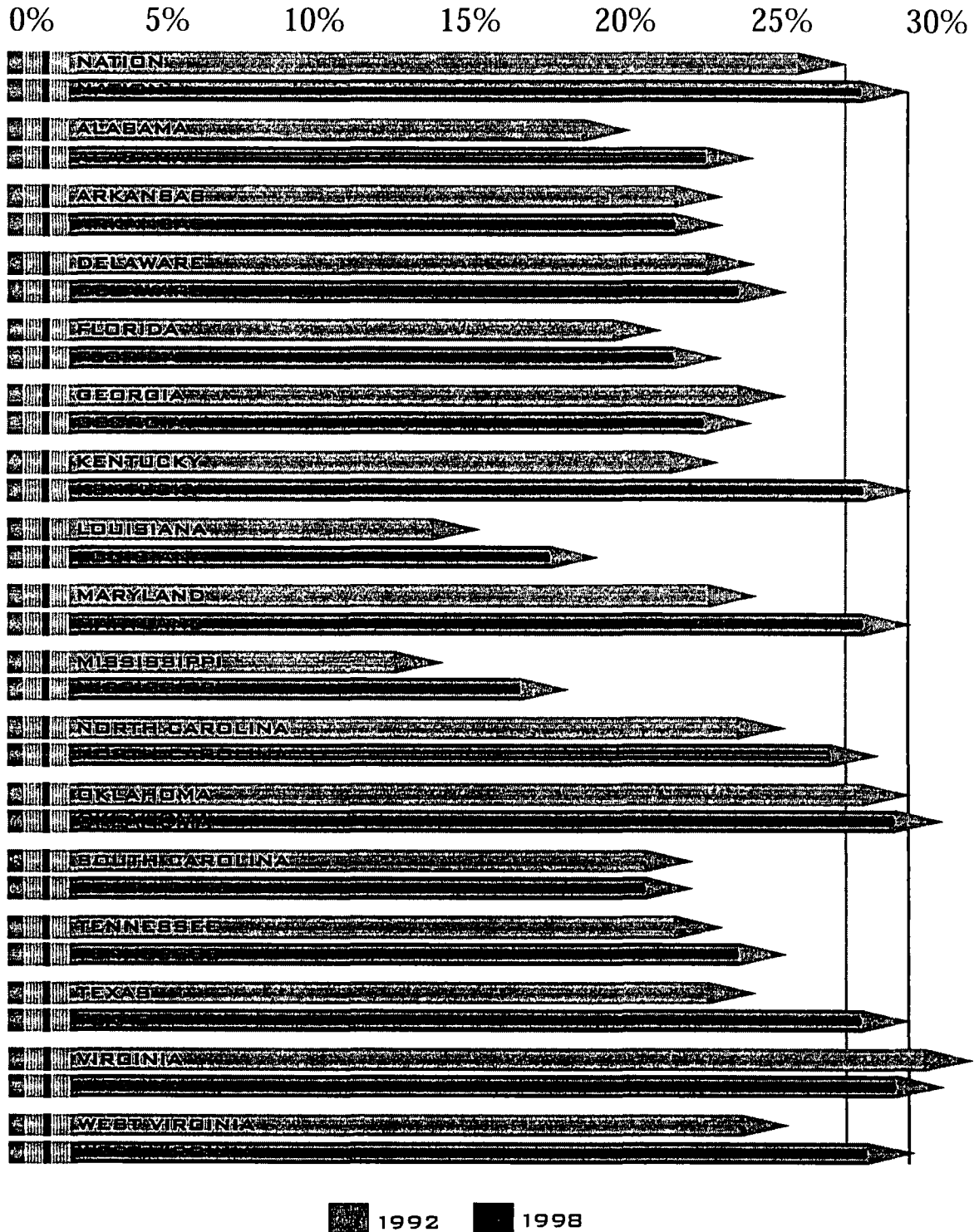
The major challenges that now confront SREB states are:

- ◆ defining what students should know and setting standards for how well they must read, write, compute and solve problems;
- ◆ measuring student achievement as part of a state accountability system; and
- ◆ finding effective ways to help all students meet high expectations.

Accomplishments and improvements

- ☑ In the mid-1980s, comparable state-by-state results on student achievement were not available. SREB states led the way in establishing comparable state-by-state results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. In 1998, every SREB state participated in the NAEP assessments.
- ☑ Between 1992 and 1998, two-thirds of the SREB states improved the percentages of fourth-graders who scored at or above the proficient level in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The increases in eight states were larger than the national increase.
- ☑ On the most recent National Assessment of mathematics, the percentage of eighth-graders with scores at or above the proficient level was higher than in 1990 for every SREB state that participated in both assessments.
- ☑ Scores on statewide achievement tests during the 1990s are up in all SREB states.
- ☑ Average scores on college admissions tests are higher than a decade ago in nearly every SREB state, and more high school seniors than ever took these tests.
- ☑ Between 1988 and 1999, the number of students who took Advanced Placement examinations in the SREB states increased by 123,000, accounting for 36 percent of the national increase.
- ☑ More public schools are participating in the Advanced Placement Program. Students from at least 70 percent of the public schools in half of the SREB states took Advanced Placement examinations in 1999. In two other SREB states, students from at least 60 percent of the public schools took Advanced Placement examinations in 1999.
- ☑ Students had scores high enough to earn college credit on almost 60 percent of the Advanced Placement examinations. That means more than 90,000 students in the SREB states—almost three times the number of students who took examinations in 1984—earned college credits before they entered college in 1999.

Percent of Fourth-Grade Students Who Scored at or Above the Proficient Level on the 1992 and 1998 NAEP Reading Assessments



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1999

- ☒ Most SREB states have reviewed or are reviewing their curricula to develop standards for what should be taught in English, mathematics, science and social studies and to link statewide testing programs more directly to these standards.
- ☒ Most SREB states have raised requirements for high school graduation by increasing the number of required courses in English, mathematics, science and social studies; specifying that all students complete Algebra I or its equivalent; and eliminating the "general" curriculum.
- ☒ SREB states lead the nation in gains in the percentage of high school graduates who complete four years of English and three years each of mathematics, science and social studies. In the SREB states, 57 percent of high school graduates completed these academic courses — four times the percentage who completed them in the early 1980s. Nationally, 55 percent complete these courses.

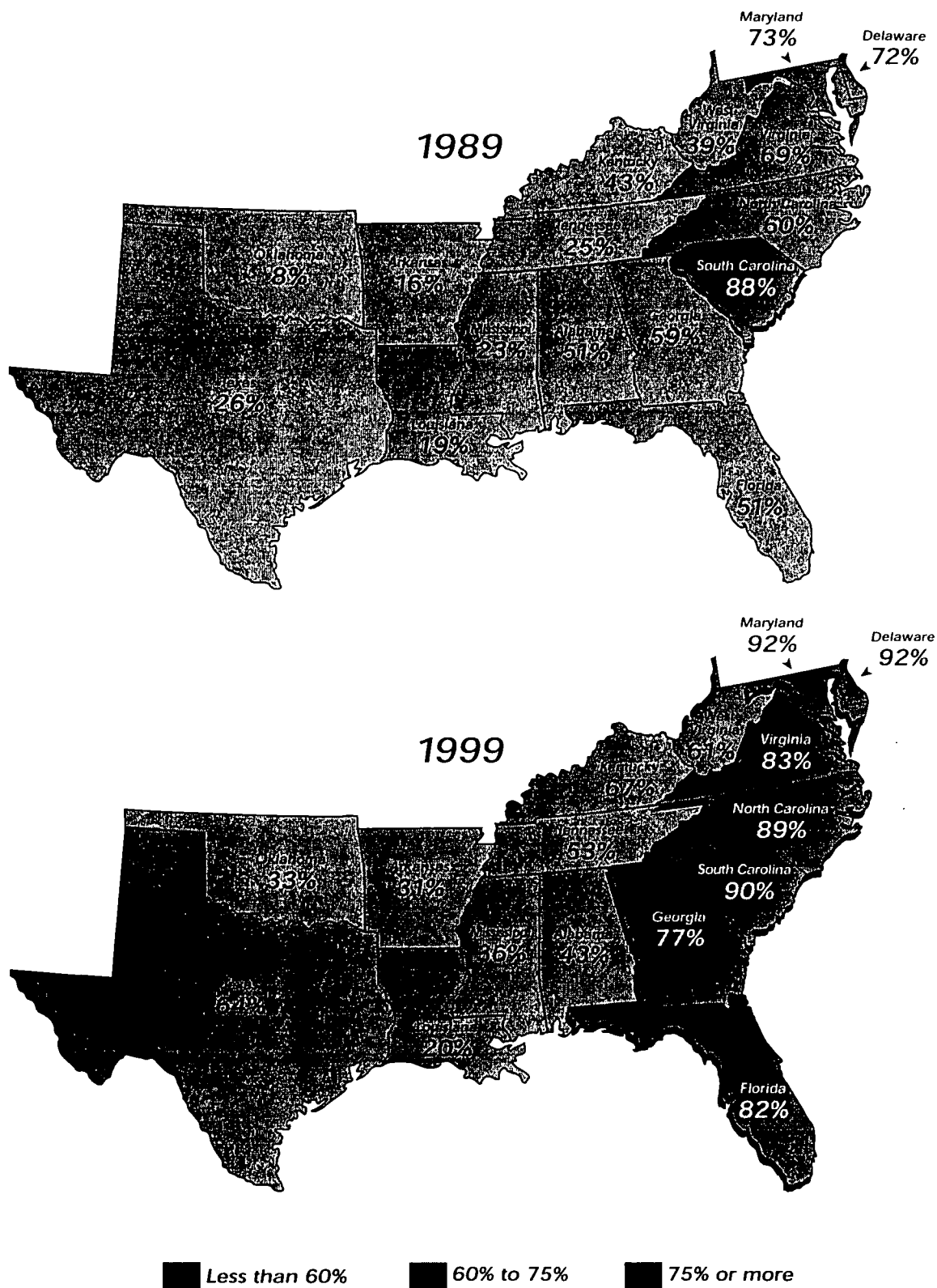
Remaining challenges

- ☐ States need to define what students should know and set standards for how well they need to read, write, compute and solve problems.
- ☐ States should link measures of student achievement more directly to the standards for what students are taught, and define how the measures are used in accountability programs to assess progress in student achievement.
- ☐ States need to find effective ways to help all students meet high expectations.
- ☐ States should increase the rigor of high school courses and the percentage of students who take a core of challenging academic courses in English, mathematics, social studies and science. Less than 60 percent of high school graduates in the SREB region and the nation complete four credits in English and three credits each in mathematics, science and social studies.
- ☐ It is important to close the gaps in student achievement between different groups of students. The gaps in achievement between white and black students and between white and Hispanic students are unacceptably large. Students from low-income families in SREB states have lower National Assessment scores than low-income students nationally. Students in rural areas of the SREB region score lower than students in rural areas nationwide. Female students do not perform as well in mathematics and science as the SREB region's male students or as female students nationwide.

Several SREB states have made larger gains in student achievement over the last decade than has the rest of the nation, but even with this progress student performance on most national measures in most SREB states continues to trail national averages.

For more information, see *Student Achievement in SREB States—How do SREB states compare with the nation? Is student achievement improving? What problems remain?* by Joseph D. Creech.

Percent of Public Schools That Offer Advanced Placement 1989 and 1999



2 *BY THE YEAR 2000...*

The school dropout rate will be reduced by one-half.

Dropout rates in most SREB states are lower now than in the mid-1980s and are dramatically lower than in the mid-1970s. The South has led the nation in reducing the dropout rate over the last two decades.

By the mid-1990s, the percentage of 16- through 24-year-olds without a diploma and not enrolled in school had been reduced by one-third — from 19 percent in 1975 to 13 percent in 1995. But progress has stalled since 1995, and dropout rates remain at about 13 percent.

Compared with a decade ago, we know more about who drops out of school and why. We know that low expectations and academic and career-preparation programs that are not challenging will not keep students in school. We know that students who have fallen behind in reading, mathematics and writing are those who are most likely to drop out of school when they get to high school. We know that children who get a poor start and are not ready to begin first grade are more likely to drop out of school later. We know that schools alone cannot solve the dropout problem. Preventing teenagers from dropping out of school requires services from and cooperation among schools, community agencies and local businesses.

As incredible as it may seem initially, one of the most confusing issues in addressing the dropout problem is deciding how to define and calculate the dropout rate — in other words, how to get a handle on the size of the problem and to respond accordingly. Newspaper reports in SREB states — most notably Florida, South Carolina and Texas in the last year — highlighted problems of getting good information and understanding dropout rates. Legislative hearings on the dropout problem are being conducted in Texas this year.

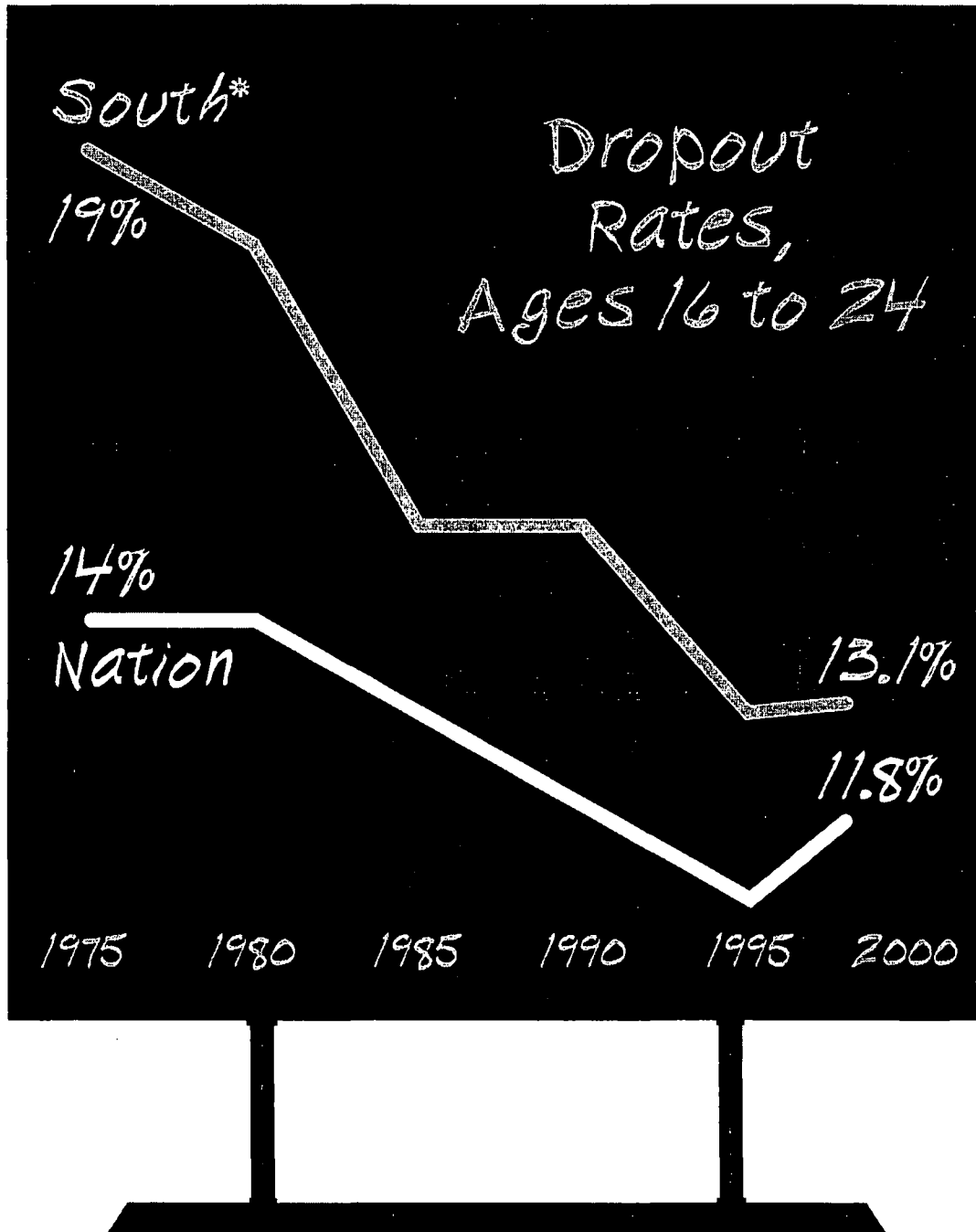
To reduce the number of students who drop out of school, state leaders must:

- ◆ insist on systematic and accurate collecting of data and reporting of dropout rates;
- ◆ support programs and actions that prevent students from dropping out;
- ◆ provide incentives and rewards for schools to provide the academic and personal support needed by students who are most likely to drop out; and
- ◆ require coordination of services among schools and government and community agencies that work with children and families.

Accomplishments and improvements

- ✓ Dropout rates in the SREB region are one-third lower now than in the mid-1970s. Since 1990, the percentage of young people who drop out of school has decreased from 15 percent to 13 percent in the SREB region. Almost all SREB states have increased numbers of young adults with high school diplomas.
- ✓ All SREB states have established state goals for reducing dropout rates.

More Students Are Staying in School



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, *Dropout Rates in the United States*, various years

* South includes SREB states and the District of Columbia.

- ☒ Most SREB states have comprehensive plans for reducing dropout rates that include systems to collect and report dropout data for different groups of students; programs to identify and help students who are most likely to drop out of school; policies to reduce excessive absenteeism; and special assistance for particular groups of students.
- ☒ All SREB states disseminate information to the public, teachers and schools about who is most likely to drop out and how to prevent students from dropping out.
- ☒ All states include dropout rates on school report cards. Several states report dropout rates by race and gender. Most SREB states report that dropout rates are lower now than they were 10 years ago.
- ☒ In 1990, SREB states were calculating their dropout rates differently. The National Center for Education Statistics has established a common definition that allows states to calculate comparable data on dropout rates. Now 11 SREB states and 26 other states across the nation provide information to the NCES that can be used to calculate comparable dropout rates.
- ☒ Most SREB states provide school administrators and teachers with training in dropout prevention and with information on successful dropout-prevention programs.
- ☒ Most SREB states have definitions of "truancy" or "excessive absenteeism" that aim to identify students whose lack of attendance makes them more likely to drop out of school.

Remaining challenges

- ☐ States need to implement information systems that can follow individual students as they progress from grade nine to grade 12, transfer to other public schools within the state or graduate.
- ☐ States need to develop a credible and reliable definition of a dropout rate that is consistent from school to school and that motivates schools to report accurately.
- ☐ Schools should establish systems to identify early those students who are most likely to drop out of school and to provide them with additional help and resources.
- ☐ States should evaluate dropout prevention programs and report on what works and what does not work.
- ☐ More efforts are needed to close the gaps between dropout rates of white students and black students, of white students and Hispanic students, and of male students and female students. Black students are twice as likely—and Hispanic students are more than three times as likely—as white students to drop out of school. Boys are more likely than girls to drop out.
- ☐ More attention is needed to get middle school students better prepared academically for high school.
- ☐ Resources and services from schools and community and government agencies need to be coordinated to prevent students from dropping out of school.

Dropout rates in the SREB region declined by one-third between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s. Progress stalled then, and rates have remained about the same.

For more information, see *Reducing Dropout Rates in SREB States* by Joseph D. Creech.



2 BY THE YEAR 2000...

Ninety percent of adults will have high school diplomas or the equivalent.

In 1950, only 25 percent of adults age 25 and older in the SREB states had completed high school. Today, less than 25 percent have *not* completed high school. That is remarkable progress.

In less than two generations SREB states tripled the percentage of adults who complete 12 or more years of schooling. The gap is closing between the educational levels of adults nationally and of adults in the SREB region. The gap between the percentages of white and black adults with high school diplomas continues to narrow.

More adults in SREB states who did not graduate from high school are enrolling in programs that prepare them for the General Educational Development (GED) examinations. More are taking and passing the GED exams. States are supporting development of workplace literacy programs offered by businesses and industries in partnership with colleges and universities.

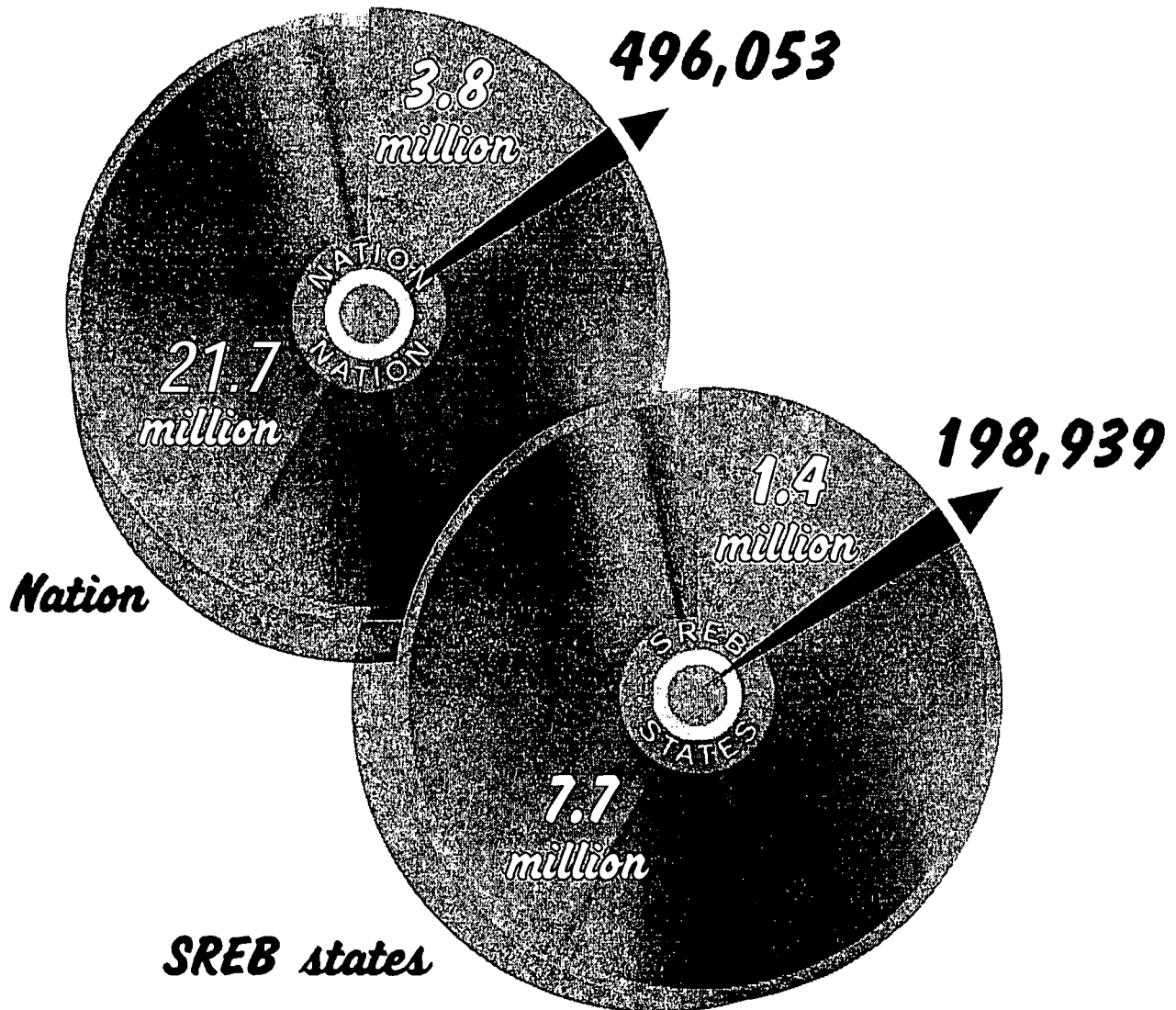
In the 1990s record-high percentages of young people completed high school or earned high school credentials through alternative programs. Such achievement reflects the success of states' efforts to reduce the number who drop out of school and to attract those who do drop out into alternative programs. Statistics show that few people over age 40 who do not have high school diplomas will prepare for and earn high school credentials. States must focus on getting younger adults into programs that prepare them for the General Educational Development exams or into other alternative programs that lead to high school credentials.

SREB states are home to a growing number of people whose native language is not English. Already, one of every five people in adult education programs in the SREB region is enrolled in a program that provides instruction in English to non-native speakers. Many of them likely completed 12 years of school in their home countries and need only to improve their English skills to demonstrate their readiness for high school credentials.

The percentage of adults with high school diplomas is higher today in every SREB state than it was 10 years ago. States face real challenges in raising the percentages further.

Young Adults: Too Many Dropping Out; Too Few Earning GEDs

18- to 24-year-olds in 1998



Number with high school diplomas

 Number without high school diplomas

 Number earning GEDs, 1998.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; American Council on Education

Accomplishments and improvements

- ☒ Eighty percent of all adults age 25 and older in the SREB region have high school diplomas. The region has inched closer to the national average of 83 percent. Four SREB states (Delaware, Maryland, Oklahoma and Virginia) are at or above the national average. Florida is within a percentage point of the national average. Only Florida was at the national average in 1950.
- ☒ The region has made even more progress in increasing the percentage of young adults (18- to 24-year-olds) with high school diplomas. Eleven SREB states (Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia) are at or above the national average. Alabama and Florida are within one percentage point. Six SREB states (Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Oklahoma and Virginia) were at or above the national average in 1990.
- ☒ Since 1980 the percentage of young black adults in the SREB region with high school diplomas has increased from 74 percent to 83 percent, while the percentage of young white adults with diplomas has grown from 83 percent to 85 percent.
- ☒ All SREB states have workplace literacy programs to improve the basic skills of working adults and to encourage those without high school diplomas to earn them through GED or other programs.

Remaining challenges

- ☐ Literacy levels for adults in SREB states are lower than for adults nationwide. Reducing the number and percentage of working adults (ages 25 to 55) who lack the basic reading, writing and mathematical skills necessary to begin programs that lead to high school credentials will be a challenge.
- ☐ States need to increase the percentage of young adults who earn GED credentials. Less than 10 percent of young adults without high school diplomas earn GED credentials annually.
- ☐ Improving the English skills of those whose native language is not English is another challenge. According to the National Literacy Survey, 20 percent of American adults perform at the lowest level of literacy. Most of the adults in that survey were ages 25 to 55. In the SREB states, an estimated 20 percent to 30 percent of adults perform at the lowest level of literacy. Thus, many people who will make up the work force early in this century must acquire basic literacy skills before they will be ready

to begin programs that lead to high school diplomas or the equivalent. We cannot expect the percentage of adults with high school diplomas to increase until we reduce the percentage of adults in the work force who lack elementary reading, writing and computational skills.

- There is a clear need to redouble efforts to increase literacy and to help people get the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in a demanding workplace.

Several SREB states are at or very near the goal that 90 percent of young adults (18- to 24-year-olds) will have high school diplomas. Maryland has reached the goal, and five other SREB states have percentages above the national average of 85 percent. Despite increased enrollment in adult education programs, no SREB state has reached the goal that 90 percent of all adults (25 and older) will have high school diplomas.

For more information, see *A Challenge for SREB States: Increasing the Percentage of Adults With a High School Diploma* by Joseph D. Creech.

2 *BY THE YEAR 2000...*

Four of every five students entering college will be ready to begin college-level work.

There is no "typical" remedial student. Understanding this is the first important step to having fewer students who need remedial help in college.

Some remedial assistance and courses are essentially unavoidable. Other remedial assistance is avoidable. State leaders, parents and students are justifiably angry about paying for remedial programs for problems that could have been avoided.

Understanding who needs additional help and what kind of help they need to be ready to begin college-level work is the key to developing policies and practices that will reduce the need for remedial education.

- ◆ The remedial student may be a person who graduated from high school—often years ago—and needs a refresher course in mathematics or writing. Usually these are young people coming to a community college to get a new start on a new job in the work force. They have not been using higher-level mathematics or doing much writing, and they need a refresher or remedial course. This is essentially unavoidable in our society as young adults seek careers, and it is a "cost of doing business" in a society that values freedom and individual choices. Remedial education for these young adults will be with us for the foreseeable future.
- ◆ The remedial student may be a recent high school graduate who completed a weak college-preparatory curriculum in a low-achieving school. The young person is not necessarily at fault here, especially not if the student received high passing grades in the college-preparatory courses. The system has failed the student. It is fair and a wise investment to help students who graduated from high school, thinking they were on track for college, only to learn that their high school had done a poor job of preparing them. State accountability measures are being put in place to tackle this problem. In time we should see fewer students who need remedial education because they were in schools that failed to prepare them.
- ◆ The remedial student may be a recent high school graduate who did not take a college-preparatory curriculum. A person who did not take a college-preparatory curriculum who then decides to go to college and is admitted should, in most cases, need to take remedial courses. If most students who don't take a rigorous high school curriculum (college-preparatory or equivalent) don't need assistance or remedial courses to be ready for college-level work, then colleges' standards are probably too low. We should not be satisfied with situations in which new high school graduates have to take remedial courses in college because they chose not to take the necessary

courses in high school or because they were not counseled properly by educators and parents. Educator and parents can do something about this and should.

- ◆ The remedial student may be a recent high school graduate who completed a college-preparatory curriculum but had low grades. Remedial courses in an open-admissions two-year or four-year college give this student a "second chance." A state is right to provide this second chance, with requirements and restrictions on how long a student is eligible.
- ◆ The remedial student may be a recent high school graduate who was planning to go to college but decided not to take a college-preparatory mathematics course in the senior year. This is a mistake some students can and will make. It is a mistake that parents and educators can do something about.

Two things are clear:

1. If states increase the percentage of students who meet high standards in a challenging core of academic courses and take a college-preparatory mathematics course in their senior year, fewer students will need remedial help in college.
2. Some college remedial programs will be needed, especially in mathematics and writing, for those young adults who do not enter college directly after high school and years later come to a community college.

Accomplishments and improvements

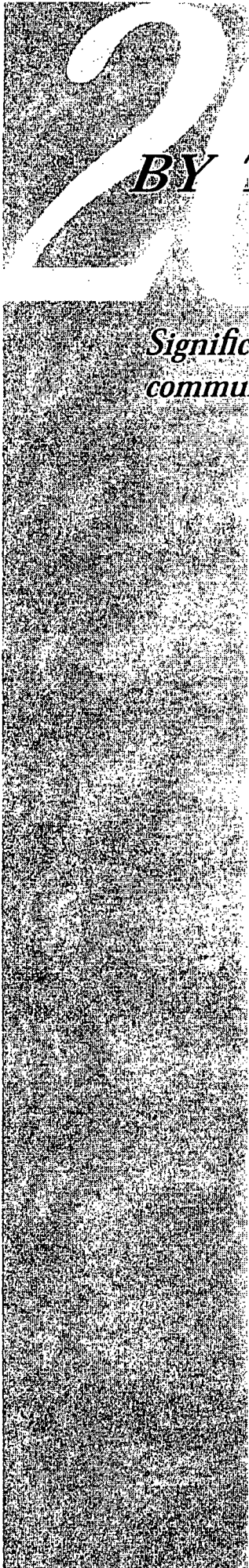
- ☑ Higher percentages of high school graduates have completed a college-preparatory curriculum. More than 40 percent of high school seniors in the SREB region complete a college-preparatory curriculum that includes four credits in English; three credits each in mathematics, science and social studies; and two credits in a foreign language. That is double the percentage that completed a college-preparatory curriculum in 1987.
- ☑ Average scores on college admissions tests (ACT and SAT) were higher in 1999 than 10 years ago in nearly every SREB state. This is true even though more high school seniors who are not in the top one-third—or even the top half—of the senior class are taking the tests.
- ☑ Four-year colleges and universities in all SREB states have established admission standards that include a core of academic courses in English, mathematics (Algebra I or higher), science, social studies, foreign languages and computer skills.
- ☑ More students are entering four-year colleges ready for college-level work. A higher percentage of high school students in every SREB state take a core college-preparatory program now than was the case a decade ago.
- ☑ At least 80 percent of the freshmen at public four-year colleges and universities in eight SREB states are ready to do college-level work. Fewer states could make that claim 10 years ago.

Remaining challenges

- ☐ Large percentages of students entering two-year colleges need remedial help. The percentages of freshmen at two-year colleges who are assigned to a remedial mathematics course range from 28 percent in one state to 75 percent in another. Many of those taking remedial courses at two-year colleges are adults in their mid-20s and late-20s who are returning to college years after leaving high school. Remedial education for these students, if effective, is a good investment for a state.
- ☐ Too few high school graduates complete a sequence of mathematics courses that prepare them for college-level mathematics. Even fewer take a challenging mathematics course in the senior year of high school.
- ☐ Colleges and universities in SREB states provide reports to school districts and schools about how their high school graduates perform in college, including how many must take remedial courses. Neither schools, colleges, nor the faculties in either are using this information effectively. Unfortunately, this appears to be a case in which states have important information that can help educators focus on "what works," but the information rarely is being used.
- ☐ Too few states have established methods to assess the effectiveness of remedial courses and programs and to use the results of the assessments to improve the quality of remedial courses and programs.
- ☐ More joint efforts among colleges and universities and public schools are needed to encourage students in the middle grades to begin planning for college and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to complete a core of academic courses in high school; to provide effective guidance to students throughout their high school years on what is necessary to begin college-level study; and to assist students and their families with applying for admission and financial support.

SREB states are making progress toward having four of five students entering college ready to begin college-level work. In half of the SREB states four of five students entering four-year colleges are ready for college-level work. This indicates that other states also can reach this goal for four-year colleges. Not all remedial education is avoidable. Open-admissions community colleges never will have four of five entering students ready for college-level work. Community colleges enroll larger numbers of older students who justifiably need to brush up on mathematics and writing skills, and they are a second chance for other students who did not take a college-preparatory curriculum or had low grades in high school. Progress in reducing avoidable remedial education has been slow, and the avoidable causes of remedial education need more attention from state policy-makers, educators, parents and students.

For more information, see *Reducing Remedial Education: What Progress are States Making?* by Ansley A. Abraham and Joseph D. Creech.



2 *BY THE YEAR 2000...*

Significant gains will be achieved in the mathematics, sciences and communications competencies of vocational education students.

Too few high school students in the SREB states complete rigorous courses that prepare them well for work or for college, and too few vocational programs emphasize academic skills that are essential for job entry and continued learning.

SREB's *High Schools That Work* demonstrates that traditional college-preparatory studies can be blended with quality vocational studies if schools follow certain key practices. The results show that career-bound students can achieve at significantly higher levels when high schools provide these students with a demanding curriculum. Vocational students in *High Schools That Work* who complete the recommended curriculum score higher on academic skills tests than students in less challenging academic and vocational courses.

High Schools That Work has shown that vocational students can meet high-quality performance standards when the school and community work together to establish a system of school and classroom practices proven to increase achievement. *High Schools That Work*, the nation's largest results-oriented high school improvement effort for vocational students, has grown from 28 schools in 13 states in 1987 to almost 900 schools in the 16 SREB states. Few states in the region have developed a statewide program. Few have analyzed the academic, technical and problem-solving achievement of vocational students over time. Kentucky and West Virginia have made SREB's *High Schools That Work* effort the centerpiece to creating such a statewide program.

There is no quick fix to improving vocational students' performance. To succeed, states must be willing to stay the course over at least a decade and assist schools—many of which may not see the need to improve—in sustaining and expanding their accomplishments.

Accomplishments and improvements

- ☒ Hundreds of schools in SREB states have raised standards for vocational students by following key practices that:
 - ◆ increase mathematics and science requirements;
 - ◆ require students to complete a core of challenging academic courses and a concentration of courses or a major in a technical or academic area;
 - ◆ provide students access to programs that combine school-based learning and work-based learning;
 - ◆ offer an organizational structure that provides time for academic and vocational teachers to plan and to integrate their instruction;
 - ◆ involve each student and his or her parents in a career and academic advising system aimed at ensuring completion of a program that will prepare the student for further education and for work;
 - ◆ establish higher standards for vocational courses and for student performance; and
 - ◆ use student assessment and program evaluation information to improve the school continuously.
- ☒ In schools that are following the key practices of *High Schools That Work*, reading, science and mathematics achievement scores of students who complete the *HSTW*-recommended curriculum are higher now than in the early 1990s. Results from the *HSTW* assessment show that average mathematics and science scores of vocational students in *HSTW* schools reach or exceed the national averages for all high school students.
- ☒ Evidence from SREB's *High Schools That Work* suggests that students who complete a challenging vocational program can do as well on achievement tests as many students in a college-preparatory program.

Remaining challenges

- ☐ Expectations of what all students should know and be able to do are not high enough. States need to give attention to ensuring that courses in English, mathematics and science and technical and career courses are challenging enough to prepare students for employment and further education.
- ☐ Reading scores of vocational students in *HSTW* schools are below the national average for all high school students.
- ☐ States need to measure the academic and technical achievement of vocational students and to understand how well the state's high schools are preparing vocational students for further study and for employment.

- ☐ States also need to collect information (at the state level) about how many students are completing challenging courses in reading, mathematics and science as part of either a college-preparatory or a vocational program.
- ☐ Few states have stepped up their licensure requirements for vocational teachers. Vocational teachers who have taken college-level courses in language arts, mathematics and science have a better foundation for helping students to understand concepts in these areas than do teachers without such coursework.
- ☐ Most high schools do not have enough counselors to provide students and parents with continuous information and advice about education and career opportunities after high school. States need to help schools train teachers to advise students and parents about the need to take challenging courses that prepare them for careers and for further education.
- ☐ More attention must be given to how schools and school districts use professional-development funds. Staff development needs to be directly linked to subject matter that should be taught, school improvement plans, and curriculum and instructional changes that schools need to make. States need to establish support teams to visit and evaluate low-performing schools. These teams can provide ongoing assistance that focuses on engaging the faculty and the community in making the necessary changes to achieve comprehensive school reform.

Several SREB states have taken important steps to achieve gains in the mathematics, sciences and communications competencies of vocational students — eliminating the “general curriculum” and requiring all students to complete a core of challenging academic courses and a concentration of courses in an academic, career or technical area. Much work remains to be done to improve the academic and technical preparation of vocational teachers, to blend the content of traditional college-preparatory courses with quality vocational studies, and to increase further the percentage of students in vocational programs who are proficient in mathematics, science and communications.

For more information, see *Using Lessons Learned: Improving the Academic Achievement of Vocational Students* by Gene Bottoms and Alice Presson.

2 *BY THE YEAR 2000...*

The percentage of adults who have attended college or earned two-year, four-year and graduate degrees will be at the national averages or higher.

The percentage of adults in the SREB region who have attended college is higher today than the percentage who completed high school 50 years ago.

And today the percentage of adults in the SREB region who have completed four-year college degrees is higher than the percentage who spent any time at all in college 50 years ago.

SREB states have made steady progress in providing access to college, and the region is closing the gap between its college attendance rate and that of the nation. A decade ago, 23 percent of young adults in SREB states were enrolled in college at least part time. Today, 29 percent are. If this trend continues, we soon might see the day when high school graduates from the SREB region are just as likely as high school graduates in the North, Midwest and West to attend college. Much of this progress is the result of actions by SREB states to:

- ◆ expand the size and number of public colleges and universities to accommodate a rapidly growing population;
- ◆ create systems of two-year community and technical colleges that bring higher education closer to where people live and work;
- ◆ keep tuition and fees affordable and expand state financial-aid programs;
- ◆ provide tuition aid for students who attend private colleges;
- ◆ enter into cooperative agreements to provide access to unique academic programs that not every state needs or can afford; and
- ◆ use technology to expand distance learning opportunities.

Even with these successes and the resulting increases in college attendance, there are still some large gaps between where SREB states want to be and where they are:

- ◆ Higher percentages of black and Hispanic students attend college today, but the percentages are about two-thirds the percentage of white students.
- ◆ Progress in providing access to college has not been matched with similar progress in how many students graduate. In 1998, only three SREB states (Delaware, Maryland and Virginia) matched the national average in the percentage of adults with bachelor's degrees.
- ◆ Many students are taking too long to graduate.

Colleges can help more students graduate by:

- ◆ making sure that students who are not fully prepared are enrolled in quality remedial programs that can help motivated students get ready for college-level courses;
- ◆ eliminating unnecessary hurdles for students who transfer from one college to another by developing general-education and prerequisite courses that can be applied to degrees at two- and four-year colleges; and
- ◆ ensuring that the number of credits required for degrees is appropriate and that required courses are regularly available.

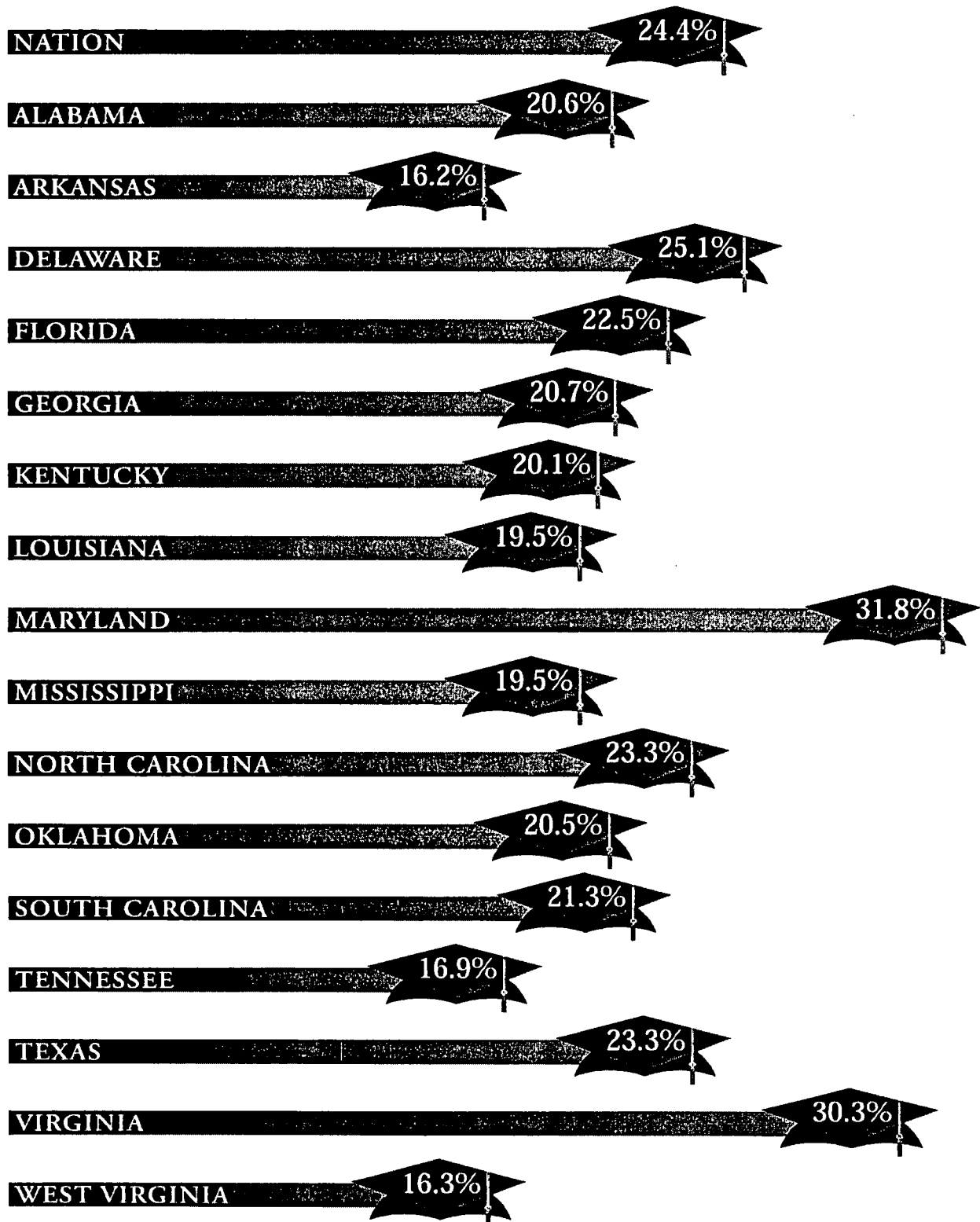
Percent of 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college full time or part time

	1987	1997
United States	26%	31%
Alabama	25	32
Arkansas	18	28
Delaware	26	40
Florida	22	29
Georgia	20	25
Kentucky	21	27
Louisiana	22	29
Maryland	24	31
Mississippi	22	29
North Carolina	26	32
Oklahoma	26	31
South Carolina	25	29
Tennessee	22	29
Texas	24	28
Virginia	25	31
West Virginia	23	30

Sources: National Center for Education Statistics; U.S. Census Bureau

Percent of Adults with Bachelor's Degrees, 1998

25 Years Old and Older



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Achievements and improvements

- ✓ Young adults (18- to 24-year-olds) in the SREB region are more likely to attend college now than they were in 1987. The percentage of young adults enrolled in college is higher in every SREB state now than a decade ago. Nationally, about 31 percent of young adults are attending college. In Alabama, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Virginia and West Virginia, 30 percent or more of the young adults are attending college. A decade ago no SREB state had more than 26 percent attending college.
- ✓ More than half of the high school graduates in two-thirds of the SREB states enter college as full-time students within a year after completing high school. Nationally, about 56 percent of high school graduates enroll in college as full-time students within a year of graduating from high school.
- ✓ Over the last decade, both the amount of financial aid available and the number of students receiving financial aid to attend college in the SREB states have grown faster than the national rates. For example, students attending colleges in SREB states receive more than \$2 billion in Pell Grants—43 percent more than in 1989-1990. The number of students who received Pell Grants in the SREB states grew more than 6 percent, while the national number remained essentially unchanged.
- ✓ The amount of state-administered financial aid to students increased almost 125 percent since the early 1990s, compared with a nationwide increase of 78 percent. Most of this increase is the result of new state scholarships for students who meet and maintain specified academic standards in high school and college. Spurred by the impact of Georgia's HOPE Scholarships, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland and South Carolina have established programs or increased the number of merit-based scholarships to encourage more students to complete more challenging courses in high school and to earn better grades.
- ✓ SREB states now have systems to collect and analyze information about how many students complete college degree programs and how long it takes them. Through the SREB-State Data Exchange, SREB states now report comparable information on graduation rates for full-time, degree-seeking students by type of college or university. For the region, the percentage of full-time students at public four-year colleges who complete degrees within six years (150 percent of normal time) is 43 percent. The rates range from 28 percent in Louisiana to 61 percent in Virginia.
- ✓ Nearly every SREB state has reviewed policies and procedures related to transferring from two-year to four-year colleges. During the 1990s, most states developed a core of freshman- and sophomore-level courses that will meet degree requirements at any public two-year or four-year college; provided academic planning and counseling for students who are transferring; and established procedures to ease the process of transferring credits from one college to another.
- ✓ The SREB *Electronic Campus* now provides access to 3,500 courses and 150 degree programs from more than 275 colleges and universities throughout the 16 SREB states.

Remaining challenges

- ☐ States need to continue their focus on reducing the gaps in college attendance and completion rates between white students and black students, between white students and Hispanic students, and between white students and Native American students. The gaps in the attendance and graduation rates among people of different races and ethnic groups are smaller now than 20 years ago, but the gaps remain too large.
- ☐ States need to continue their efforts to increase the percentage of entering students who complete their degrees within a reasonable period of time. There has been little change in the percentage of students who earn bachelor's degrees within six years of entering college. Nationally, about 55 percent complete degrees within six years. In the SREB states, the state averages of students who enter and complete degrees at a four-year college within six years exceed 50 percent in only five states: Florida, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. At many four-year colleges and universities in SREB states and throughout the nation, less than 40 percent of full-time college freshmen graduate within six years. The percentages of those who enter two-year colleges and earn bachelor's degrees within six years are even lower.
- ☐ Nationally, about 24 percent of students who complete 12 or more credits at two-year colleges transfer to four-year colleges or universities. In those SREB states that calculate transfer rates in the same way that the national rate is calculated, the rates range from 10 percent to 25 percent.
- ☐ States need to find ways to keep their public colleges and universities affordable for all residents. When increases in tuition and fees are adjusted for inflation, in-state undergraduate students at public four-year colleges and universities in SREB states are paying 13 percent more than they were in the early 1990s. Nationally, students are paying 15 percent more.
- ☐ For families with the lowest annual incomes, the effect of rising costs of attendance is dramatic, and the effect is sizable for middle-income families. For families in the lowest fifth of incomes (earning an average of \$12,500 per year), one year's attendance at a public four-year college or university rose from 41 percent of their annual income to 62 percent over the last 20 years. For families with average annual earnings of about \$29,400, college costs increased seven percentage points to 26 percent of income. The "cost burden" for the middle fifth of the population (those earning about \$46,900) rose four percentage points to 17 percent of annual income. Increased college costs had much less effect on those in the high-income brackets because their annual incomes grew at the highest rates.
- ☐ Despite the increased funding for Pell Grants, the "buying power" of a Pell Grant fell significantly in the last 20 years. In 1977-1978 the maximum Pell Grant — available to only the neediest students — covered about 65 percent of the costs of attending a public four-year college or university. By the late 1990s, the maximum grant paid only 33 percent of costs at public four-year colleges or universities.

- Students receiving financial aid increasingly get loans instead of grants. Loans accounted for more than 62 percent of all financial aid to students in 1997-1998.

**1992 full-time freshmen seeking
associate's degrees and certificates
at public two-year colleges**

**Percent completing a two-year
certificate or degree at institution of
initial enrollment within three years***

SREB states	17%
Alabama	17
Arkansas	21
Florida	27
Georgia	14
Kentucky	10
Louisiana	15
Maryland	12
Mississippi	17
North Carolina	20
Oklahoma	15
South Carolina	16
Tennessee	10
Texas	11
Virginia	16
West Virginia	12

Source: SREB-State Data Exchange, 1999-2000

* Three years is typically 150 percent of normal time to complete a certificate or an associate's degree.

Delaware did not participate in the SREB-State Data Exchange in 1999-2000.

**1992 full-time freshmen seeking
bachelor's degrees at public
four-year colleges**

**Percent completing a degree at institution
of initial enrollment within six years***

SREB states	43%
Alabama	44
Arkansas	32
Florida	56
Georgia	39
Kentucky	38
Louisiana	28
Maryland	55
Mississippi	42
North Carolina	56
Oklahoma	36
South Carolina	54
Tennessee	41
Texas	42
Virginia	61
West Virginia	40

Source: SREB-State Data Exchange, 1999-2000

* Six years is typically 150 percent of normal time to complete a bachelor's degree.

Delaware did not participate in the SREB-State Data Exchange in 1999-2000.

The percentages of adults who have attended college or earned two-year, four-year and graduate degrees are not at the national averages in most SREB states. The percentages enrolled in college in 15 SREB states increased faster than the nation, and six SREB states are at the national average. Only three SREB states—Delaware, Maryland, Virginia—are above the national average in the percentage of adults with bachelor's degrees.

2 *BY THE YEAR 2000...*

The quality and effectiveness of colleges and universities will be regularly assessed, with particular emphasis on the performance of undergraduate students.

How are states measuring the effectiveness of higher education?

Nearly all SREB states have developed performance indicators to describe how higher education is responding to what policy-makers and the public expect from higher education. During the last decade, some states passed legislation requiring colleges and universities to report on specific indicators. In other states, higher education agencies report on performance indicators as a part of the planning and budgeting process.

Why is it important that the public know more about higher education performance?

The value it adds? The return on investment? Some say the reasons are as simple as one, two, three.

1. The public increasingly insists on accountability for all of state government.
2. Competition for funding forces colleges and universities to show their efficiency and effectiveness.
3. To gain the support it needs, higher education must demonstrate its value to students, to business and industry, and to the public.

The most valuable information about higher education leads to improvements in campus operations and student learning, helps the public understand higher education's role in today's society, and contributes to better policy-making at the state level.

Accomplishments and improvements

- ☑ There is more and better information available for making judgments about higher education now than 10 years ago. Ten years ago, no SREB state issued comprehensive reports on higher education that provided information directly related to goals for higher education in the state. Now most SREB states have indicators related to the effectiveness and efficiency of colleges and universities. Most annual reports on higher education now include data and commentary on key indicators of progress toward goals.

- ☒ More SREB states now require colleges and universities to assess what college students know and can do when they complete general-education courses or earn degrees.
- ☒ States increasingly link performance indicators to the processes for making short-term and long-term budget decisions.
- ☒ Measuring and reporting on performance is bringing about changes in state policies and in institutional policies and practices.
- ☒ Federal support for research and development in the SREB states now exceeds \$3.2 billion. Twenty-nine universities in the region (21 public and eight independent) are among the nation's top 100 recipients of federal support for research and development.

Remaining challenges

- ☐ States' higher education agencies need to issue reports that link performance indicators to established goals for education.
- ☐ Most SREB states have not established standards for what is "good enough" on their higher education indicators.
- ☐ Too few states report what entering college students or rising juniors know and can do based on a common assessment used by all institutions. Individual colleges and universities periodically review courses and programs, but most states have not made a systematic effort to judge how much students know and can do after freshmen and sophomores complete the core curriculum.
- ☐ Few states have established "achievement targets" for graduate programs. Some have specified minimum numbers of students to be enrolled and numbers of degrees to be awarded.

Colleges and universities are doing a better job of assessing the effectiveness of their programs. Much more information about performance is available now than a decade ago.

For more information, see *Linking Higher Education Performance Indicators to Goals* by Joseph D. Creech.

2

BY THE YEAR 2000...

All institutions that prepare teachers will have effective teacher education programs that place primary emphasis on the knowledge and performance of graduates.

- ◆ Better preparation of first-time teachers
- ◆ High-quality, continuing professional development for veteran teachers

These are among the biggest challenges for SREB states as they strive to raise student achievement. SREB states have begun many programs to increase the supply of quality teachers. There have been too few efforts to improve the entire system of preparing teachers. As leaders in one state noted, "We have many programs but no system."

Governors and state legislators, frustrated with the lack of change, took several actions in the late 1990s. These efforts to "fix" problems show that more work needs to be done.

In every SREB state there are calls to have a "qualified teacher in every classroom for every child." This means that leadership and renewed attention are needed from governors, legislators, executive officers at higher education agencies, college and university presidents, chief state school officers and local superintendents.

Achievements and improvements

- ✓ States are placing more emphasis on the performance of graduates when they review teacher preparation programs.
- ✓ Most SREB states have strengthened teacher preparation programs by raising admissions standards and requiring teachers to have more knowledge of the content they will teach. High school teachers may be required to have a major in the subject area they teach, while teachers in the middle grades may be required to have minors in at least two content areas.
- ✓ Most SREB states have developed alternative-licensure programs to attract and prepare people who want to change careers and become teachers.
- ✓ Several SREB states are raising standards on teacher licensure tests.
- ✓ More than 2,700 teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards live in the SREB states— 57 percent of all National Board certified teachers. North Carolina leads the nation, with almost 1,300 National Board certified teachers.

Remaining challenges

- ☐ Too many teachers have inadequate backgrounds in the subjects they teach. While more than half of the SREB states now require academic majors for those who plan to teach in high schools, too few require that elementary and middle grades teachers have a concentration of rigorous academic courses.
- ☐ To increase dramatically the involvement of arts and sciences faculty in the preparation of teachers, most colleges and universities will need to change how they recognize and reward faculty.
- ☐ Too few colleges and universities and schools are in partnerships to prepare new teachers and support them in the early years.
- ☐ Preparing teachers to use technology is a critical issue for all SREB states. SREB states are beginning to incorporate standards for using technology in the classroom into teacher preparation and licensure programs, but much work remains to bring veteran and new teachers up to speed.
- ☐ The process for renewing teachers' licenses needs to be aligned with stronger, performance-based standards for initial licensure.
- ☐ Professional development for veteran teachers needs to be more focused and better aligned with school improvement objectives and the content standards that students must master. Teachers need to know more about their subject matter, how to link research and practice, and how to use technology effectively.
- ☐ Despite efforts to recruit and retain minority teachers, most SREB states have smaller percentages of minority teachers than they did a decade ago.
- ☐ States need to continue to develop incentives that encourage districts or schools to put a qualified teacher in every classroom.
- ☐ Too few states hold the entire college or university accountable for how well graduates of teacher preparation programs perform on licensure tests and on the job.
- ☐ Coordinating and overseeing the implementation of numerous recommendations stemming from state actions and reforms remain major challenges. States need better oversight, alignment and implementation of licensure, professional development and teacher preparation programs.

There are some exemplary teacher-preparation programs across the SREB region. They are still the exception. Not enough progress has been made toward improving the entire system of preparing teachers. Despite aggressive state efforts to hold schools and teachers more accountable for results, reforms in teacher preparation, licensure and professional development have not been high priorities in most SREB states.

For more information, see *Getting Beyond Talk: State Leadership Needed to Improve Teacher Quality* by Lynn M. Cornett.

National Board Certified Teachers, SREB States and the Nation

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	Cumulative Total
Nation	177	199	219	318	924	2,967	4,803
SREB states	45	69	75	151	483	1,896	2,718
SREB states as a percentage of nation	25%	35%	34%	49%	52%	64%	57%

Source: National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1999

State-established Passing Scores on Professional Assessments
for Beginning Teachers, 1999-2000 The PRAXIS Series

Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

	Passing score established by state	Percent of national test-takers scoring below the state-established score
Florida	151	6%
Kentucky	163	16
Louisiana	156	10
South Carolina	164	17
Tennessee	159	12
West Virginia	155	9

Education in the Elementary School

Arkansas	500	4%
Florida	560	17
Maryland	550	14

Sources: Educational Testing Service, *Understanding Your PRAXIS Scores*, 1999-2000 Spring Edition;
Summary reports for selected tests, unpublished data

State-established Passing Scores on Professional Assessments
for Beginning Teachers, 1999-2000, The PRAXIS Series

Mathematics Content Knowledge

	Passing score established by state	Percent of national test-takers scoring below the state-established score
Arkansas	136	42%
Georgia	124	23
Kentucky	141	52
Maryland	141	52
Mississippi	123	23
North Carolina	133	36
Tennessee	136	42
Virginia	147	64
West Virginia	133	36

Sources: Educational Testing Service, *Understanding Your PRAXIS Scores*, 1999-2000 Spring Edition;
Summary reports for selected tests, unpublished data

2 *BY THE YEAR 2000...*

All states and localities will have schools with improved performance and productivity demonstrated by results.

Every SREB state has taken actions aimed at holding schools accountable for improved student achievement. Several SREB states are recognized nationally as leaders in implementing school accountability systems that are getting results. Most SREB states now evaluate school performance, and every SREB state reports to the public each year on the performance of each school.

Most states provide technical or financial assistance (or both) to low-performing schools. While state leadership in establishing curriculum and performance standards and ways to assess student achievement remains crucial, responsibility for deciding how to implement reforms and improve schools is being shifted to local districts and schools. Local superintendents and school boards are being authorized to make many of the decisions that once were made at the state level. But shifting authority for school reform to local schools without expanding the capacity for professional development of teachers and for the development of effective school leaders is not likely to produce positive results.

Improving schools is a complex task that involves:

- ◆ agreeing on what students are expected to know and do;
- ◆ establishing levels of student achievement and school performance against which progress can be measured;
- ◆ developing reliable ways to assess what students know and can do;
- ◆ reporting results to the public in clear, understandable terms;
- ◆ establishing incentives that balance rewards for good performance with sanctions for poor performance;
- ◆ targeting technical and financial assistance to low-performing schools; and
- ◆ providing continuous improvement and development of teachers, school leaders and members of school boards.

Holding schools accountable and making them more effective mean all of these things must be connected and aligned. A state may not be able to achieve all of these objectives at once, but the links among these actions cannot be ignored.

A key ingredient in improving schools is developing effective school leaders. States are reducing regulation, increasing flexibility for local schools and districts, and establishing systems of checks and balances aimed at ensuring quality through accountability. The benefits will not be realized unless school boards, administrators, teachers and parents have been trained adequately—both to develop plans for improvement and to focus on results.

A continuing SREB initiative is examining the connections among the different parts of accountability systems to increase the effectiveness of schools. Two things are clear: Changing one part will affect all the others, and all the parts are necessary to improve student learning.

A sound accountability system can provide the link for the state, local district and individual school to reach challenging state goals. Defining challenging standards for school performance, measuring and reporting progress, and providing incentives and extra assistance can help all schools become more effective.

Achievements and improvements

-  Every SREB state now produces school-by-school accountability reports. Only eight did in 1990. These reports provide state and district results and information on individual schools.
-  All SREB states have or are developing systems to identify low-performing schools. Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia identify both low-performing and high-performing schools. Arkansas, Maryland and Oklahoma focus on low-performing schools.
-  Rewards are given to high-performing or improving schools, while low-performing schools or those with declining performance may be placed on probation. In most SREB states, help is provided to low-performing schools through technical assistance and staff development.
-  Partnerships between schools and businesses continue to grow in every state. These partnerships promote academic achievement, community service projects, and students' passage from school to work and to higher education.

Remaining challenges

- ☐ Most SREB states still have a lot of work to do in connecting and aligning the five key areas of accountability—standards, testing, professional development, reporting, and rewards and assistance—into a comprehensive approach that improves student achievement.
- ☐ SREB states need to improve how schools use student achievement results and other factors that are part of school ratings systems to develop plans and actions that lead to improved performance.
- ☐ States need to focus on using accurate, reliable information as the basis for ratings systems; making the ratings fair and consistent; and establishing both absolute standards that all schools should meet and standards for improvement. These standards need the right balance to make them challenging and reasonable.
- ☐ Effective schools have effective leaders, but leadership development programs in SREB states are not a high priority and do not receive much funding. Shifting authority for school reform to local schools without expanding the capacity for professional development of teachers and for development of effective principals and superintendents is not likely to produce positive results.
- ☐ States need to pay more attention to developing effective ways to assist low-performing schools. A variety of approaches can be used, but all must focus on improving how the school is organized and managed and the quality of school leadership and teaching; on raising expectations and achievement for all students; and on providing additional funding that aims to achieve specific goals.

SREB states are making progress toward improving the performance and productivity of schools, as demonstrated by results. Every SREB state now produces school-by-school accountability reports and has implemented initiatives to ensure that schools are being held accountable for student achievement. States that have developed comprehensive approaches and refined them over time are seeing improvements on national measures of student achievement.

For more information, see *Getting Results with Accountability: Rating Schools, Assisting Schools, Improving Schools* by Jim Watts.

2 BY THE YEAR 2000...

Salaries for teachers and faculty will be competitive in the marketplace, will reach important benchmarks and will be linked to performance measures and standards.

- ◆ Competitive pay
- ◆ Rewards for outstanding performance
- ◆ Opportunities to grow in the teaching profession

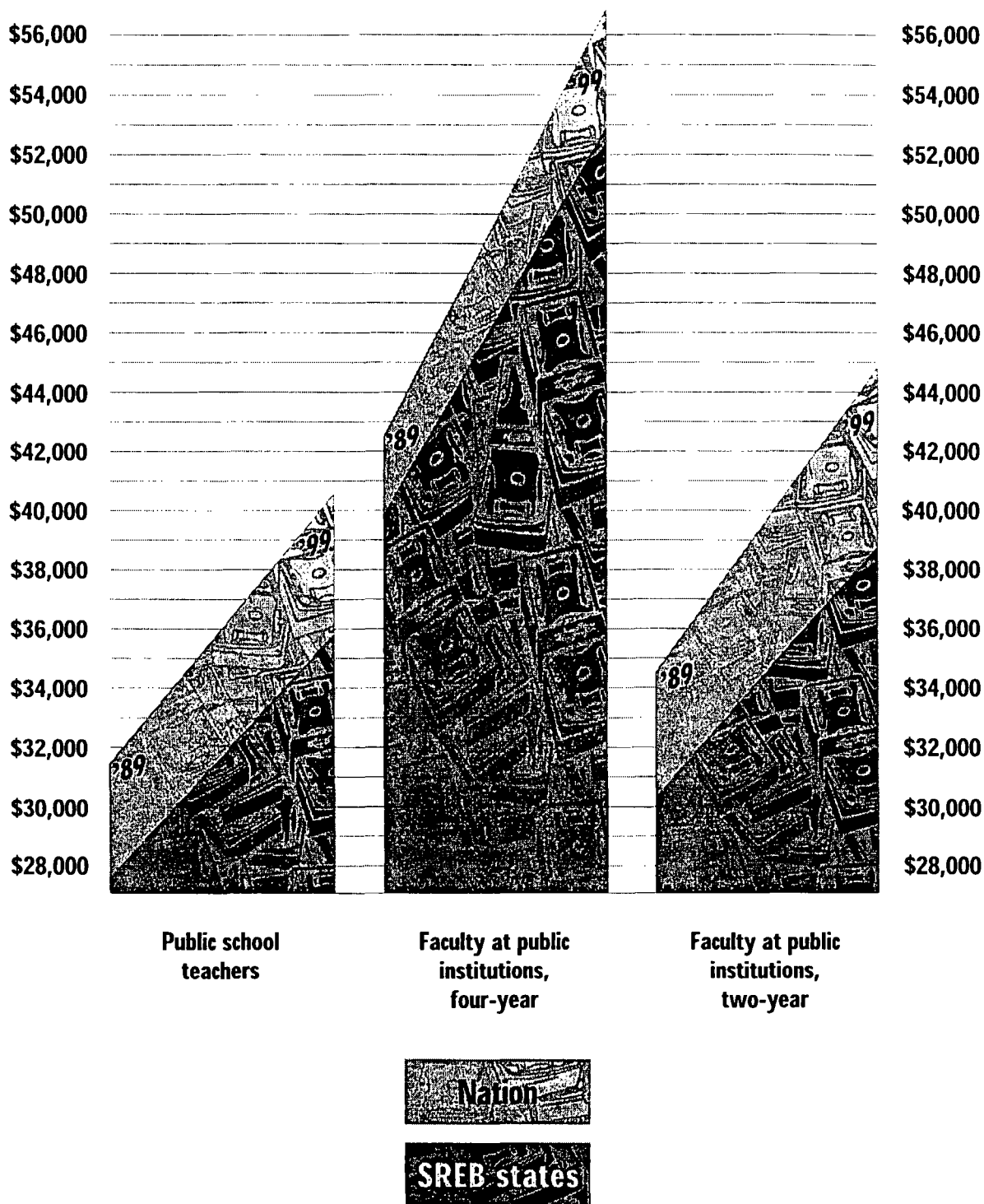
Decisions about pay, rewards and professional opportunities largely will determine whether states develop the dedicated, well-qualified teaching force necessary to raise student achievement consistently. Increasing salaries for teachers and faculty is a big-ticket budget item for states and localities. In the SREB region the cost of a 1 percent pay raise for teachers ranges by state from \$3 million to more than \$90 million. For full-time faculty at public two- and four-year colleges, a 1 percent raise ranges by state from \$1 million to \$11 million. Employee benefits add to these costs.

In the 1980s, SREB states made aggressive efforts to raise salaries for teachers and faculty. By the late 1980s, salaries for public school teachers in the SREB region were at 88 percent of the national average and college faculty salaries were at 94 percent of the national average. Even with significant increases in salaries during the 1990s, average salaries for teachers in public schools remain at 88 percent of the national average. Nine SREB states (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee and West Virginia) moved closer to the national average in 1999 compared with 1989, while Florida, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia were further below the national average than in 1989. Delaware and Maryland continued to be above the national average. Faculty salaries at four-year colleges and universities continue to be 94 percent of the national average. In 1999, average faculty salaries at public four-year colleges in Delaware jumped above the national average, and the averages in Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana and North Carolina are closer to the national average than in 1989. Salaries for faculty at community colleges in SREB states declined to less than 90 percent of the national average, even though the averages in 1999 for Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina and West Virginia were closer to the national average than in 1989.

Inflation was more modest in the 1990s than in the 1980s, but it is still a factor that makes it hard to maintain or raise "real" salaries. Despite significant efforts to increase salaries for teachers at all levels, inflation-adjusted average salaries for faculty at four-year colleges are only 4 percent higher than a decade ago. In the SREB region, inflation-adjusted salaries for public school teachers are only 1 percent higher in 1999 than in 1989.

The Salary Gap

Average Salaries in the Nation and the SREB States,
1989 to 1999*



* Salaries are for full-time teachers and faculty.
 Sources: National Education Association; American Association of University Professors; SREB-State Data Exchange

Two other factors have made it difficult for SREB states to make significant gains on national salary averages. First, since 1987, half of the nation's enrollment growth in public elementary and secondary schools occurred in SREB states. Growing enrollments in elementary and secondary schools — combined with state actions to reduce class sizes — created almost 230,000 new teaching jobs in SREB states over the last decade — nearly 50 percent of all new teaching jobs in the nation. A state's overall average salary is affected by the employment of new teachers and faculty at the lower end of the pay scale and by the retirement of higher-paid, experienced ones. For example, 24 percent of eighth-grade mathematics teachers in the nation have at least 25 years of experience, but only 12 percent of those in SREB states do.

Second, reaching national, regional and peer group averages is difficult because those averages do not stand still. To catch up, states below the average must make up not only the current gap but also any salary increases made by states that are already above the average.

Improving salaries for faculty in our schools and colleges will remain an uphill struggle. As long as the only question is whether there will be a 1 percent, 3 percent or 5 percent across-the-board pay raise, states are not likely to discover workable incentive plans for teachers in schools and colleges.

It is difficult to sustain competitive salary increases year in and year out, but several SREB states did so in the 1990s. Competitive salary increases — along with efforts to address teacher shortages, recognize superior performance or provide incentives for teachers to strengthen their professional skills — can go a long way toward attracting and retaining qualified candidates.

Average Salaries for Public School Teachers

	1999	Percent change, 1989 to 1999
United States	\$40,582	37%
SREB states	35,795	37
Alabama	35,820	42
Arkansas	32,350	51
Delaware	43,164	37
Florida	35,916	33
Georgia	39,675	47
Kentucky	35,526	43
Louisiana	32,510	45
Maryland	42,526	25
Mississippi	29,530	31
North Carolina	36,098	40
Oklahoma	31,107	39
South Carolina	34,506	35
Tennessee	36,500	42
Texas	35,041	32
Virginia	37,502	30
West Virginia	34,244	56

Source: National Education Association

Achievements and improvements

- ☒ Average salaries for teachers in public schools and colleges and universities have increased in every SREB state over the last decade. In 1998-1999, the typical salary for public school teachers was 37 percent higher than that in 1988-1989; for faculty at public two-year and four-year colleges it was 30 percent higher.
- ☒ At the same time, SREB states have expanded dramatically the numbers of faculty in public schools, colleges and universities. Nearly half of the new teaching positions in America's public schools and more than half of those in colleges and universities are in SREB states.

Remaining challenges

- ☐ National averages are a moving target. Compared with national averages, salaries for teachers and faculty in the SREB states are about the same as in 1988-1989. The typical teacher's salary in SREB states was 88 percent of the national average in 1999 and was 88 percent of the national average in 1989. The typical salary for faculty at four-year colleges in SREB states was 94 percent of the national average in 1999 and was 94 percent of the national average in 1989. The typical salary for faculty at two-year colleges in the region was 87 percent of the national average in 1999, down from 92 percent of the national average in 1989.
- ☐ SREB states are not tying teacher salaries to performance. Some states experimented with career ladders and performance incentives, but, for the most part, incentive-pay programs for teachers no longer exist. Incentive programs now are more likely to be part of school improvement efforts and to emphasize school awards based on student achievement. Salaries for college and university faculty are tied more closely to performance because peer evaluations and judgments more heavily influence promotions and salary increases. The issue in higher education remains that of what performance is being rewarded. Is outstanding teaching being rewarded as well as outstanding research?

SREB states have raised salaries for teachers in schools and colleges and universities significantly during the last decade, and so have other states across the nation. These increases in other states and inflation in the 1990s mean that average salaries in the SREB region relative to the national average are about where they were in the late 1980s. States have set goals for salary increases and have reached and maintained higher salaries. It is difficult to determine whether salaries for teachers in schools and colleges are competitive in the marketplace. In most SREB states, the marketplace is being defined as peer or regional or national averages.

For more information, see *Teacher Salaries and State Priorities for Education Quality — A Vital Link* by Gale Gaines and *Faculty Salaries in Colleges and Universities: Where do SREB States Stand?* by Joseph L. Marks.

Average Salaries for Full-Time Faculty at Public Four-Year Colleges

	1999	Percent change, 1989 to 1999
United States	\$56,916	41%
SREB states	52,995	40
Alabama	50,534	41
Arkansas	47,188	44
Delaware	66,473	67
Florida	55,004	33
Georgia	56,251	45
Kentucky	52,287	50
Louisiana	44,902	45
Maryland	58,075	42
Mississippi	48,606	40
North Carolina	56,311	43
Oklahoma	48,398	41
South Carolina	51,690	41
Tennessee	49,698	32
Texas	53,027	34
Virginia	58,800	35
West Virginia	46,867	51

Source: SREB-State Data Exchange; American Association of University Professors; National Center for Education Statistics

Average Salaries for Full-Time Faculty at Public Two-Year Colleges

	1999	Percent change, 1989 to 1999
United States	\$44,798	38%
SREB states	38,793	31
Alabama	42,608	40
Arkansas	34,276	39
Delaware	46,315	41
Florida	40,114	19
Georgia	42,141	40
Kentucky	39,299	56
Louisiana	33,528	30
Maryland	48,918	36
Mississippi	37,854	52
North Carolina	33,027	30
Oklahoma	37,569	34
South Carolina	35,065	41
Tennessee	36,189	26
Texas	39,748	29
Virginia	42,389	31
West Virginia	38,293	57

Source: SREB-State Data Exchange; American Association of University Professors; National Center for Education Statistics

2 *BY THE YEAR 2000...*

States will maintain or increase the proportion of state tax dollars for schools and colleges while emphasizing funding aimed at raising quality and productivity.

Since the late 1980s:

- ◆ Expenditures for public schools in SREB states have almost doubled.
- ◆ Expenditures for higher education have grown by more than 80 percent.
- ◆ The number of students in public schools has increased 14 percent.
- ◆ The number of college students has increased 12 percent.
- ◆ Expenditures for health care, corrections and public welfare have grown much faster than total state spending.
- ◆ Expenditures for education have increased at a slower rate than total state spending.

Schools and colleges must grapple with increased expectations, including: serving more students with complex needs; implementing new technologies; developing new ways to deliver instruction; and contributing to economic development through research. At the same time, claims on state budgets from other areas of state government are greater than ever.

Recent increases in funding for education have made it a higher budget priority than in the early 1990s, but in most SREB states education is a lower budget priority than it was in the mid-1980s.

In the 1990s, new money for education has been targeted to accomplish specific objectives that include:

- ◆ funding significant salary increases to reach regional or national salary goals;
- ◆ funding increases in enrollments;
- ◆ establishing merit-based scholarship programs;
- ◆ creating prepaid college tuition and tuition savings programs;
- ◆ expanding the use of technology in schools and colleges;
- ◆ reducing class sizes for students in the early grades;
- ◆ strengthening reading programs in the early grades; and
- ◆ funding incentives and rewards based on performance for schools and colleges.

State leaders recognize that many of these new efforts are additions to existing ones. They also know that SREB states long have trailed the nation in funding education.

These recent actions tend to show that state officials are most likely to support exceptional funding increases for schools and colleges when this funding is linked specifically to raising quality and improving productivity.

Achievements and improvements

- ☒ Spending for public schools in SREB states historically has trailed that for the nation, but since the late 1980s, spending for public schools has increased faster than the national average in Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, South Carolina and Tennessee. Nationally, spending for public schools is 93 percent higher now than in 1986. For the SREB region, spending is 97 percent higher.
- ☒ Funding for higher education in the SREB states also grew faster than the national average — growing by 83 percent for the SREB states, compared with 78 percent for the nation. The percent change in funding is higher than the national average for Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.
- ☒ Much of the increase in funding for education in the SREB states has been necessary to keep up with growing enrollments — 14 percent more students in public schools and 12 percent more in higher education than at the beginning of the decade.

Remaining challenges

- ☐ Even with these dramatic increases, public schools are a lower priority in the total state budget today than in the late 1980s in two-thirds of the SREB states (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia).
- ☐ As with the public schools, higher education's priority in state budgets is lower than it was a decade ago. Higher education now receives smaller percentages of the budgets in 15 SREB states.

SREB states have increased funding for education throughout the 1990s. Most of the increase has been used to increase the salaries of teachers, to keep up with enrollment increases and inflation, and to accomplish specific objectives tied to raising quality and improving productivity. Maintaining the proportion of state expenditures dedicated to education will not guarantee better schools and colleges. It is difficult to imagine, however, given the challenges facing education, that simply spending the same amount — or less — will enable states to respond to the unfinished business in education.



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