

Making Schools Work



School and Classroom Practices That Prepare Students for College and Careers

SREB

School
Improvement



For more than 30 years, SREB has helped teachers, counselors and school leaders empower youth to connect the classroom with the real world. Our efforts began in 1987 with High Schools That Work, our premier school improvement process.

Now known as **Making Schools Work** and spanning grades 3-14, our process is grounded in the belief that **increased achievement starts with motivating students to make the effort to succeed.**

Making Schools Work employs a distributed leadership approach to involve the whole school in identifying problems that impact achievement and developing plans to solve them.

With designs for elementary grades,* middle grades, high schools and technology centers, Making Schools Work shows school teams how to create improvement plans that address **five focus areas:**

- engaging students through **quality instruction**
- **aligning curricula** with state readiness standards
- ensuring that students can **explore careers and complete career pathways** that align with their interests and aptitudes
- providing **student supports** that promote readiness
- promoting leadership for creating and supporting **cultures of continuous improvement**

Making Schools Work helps schools transform their practices so that students never have to ask, “Why do I need to know this?” With Making Schools Work, students connect classroom learning with their personal goals.

“When I was a new principal, SREB’s school improvement process helped me adopt a distributed leadership style and empower my teachers to research, problem-solve and propose solutions to campus problems. I’ll use the same approach in my new role to solve campus or district problems.”

— Holly Keown, Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services, Crandall Independent School District, Texas

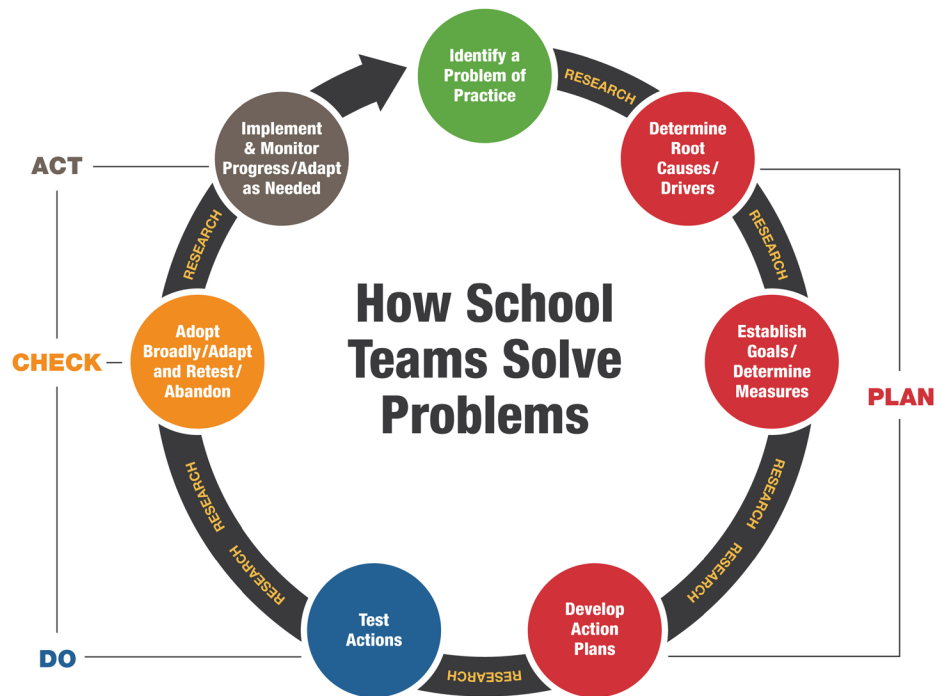
* under development

Our Problem-Solving Process

With Making Schools Work, focus teams of teachers, counselors and school leaders collaboratively identify the steps they need to take to address problems of practice.

Based on W. Edward Deming's Plan-Do-Check-Act process, our **facilitated approach to problem-solving** supports focus teams as they foster supportive learning environments, integrate academic and technical content, improve achievement and empower youth to explore and achieve their career goals.

During the process, focus teams create a profile of a college- and career-ready graduate that clearly articulates the experiences, skills and knowledge students should have. These profiles help teams establish improvement goals and revise their school's mission and vision to meet the needs of each student. Structured activities, shared resources and ongoing coaching and professional development deepen teams' understanding of effective school and classroom practices.



What Makes It Work — 10 Key Practices

Whether applied in high schools or technology centers,* these **10 key practices** give students the purpose, direction and accelerated learning opportunities they need to graduate on time and thrive in college, careers and life.

- 1. High Expectations** — Create a culture of high expectations in every classroom and throughout the school.
- 2. Programs of Study** — Ensure each student develops and completes a personalized program of study that leads to postsecondary and career success.
- 3. Integrated Curriculum** — Teach academic content through the lens of real-world problems and projects.
- 4. Access and Equity** — Ensure that all students, including underrepresented and nontraditional students, have equitable access to high-quality career pathways.
- 5. Student Engagement** — Use research-based instructional strategies and innovative technology practices to engage each student.
- 6. Teacher Collaboration** — Provide teams of teachers with the training, time and support they need to work together to improve instruction.
- 7. Work-Based Learning** — Provide each student with a continuum of real-world learning experiences that connect classroom and workplace learning.
- 8. Guidance and Advisement** — Offer guidance and advisement that empower students to pursue a full range of career and college options after high school.
- 9. Interventions and Enrichments** — Provide students with the extra help or accelerated learning strategies they need to graduate college and career ready.
- 10. Culture of Continuous Improvement** — Engage the whole school community in continuously using data to identify problems and develop plans to solve them.

* Learn about SREB's 10 Key Practices for the middle grades at sreb.org/middle-grades.

Support for Continuous Improvement

Many districts and schools choose to begin with one of SREB's comprehensive needs assessments — **our curriculum and instruction reviews or career pathway reviews** — that examine school and classroom practices and learning opportunities across the district or school.

Most sites opt to receive direct support from SREB's instructional and leadership coaches through a series of customized **site development workshops** and follow-up **coaching** and **professional development services**. We can also prepare state or district leaders to provide support.

We invite participating schools to showcase their promising practices at our Making Schools Work Conference as well as at forums, workshops and webinars.

At every step, SREB helps states, districts and schools:

- Establish the need for change.
- Create a shared vision for change.
- Engage teams in developing plans to achieve their vision.
- Access expert coaching and support.
- Participate in ongoing professional learning.
- Monitor changes in school and classroom practices.
- Adapt and achieve their goals and vision.



States, districts and schools can adopt the process in any grade level or setting. SREB also encourages districts and schools to leverage their knowledge and sustain change by participating in Networked Improvement Communities.

Sustainability is baked into our process. Teachers and leaders take ownership of problems, develop plans for improvement and make changes in school and classroom practices that result in improved student engagement and achievement. Done right, the process becomes part of the school's culture and way of doing business, outlasting staff and leadership changes.

Let us help you ensure that:

- **Elementary students** develop the literacy and math skills needed in the middle grades.
- **Middle grades students** enter high school able to read and understand grade-level texts and prepared to take or having already completed Algebra I.
- **High school students** earn enough credits as first-time ninth-graders to enter the 10th grade, graduate on time and college and career ready, and earn a credential or degree of value by age 25.

Learn more about how SREB can help you reach your school improvement goals.

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