

SREB's Student Success Framework

The Southern Regional Education Board defines Student Success as access to and completion of postsecondary credentials that lead to lifelong learning, fulfilling careers and stronger economies. SREB has identified four pillars as the foundation of the framework for Student Success — access, persistence, retention and attainment.

Each of these pillars has key practices associated with K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions and state level educators or policymakers that guide education leaders and help build their capacity to support student success. SREB created the *Student Success Framework* to guide institutions, state agencies, workforce and communities in integrating these practices in their policies while incorporating student feedback to refine and improve support services.

- I. **ACCESS** — Access refers to the capacity of all institutional stakeholders to prepare each and every student to pursue and succeed in education beyond high school, encompassing awareness of postsecondary options, available resources, affordability, entry requirements and navigation of institutional processes.

KEY PRACTICES

	K-12 Schools	Postsecondary	State Level/ Policymaker
Challenging Coursework	Ensure each and every student, including communities in need and non-traditional students have opportunities to engage in challenging academic and technical skills necessary for the workplace and further education.	Provide each and every student with an opportunity to engage in rigorous academic and technical training that prepares them for the workforce and advanced education, including tailored support for communities in need and non-traditional students.	Prioritize state resources and efforts to develop academic degree programs and shorter-term, non-degree programs aligned to critical labor market needs.
Career Pathways	Collaborate with business and industry to provide each and every student access to quality work-based learning experiences that align with their career interests and aptitude.	Collaborate with business and industry to integrate high-quality work-based learning experiences into academic programs and career services, ensuring they align with students' career interests and aptitudes.	Ensure state policymakers, business and industry co-create career pathways, with K-12 and postsecondary institutions that include work-based learning experiences and opportunities.
Student Support	Equip students and families with advisory support and ample information when selecting career pathways, such as interest inventories, aptitude tests, career awareness and funding sources.	Offer students comprehensive advisory support and resources for selecting career pathways, including career interest inventories, aptitude assessments, career exploration opportunities and information on financial aid and scholarships.	Offer students comprehensive advisory support and resources for selecting career pathways, including career interest inventories, aptitude assessments, career exploration opportunities and information on financial aid and scholarships.
Human Capital	Provide appropriate personnel and resources so that each student has access to high-demand career programs in critical needs areas, regardless of their location or socio-economic status.	Provide appropriate personnel and resources so that each and every student has the opportunity to enroll in high-demand career programs in critical need areas and provide them with information on how to access support programs, including academic support, mental health services and financial aid.	Establish coordinated state-wide policies that ensure access to high-demand career programs, promote data collection on student outcomes by institutions, and work with state agencies to provide insights on pay and in-demand careers so that critically understaffed programs are sufficiently staffed.

II. PERSISTENCE — Persistence emphasizes individual agency, progress towards personal goals and self-reflection in an aligned and transparent system by actively engaging with available resources and student support programs.

KEY PRACTICES

	K-12 Schools	Postsecondary	State Level/ Policymaker
Challenging Coursework	Design tiered systems of extra help, work-based learning and accelerated learning opportunities that help each student stay engaged in a challenging academic and technical program of study.	Promote participation in summer bridge programs that offer both preparatory and core courses, along with peer mentoring and tutoring through a range of support programs, as well as work-based learning opportunities to aid students in their transition to college.	Champion state policies that fund and support summer bridge programs offering both preparatory and core courses and ensure the availability of peer mentoring and tutoring through a variety of support programs to enhance students' transition to college.
Career Pathways	Provide all shareholders with clearly defined academic and technical pathways from high school to college and career, including articulated and dual credit, and industry-recognized credentials.	Provide a transfer system that clearly articulates course and credit transferability between community colleges, universities that align with degrees, and industry recognized credentials.	Align statewide policies and resources to simplify credit transfer and articulation among secondary and post-secondary institutions.
Student Support	Ensure each student participates in a comprehensive counseling program that addresses academic and career development, and mental health and wellness to attain skills for lifelong success.	Implement comprehensive student support programs that include academic and career counseling, as well as mental health and wellness services, to help students develop the skills needed for long-term success.	Promote state policies that ensure K-12 schools and higher education institutions provide comprehensive counseling programs addressing academic and career development, alongside mental health and wellness services, to equip students with skills for lifelong success.
Human Capital	Build capacity within the whole school community to have a growth mindset that all students can complete early college and career opportunities.	Collaborate with shareholders to identify and implement statewide initiatives that offer students opportunities to earn early college credit.	Support policies and foster collaboration between state agencies and industry partners to ensure alignment provides early access to college and career opportunities.

III. RETENTION — Retention is providing students with tools and services that enable them to complete their intended courses of study, including streamlined processes, robust support services, comprehensive learning environments, clear academic and career pathways, and proactive monitoring and support of each student’s progress.

KEY PRACTICES

	K-12 Schools	Postsecondary	State Level/ Policymaker
Challenging Coursework	Provide dual enrollment and early college training opportunities for K-12 teachers to facilitate exposure and transition to postsecondary education.	Provide dual enrollment and early college opportunities to students, creating a pipeline of students, and promoting seamless transition to postsecondary education.	Support policies, regulations and laws that direct resources to support K-12 teacher training in dual enrollment and early college teaching and expand availability of dual enrollment and early college opportunities for students.
Career Pathways	Create programs of study in partnership with postsecondary institutions and businesses that have detailed career pathway progressions aligned to labor market needs and lead to fulfilling careers.	Cultivate partnerships between postsecondary institutions and businesses to provide work-based learning experiences in high-demand fields that provide livable wages.	Advocate for the provision of necessary resources and the data required to establish and facilitate partnerships between educational institutions and industries in high-demand fields.
Student Support	Ensure each student has support through mentoring, advocacy and advisory programs, co-curricular activities or community partnerships.	Establish wraparound services and partner with local support organizations to provide student academic advisement, financial aid, mental health supports, career services and other needed assistance.	Foster collaboration between state education institutions, social service and workforce development organizations to ensure wraparound services including cooperative learning opportunities are provided to support student retention.
Human Capital	Use data-driven means to proactively monitor each student’s progress and provide needed supports.	Implement data-driven student monitoring systems to better anticipate, identify and address potential challenges to each student’s continued enrollment.	Promote the adoption of policies mandating ongoing, data-driven evaluation of programs to ensure their quality and effectiveness and to identify any areas of needed improvement.

IV. ATTAINMENT — Attainment refers to the completion of postsecondary education and training, including certificates, degrees and work-based experiences, to prepare individuals for fulfilling careers and foster a diverse, skilled workforce.

KEY PRACTICES

	K-12 Schools	Postsecondary	State Level/ Policymaker
Challenging Coursework	Ensure each student has opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials and early postsecondary credits in their chosen program and career pathway.	Offer students opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials and postsecondary credits within their chosen program and career pathway, while also recognizing and awarding credit for prior life experiences and skills.	Support the development and expansion of policies that provide students with opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials and early post-secondary credits in their chosen career pathways.
Career Pathways	Ensure each student at all grade levels develops and annually reviews and revises a personalized education plan that includes rigorous academic core courses and challenging career pathway courses that align with their interests and aptitudes.	Ensure that each student, including communities in need and non-traditional students, obtains in-demand skills and earns a credential that serves as an on-ramp to a career and enhanced living standards.	Engage business and industry leaders in ongoing collaboration to identify current and future workforce needs and to strengthen regional industry sector partnerships.
Student Support	Ensure each student receives appropriate support for a seamless transition between teachers, grade levels and schools. Additional targeted assistance is available for students who enter school during the school year.	Provide students with tailored support to ensure a smooth transition between academic levels, programs and departments, and offer additional assistance for students who enroll mid-year.	Promote policies that facilitate smooth transitions for students between educational stages and institutions, and support programs that offer targeted assistance for students entering mid-year.
Human Capital	Provide personnel with training to support students in using career interest and aptitude surveys to develop a plan of support that allows them to explore their talents and options.	Provide personnel with training to support students in using career interest and aptitude surveys to develop a plan of support that allows them to explore their talents and options.	Adopt an industry-aligned statewide policy for K-16 and work-based learning that promotes the development of personnel to provide a continuum of experiences beginning in the middle grades and extending through post-secondary.

About this Framework

The Southern Regional Education Board's *Student Success Framework* is grounded in over 15 years of SREB research, providing a comprehensive approach to ensuring that all students can access and complete postsecondary credentials that lead to lifelong learning, fulfilling careers and economic strength. The four pillars of the *Student Success Framework* — access, persistence, retention and attainment — provide a structured approach to support students through every phase of their educational journey, ensuring they have the resources to enter, continue and successfully complete postsecondary programs that lead to lasting careers and personal success.

Each pillar includes specific practices centered around challenging coursework, career pathways, student support and human capital that are tailored to K-12 schools, post-secondary institutions and state-level leaders. These practices offer steps that help build capacity across all levels of education. To support these efforts, SREB convenes professionals from across these sectors in gatherings focused on key practices within each pillar, creating opportunities to share insights, collaborate and align strategies. These convenings enable education leaders, workforce professionals and community members to strengthen their approaches to student success and make it a shared priority.

SREB also provides technical assistance and professional development resources to help institutions create effective policies and services that guide every student toward their educational and career goals. By grounding improvement efforts in these pillars, the *Student Success Framework* empowers institutions and agencies to drive change that leads to meaningful student outcomes and broader economic and social benefits. For more information and a comprehensive list of resources, please visit <https://www.sreb.org/post/list-publications-and-resources>.

The *Student Success Framework* was developed by members of the SREB Student Success Steering Committee. Their collective expertise alongside feedback and advisement from K-12, postsecondary and state level shareholders has shaped a valuable resource designed to guide educational institutions in improving student outcomes across the Southern region. For more information, please contact co-chairs Michael A. DeJesus III, Director of Student Success and Access at michael.dejesus@sreb.org and Aimee Wyatt at aimee.wyatt@sreb.org, Director of Leadership and Professional Learning.