

**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.*

Indicators of progress include—

- Agreeing at the state level on funding plans for schools and colleges that emphasize raising quality and productivity;
- Providing annual financial statements to governors, legislators, and citizens on the state's success in implementing funding plans for education;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of selected school and collegiate programs and linking the results to funding decisions;
- Establishing a state competitive grant process that assigns dollars where they will have the biggest impact on promoting specific initiatives.

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## **CHALLENGING THE FUTURE**

Will we challenge the future? Will we challenge trends for the year 2000 that forecast shortfalls in educational attainment and quality of education and therefore unacceptable standards of living? Will we set goals for education, work to achieve them, and alter the future?

The twelve recommended goals in this document are intended to add to the resolve of state leaders to do more to improve education. They are intended to encourage an even deeper and more sustained commitment to educational improvement from pre-school through graduate school.

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## *Goals for Education*

### **CHALLENGE 2000**

Copies of the report *Goals for Education*  
**CHALLENGE 2000** are available at  
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## *Goals for Education*

### **CHALLENGE 2000**



**Southern Regional Education Board**

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## Goals for Education

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#### *Why is it important to set goals for education?*

Nearly all Southern Regional Education Board states are implementing new standards and programs to improve the quality of education. Since 1981 they have led the nation in doing so. But, few states appear to have set specific goals for results they expect these new educational standards and programs to produce. Educators and elected officials need to ask several questions:

- Have we shaped our educational reforms into a vision of what we expect to accomplish?
- Do we know with some certainty where we want our state's educational system to be by the year 2000?
- Do we have ways of knowing whether we are on track with our educational programs? Of knowing whether we are supporting them adequately?
- In short, does our state have specific educational goals and ways of knowing when we have successfully reached them or are making progress toward achieving them?

If state leaders ask these questions of themselves and others they may find that the answers are too often "no."

Why then are educational goals important? Simply put, **the citizens of any state are not likely to achieve more in education than they and their leaders expect and aim for.**

Significant improvements in education do not "just happen." They are planned, pursued, and evaluated. If the number of students graduating from high school increases appreciably or if there is a rise in the percentage of entering college students who are ready for college-level work, it will be because these matters are priorities.

Substantial and sustained public support will be required. Setting and pursuing educational goals may be the best way to encourage and maintain this support. Attempting to rally support from the public with general claims that schools and colleges are working harder or doing better will not suffice. States without specific goals for the year 2000 may likely remember the 1980s as "the good old days in education." States with educational visions and goals specifically tied to these visions may remember the 1980s as the time they laid the groundwork for their continuing prosperity.

Educational goals should be concrete. They should be realistic, but present a challenge to reach beyond the present grasp. Goals should be measurable so that progress in meeting them can be checked. States should seek to link their goals to national standards and benchmarks—especially for student learning and performance.

Disparities in opportunities and outcomes are too prevalent in every state. Therefore, as states set goals for the education of the population in general, they should determine what goals mean for citizens from disadvantaged backgrounds, many of whom are blacks and Hispanics, create the special programs that may be needed, and track the degree of success for both majority and minority populations.

Goals will vary from state to state, but there will be many similarities. Goals should address the entire range of educational programs. Why? Because it is impossible to separate the question of the quality in a state's elementary and secondary schools and in its colleges. Goals should focus on student learning and on what it takes to produce satisfactory levels of student learning in schools and colleges.

The Southern Regional Education Board and its Commission for Educational Quality have proposed 12 specific goals for education and "indicators of progress" toward meeting those goals. The underlying belief is that taking action to set educational goals and keeping track of progress toward meeting them will better prepare the citizens of SREB states to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

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## EDUCATIONAL GOALS FOR STATES, SCHOOLS, AND COLLEGES

If SREB states are determined to meet or exceed national standards in education by the year 2000, what kinds of goals must they set and reach? And what actions or conditions—what "indicators" of progress—will signal to citizens, educators, and government leaders movement toward meeting long-range educational goals? The goals and a few of the indicators of progress advanced by SREB follow.

#### **BY THE YEAR 2000—**

*All children will be ready for the first grade.*

Indicators of progress include—

- Increasing the percentage of "at risk" children served by pre-school and kindergarten programs to 100 percent by the year 2000;

- Using readiness assessments for all children prior to their beginning the first grade and providing appropriate developmental programs to meet individual needs;
- Establishing programs that help those children who are unprepared to begin academic work in the first grade in 100 percent of the districts.

#### **BY THE YEAR 2000—**

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

Indicators of progress include—

- Establishing and publicizing specific student achievement goals by schools, districts, and states;
- Reporting of student achievement results by divisions such as quartiles—upper one-fourth, middle two-fourths, and lower one-fourth—to keep the focus on helping all students make progress;
- Increasing the percentages of students meeting academic standards or making gains on national achievement tests;
- Narrowing by one-half the unacceptably large gaps in achievement of students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds (achievement should also be reported in ways that clearly show any existing disparities among students with different economic and geographic backgrounds so problems can be pinpointed).

#### **BY THE YEAR 2000—**

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

- Establishing a system to collect and report state dropout data by race and gender and by schools and districts according to a common definition;
- Providing funding to develop programs that identify and help at-risk students, beginning in early grades and continuing through high school completion;
- Reducing the number of chronically absent students by 25 percent and raising the overall student attendance rate to 95 percent, or higher.

#### **BY THE YEAR 2000—**

*90 percent of adults will have a high school diploma or equivalency.*

- Increasing dramatically the number of employees participating in business-sponsored "learn and earn" programs to complete a high school equivalency;

- Increasing to 50 percent or higher the percentage of school dropouts who enroll in and complete the General Educational Development program—for black young adults, this will mean doubling the number who complete the program after enrolling.

#### **BY THE YEAR 2000—**

*4 of every 5 students entering college will be ready to begin college-level work.*

Indicators of progress include—

- Establishing standards that include a core of required academic high school courses for admission into four-year colleges and universities;
- Increasing the percentage of high school students enrolled in an academic or college preparatory high school track to equal or exceed the percentage of students going on to academic post-secondary programs;
- Establishing in every institution of higher education standards for beginning college-level study and assessments to determine if students are prepared to begin this degree-credit study;
- Establishing policies that require successful completion of non-credit remedial education courses for students not meeting degree-credit standards and continuous evaluations of the effectiveness of remedial education programs for students from different backgrounds and levels of preparation for college.

#### **BY THE YEAR 2000—**

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

Indicators of progress include—

- Raising the basic reading, mathematics, and science competencies of students who complete secondary vocational education programs to national averages or higher as measured by programs such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress;
- Establishing targets for the percentage of students who complete vocational programs and are successfully placed in related jobs, the military, or pursue further education;
- Evaluating and revising the ways that vocational education teachers are prepared, licensed, and updated, with the emphasis on improving their academic competencies and their skills for teaching applied courses.

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**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.*

Indicators of progress include—

- Increasing to national averages or higher the rates at which new high school graduates and adults enroll in higher education;
- Increasing the percentage of two-year college students who go on to attend senior institutions, currently about 20 percent, (states will need effective transfer agreements between two-year and four-year institutions and programs to raise the numbers of minority students who transfer to senior institutions);
- Setting quantitative and qualitative targets for graduate enrollments, with consideration of the proportion of minorities and women enrolled, and creating conditions for growth in selected fields.

**BY THE YEAR 2000—**

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

Indicators of progress include—

- Requiring institutional goals and standards for the proportion of students successfully passing state and national examinations for licensure or certification;
- Insisting that each institution evaluate the effectiveness of its core curriculum in providing a sound general education for students during the first two years of college;
- Insisting that every institution or system of institutions establish graduation and retention goals—with special attention to minority and disadvantaged students.

**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.*

Indicators of progress include—

- Adopting as state policy a continuing state-level emphasis on improving teacher preparation programs that includes the presidents and the arts and sciences and education faculty of all colleges and universities in periodic examination of teacher preparation programs;

- Evaluating different approaches to prepare teachers, such as alternative certification, four-year undergraduate, and extended programs, based primarily on performance of graduates and their students;
- Increasing threefold the number of minorities graduating from programs to prepare teachers—this means an annual increase of approximately 20 percent each year to the year 2000;
- Improving the performance of beginning and veteran teachers according to assessments of principals and veteran teachers.

**BY THE YEAR 2000—**

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

Indicators of progress include—

- Establishing in each state school standards and rewards based primarily on school outcomes, such as student achievement, attendance, and assessments of students' readiness for post-secondary education and employment;
- Focusing on school-site results and rewarding schools for outcomes;
- Preparing school board members, superintendents, principals, and teachers to establish goals and operate results-oriented accountability systems;
- Supporting programs in all districts that help principals and teachers increase the involvement of parents and the community in each school.

**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.*

Indicators of progress include—

- Agreeing at the state level on appropriate salary goals for teachers and faculty and on a schedule for meeting these goals;
  - Providing pay plans for teachers and faculty that reward outstanding performance, expanded responsibilities, or expertise in critical areas;
  - Establishing a system to inform the governor, legislators, and citizens about the present and projected supply and demand for teachers and faculty and the progress made in achieving compensation goals for them;
  - Increasing numbers of teachers and faculty with high performance evaluations who choose to remain in the classroom.
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