

SREB

A Blueprint for Improving High School Achievement *and* Graduation Rates in SREB States

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Why Give Equal Emphasis to Graduation Rates *and* Achievement

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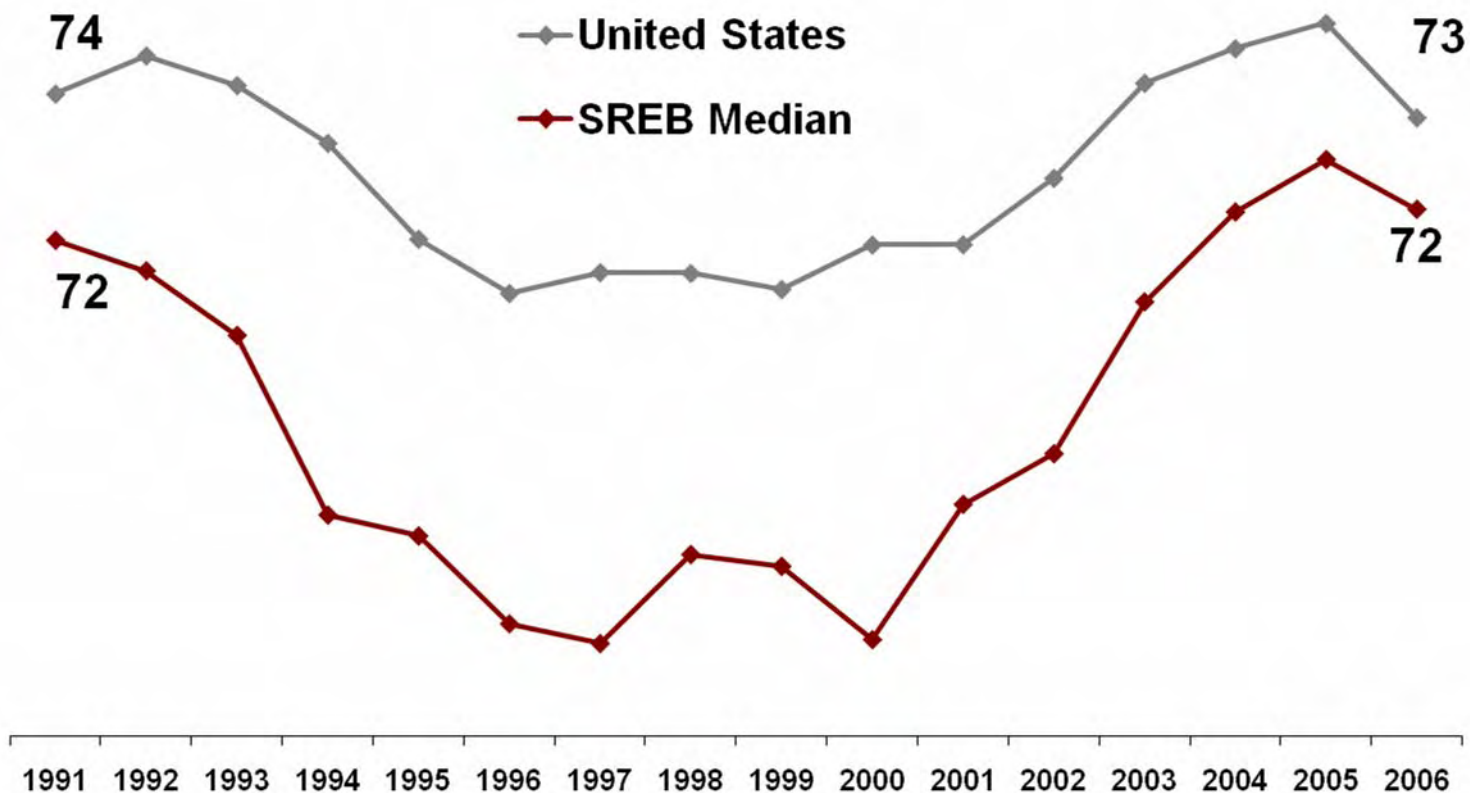
- **Current focus is on meeting minimum achievement levels, not graduation.**
- **Many students enter high school unprepared.**
- **Many high school graduates are unprepared for college and work.**
- **Dropouts are costly to SREB states.**

Graduation Rate Progress

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United States and SREB, 1991 to 2006

SREB states narrowing the gap with the nation



Source: National Center for Education Statistics

NC Commission 09-08-09

Next Generation of Accountability — Foundational Ideas

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- The purpose of high school is to graduate more students and to graduate them prepared for a next step — postsecondary studies, career training, military, employment, apprenticeship, etc. **Page 9 Blueprint Report**
- Graduates should meet a common threshold-level of knowledge and skills in reading, writing and math. **Page 9**
- Students should leave high school meeting college-readiness standards, work-readiness standards or both. **Pages 9 and 10**

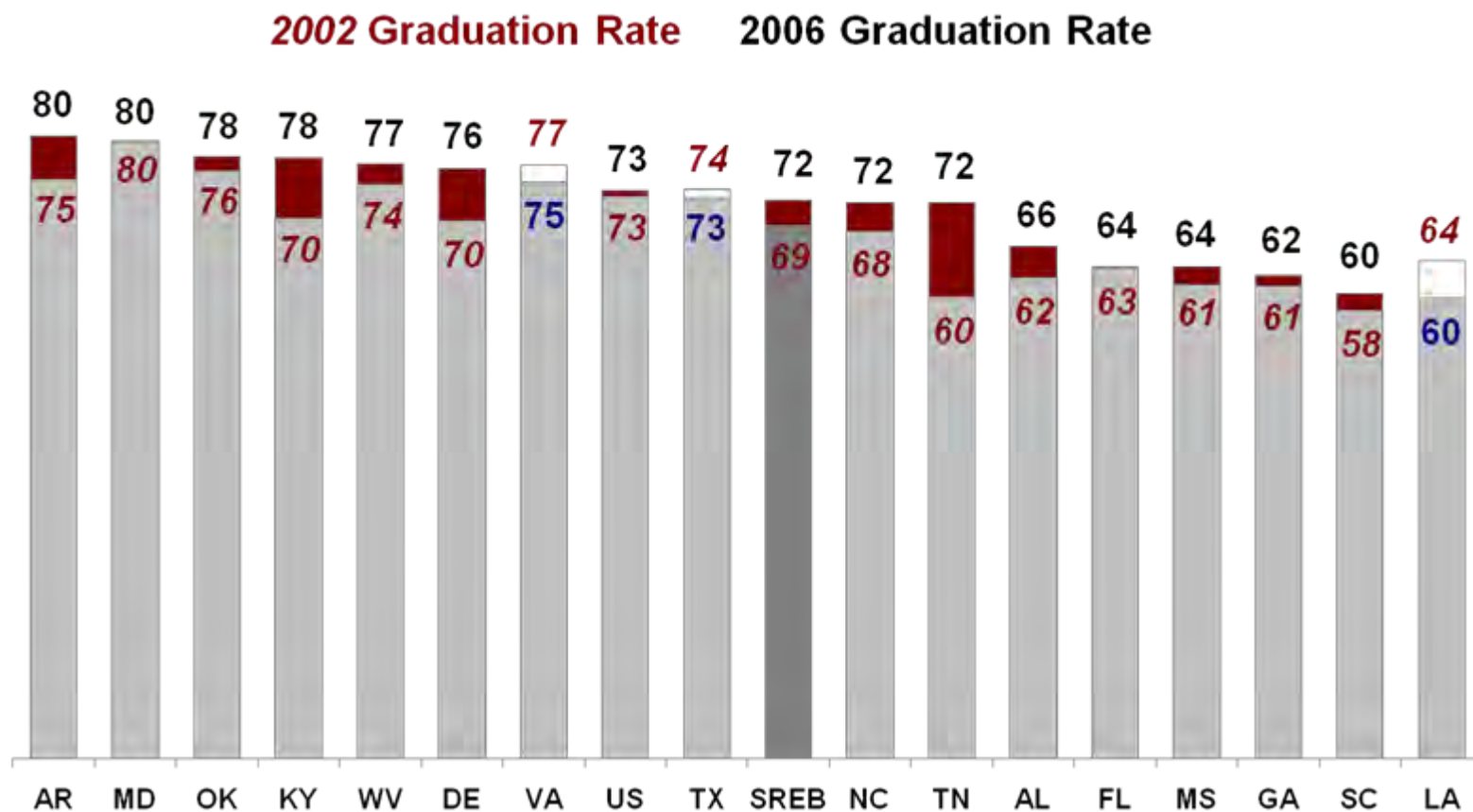
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Graduation Rate Progress

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SREB States, 2002 and 2006

Most SREB states saw gains — some significant



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State Actions for Next Generation of Accountability — Foundational Ideas

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Action 1: Give equal weight to graduation *and* achievement in determining school performance.

- Make graduation a parallel goal to higher achievement. **Page 12**

State Actions for Next Generation of Accountability — Foundational Ideas

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Action 2: Set ambitious goals for improving graduation rates. Page 12

- **Set graduation goal of 90%. Page 13**
- **Set annual incremental targets for each school to reach. Page 13**
- **Targets vary by school conditions. Page 13**

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State Actions for Next Generation of Accountability — Foundational Ideas

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Action 3: Set achievement levels for high schools beyond minimum competency and hold schools accountable for annual improvement. **Page 13**

- Encourage and recognize schools with higher percentage of students meeting college- and career-readiness.

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Broaden Range of Achievement Indicators Beyond Minimum Proficiency **Page 15**

Include percentages of high school students:

- **Academically ready to begin college**
- **Ready to enter employment**
- **Succeeding in academically challenging course work**
 - **AP and IB programs**
- **Passing reading and math state exams at readiness levels for high school graduation, continued education and career training**
- **Meeting ACT or SAT college-readiness benchmarks**
- **Eligible for merit scholarships at state's two- and four-year institutions**
- **Earning postsecondary education and training credit early through dual credit/joint enrollment**

State Actions for Next Generation of Accountability — Foundational Ideas

Action 4: Stress improvement by recognizing schools with significant improvement in graduation rates and percentages of students college-ready, work-ready or both. **Page 15**

Apply sanctions when districts fail to improve after receiving capacity-building assistance to carry out reform. **Page 16**

State Actions That Go Beyond Setting Goals, Assessing and Reporting Results

Implement proven state and local initiatives – setting accountability goals, assessing and reporting results and providing rewards and sanctions are essential, but not enough. Page 16

States must have a focused set of strategic actions to build confidence that improved results will be achieved.

Ninth-Grade Bulge in Selected SREB States

State	2001-2002	2005-2006
Alabama	107%	110%
Arkansas	103	104
Florida	134	117
Georgia	118	119
Louisiana	92	88
North Carolina	115	117
Oklahoma	106	106
Texas	121	120
Virginia	115	114

Source: NCES Common Core of Data

State Actions for Meeting the Next Generation of Accountability Goals

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Action 5: Strengthen middle grades students' transition into high school and reduce failure rates in the ninth grade. See pages 17 and 18 for possible indicators.

- Use early warning indicators for intervention. Page 18
- Hold middle grades accountable for ninth-grade readiness. Page 17
- Use indicators for assessing progress in grades nine and 10. Page 17
- Redesign grade nine. Page 19

State Actions for Meeting Next Generation of Accountability Goals

Action 6: Recognize that one path to graduation does not fit all students.

Pages 20 and 21

Graduation rate indicators **Page 20**

- Choice, full-time technical centers
- Career academies (School-within-school)
- Early college (credit recovery)
- Flexible time (hours/days)
- Flexible credit policy

Graduation-rate indicators should count students who:

See Page 20

- Graduate in four years or less with standard or higher-level diploma.
- Graduate in more than four years with a standard or higher-level diploma.
- Earn a standard diploma through adult education.
- Return after dropping out and earn a standard diploma.
- Meet diploma requirements and enter college early.
- Earn a GED credential, coupled with a state-approved industry certification.

State Actions for Meeting Next Generation of Accountability Goals

Action 7: Broaden the definition of academic rigor to include career/technical (CT) programs of study that join a ready academic core with a sequence of quality CT courses.

- Broader definition of rigor **Page 22**
 - Alternative assessment
- “Ready” academic core **Page 23**
- Applied academic courses **Page 24**
- Intellectually demanding career/technical courses **Page 25**

State Actions for Meeting Next Generation of Accountability Goals

Action 8: Bring dropouts back into the education system. Pages 26 and 27

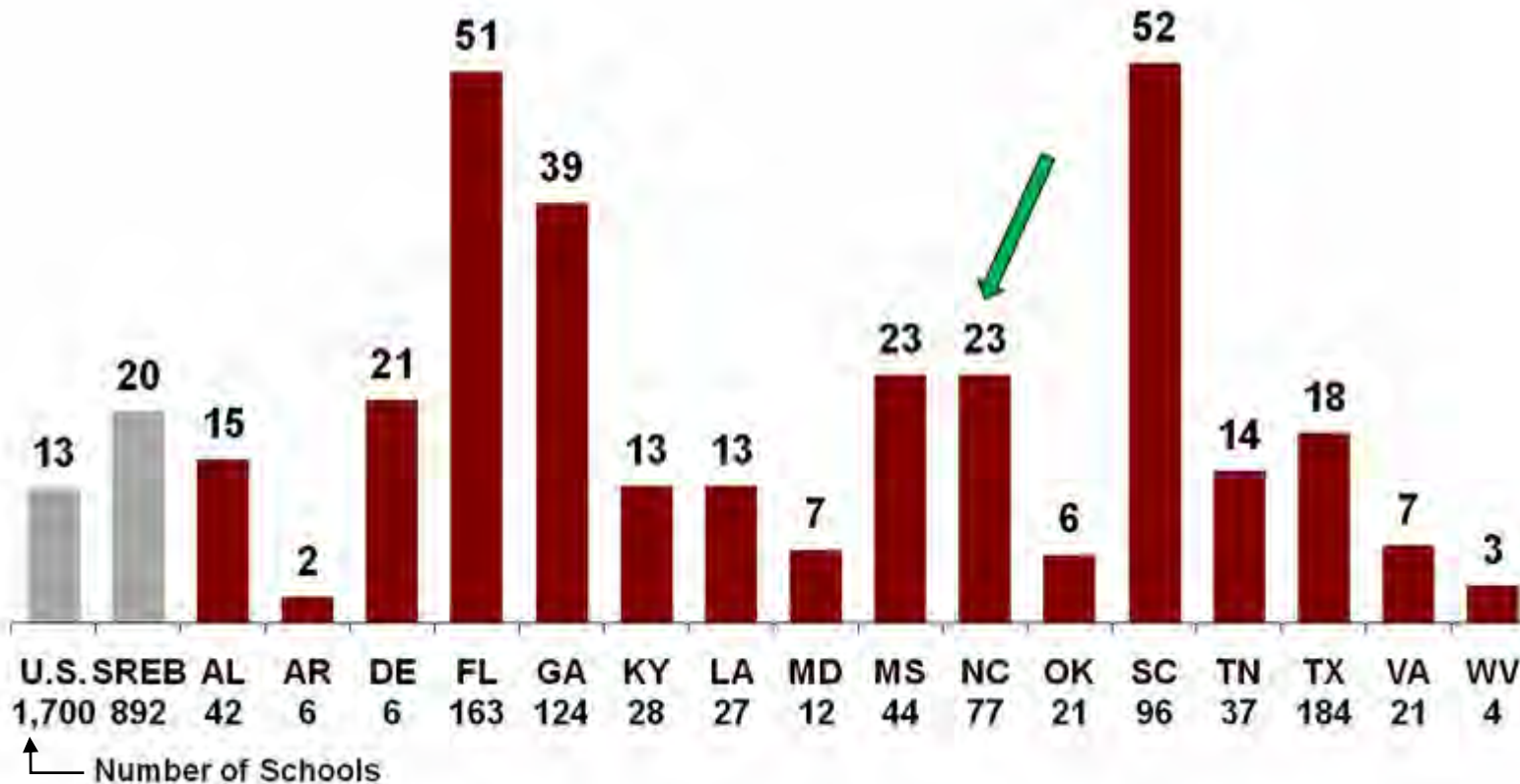
- Adult high schools
- Regional technical centers
- Community colleges
- Flexible credit policy
- Flexible school day and year
- Facilitated Web-based instruction

Targeting the Dropout Crisis

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Percent of High Schools in Which 60 Percent or Fewer Freshmen Became Seniors, 2006

SREB states have too many “dropout factories”



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The High School Pipeline

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Intermediate Indicators to Assess Progress Toward Graduation

- **Ninth-grade bulge:** ratio of ninth- to eighth-grade enrollment
- **Promoting power:** percentage of ninth-graders who progress to 12th grade in three years
- **Seniors-to-graduates ratio:** percentage of seniors who earn a diploma at the end of the school year
- **Strong promoting power:** getting more than 90 percent of ninth-graders to the senior year in three years
- **Weak promoting power:** getting less than 60 percent of ninth-graders to the senior year

Source: Johns Hopkins University

State Actions for Meeting the Next Generation of Accountability Goals

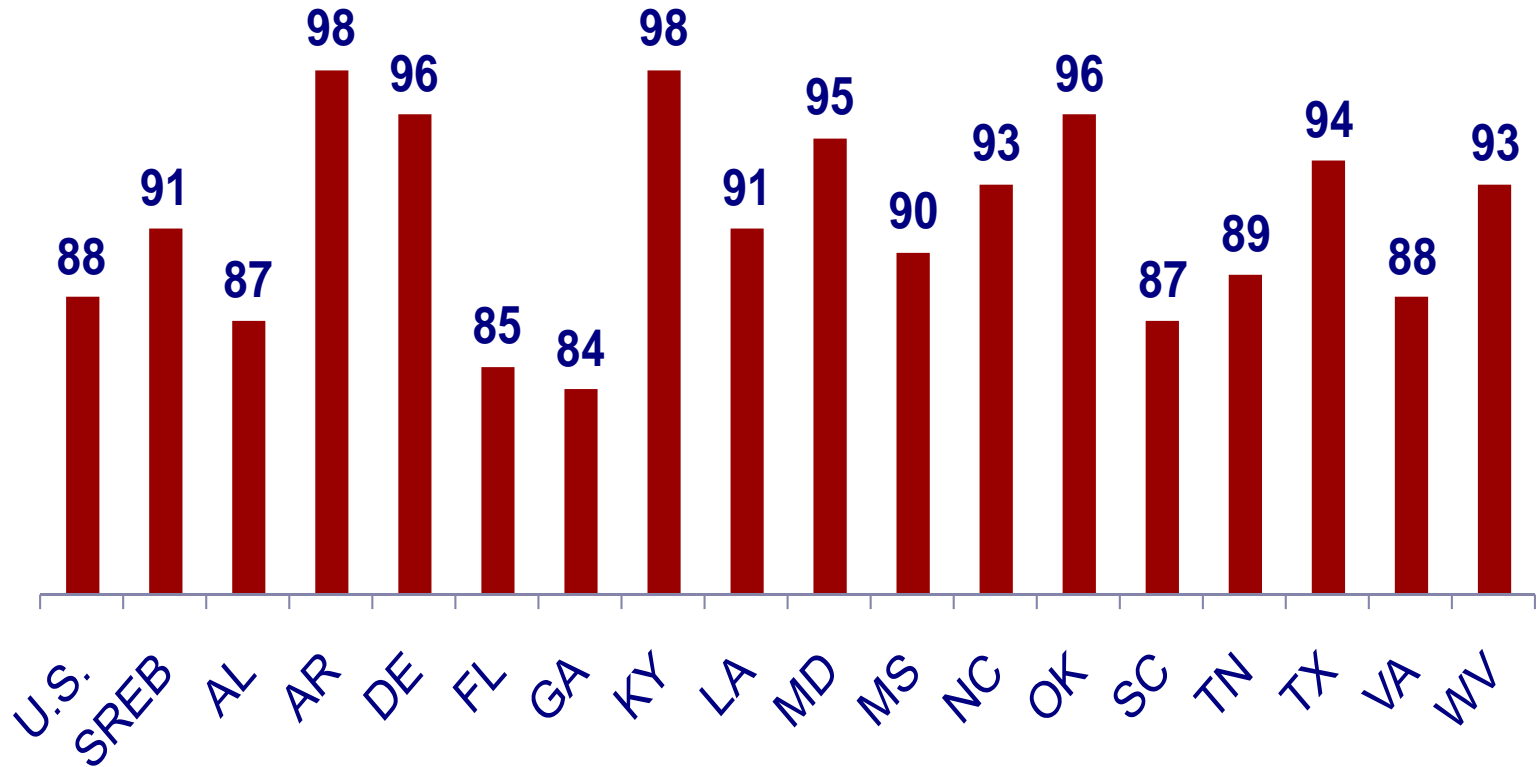
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Action 9: Target schools with the lowest achievement levels *and* graduation rates for major improvements.

- **Develop district and school capacity** Pages 28 and 29
- **Practices that impact achievement and completion rates** Page 29
- **Wall-to-wall academies or small learning communities**

Making the Senior Year Matter

Percent of Seniors Who Earn a Regular Diploma at the End of the School Year (Seniors-to-Graduates Ratio, 2006)



Source: Johns Hopkins University

State Actions for Meeting Next Generation of Accountability Goals

Action 10: Make better use of the senior year to prepare more students for graduation and give prepared students a jump-start on college and career transitions. **Page 30**

- Prepare students to graduate **Page 31**
- Prepare students for college **Page 32**
- Get work-bound students ready for a career **Page 33**
- Provide college-ready students access to dual credit courses **Page 33**

Next Generation of Accountability for SREB States

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The accountability system should:

- Give equal priority to raising student achievement *and* high school graduation.
- Set ambitious goals.
- Emphasize recognition and rewards and apply sanctions only upon failure to improve after extensive capacity-building assistance.
- Support proven practices to improve low-performing schools.