

Southern Regional Education Board – High Schools That Work:

Planning and Pre-Implementation

The plan of support uses research from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), National Research Center for Career Technical Education, and Father Flanagan’s Boys Town to build a school’s capacity to improve itself. SREB’s plan is based on the belief that when students put forth greater effort, they are more likely to graduate high school, college- and career-ready. Further, it is the adults within a building whose practices determine the amount of effort the students will make. Thus, the Planning and Pre-implementation is built on having teachers and leaders take ownership of both the problems and solutions by developing plans to implement school and classroom practices that cause students to put forth greater effort.

Two key aspects of school improvement are to create a culture of learning and to move beyond just the “tested areas.” SREB has partnered with Boys Town to support the development of a culture of learning and much of this support becomes part of the planning year. The HSTW framework gives teachers and leaders strategies to improve both academic classrooms and career technical programs of study. SREB believes that all students, especially those in struggling schools, need to see a purpose in high school. Quality career programs not only develop purpose-driven students, but have a value-added for academic programs.

The HSTW Priorities for Improvement provide a framework for schools to develop their transformation plan. SREB places an emphasis on supporting schools to address these priorities and they are the focus of the planning year support. Beginning with a thorough assessment of school and classroom practices, an in-depth workshop to organize the faculty for improvement and ongoing job-embedded leadership coaching to plan career pathways, the planning and pre-implementation year make the priorities the foundation for transformation. The HSTW Priorities are:

1. Provide challenging career pathways that prepare students for multiple options after high school—both postsecondary study and work.
2. Support academic and career technical teachers to design quality assignments that engage students in learning required knowledge and skills.
3. Train all teachers to support students’ overall literacy development, especially in grades nine and ten.
4. Use a balanced approach to instruction in mathematics.
5. Implement a counseling for careers program.
6. Implement a range of extra help strategies and initiatives.
7. Implement senior transition courses in literacy and mathematics.
8. Implement organizational structures that allow for teachers to collaborate across disciplines.
9. Provide every school with leadership for continuous improvement and that supports on-going teacher development.