

Press Release

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Southern Regional Education Board Representatives Explore Study With Patrick County Education Foundation

Representatives of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) were in Stuart last week to discuss a potential one-year adult learning collaboration with the Patrick County Education Foundation. Dr. Bruce Chaloux, Director of the SREB *Electronic Campus* and the Adult Learning Campaign and Dr. Angela Birkes, Associate Director for the Adult Learning Campaign met on April 25th with Foundation Executive Director Gerald L. Hughes, Jr. and other Foundation personnel to explore possible goals and objectives for this partnership.

Such a collaborative effort would involve the SREB's *Adult Learning Campaign*, a two-year project funded through a \$1 million grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education and designed to bring more adults into postsecondary education. The *Adult Learning Campaign* focuses on two groups: adult learners, particularly e-learners, and state policymakers. According to Dr. Chaloux, the SREB has two principle interests in the Patrick County Education Foundation—first, to explore ways Virginia education policies affect the Foundation's work and that of other adult learning initiatives and second, to develop a means of replicating the Foundation's successful programs in other rural communities.

Foundation Executive Director Hughes is enthusiastic about the promise that such a partnership could hold for Patrick County. "The SREB has a long and distinguished track record of promoting

education throughout the South. Through a collaborative relationship with SREB, the Patrick County Education Foundation would be able to draw on their expertise in adult learning and their considerable technical and financial resources to enable us to reach more County residents and offer to them a wider array of services and a more comprehensive focus to adult education. This could be an ideal partnership because it would provide our Foundation with valuable resources at little cost to us and offer a means for taking the successful “Patrick model” to other rural Virginia counties and communities. It could be a win-win proposition for the Foundation, the County, the SREB and those counties that might implement adult education programs built on the ‘Patrick model’.”

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) is America’s first interstate compact for education. It was created in 1948 to provide specific services to member states, create ways to share resources and enable states to achieve together educational programs and improvements that would be impossible or financially impractical for a single state. The SREB helps government and education leaders work cooperatively to advance education and, in doing so, to improve the social and economic life of the region. Through its efforts across all education levels—pre-kindergarten through colleges and universities, the SREB works to pursue within its 16 member states longer-term solutions that are more likely to produce lasting effects.

Representatives of the Patrick County Education Foundation and the SREB hope to work through the details and develop a collaborative agreement within the next 30 days. “Just having available the best and most up-to-date education resources is not enough. We have to be certain that residents understand the benefits of those resources and that those resources can be readily accessed. The SREB can help us do our job better and help us share the ‘Patrick model’ so that other communities can benefit,” stated Hughes.

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