

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 18, 2018

NIEER Contact:
Michelle Ruess
848.932.4350

Media Contact:
Morgan Williams
202-836-9890

2017 State of Preschool Report Highlights Problems in Kansas *Kansas falls further behind in investments in pre-k*

New Brunswick, NJ—A new state-by-state report shows more young children enrolled in public pre-K programs nationwide, with Kansas pre-k enrollment stalled and investment declining.

The State of Preschool 2017 annual report finds states heeding the demand for pre-K and expanding access to publicly funded programs in a variety of settings, based on 2016-17 data. But instead of supporting quality early learning with adequate resources, most state programs invest too little to help children catch up with their more advantaged peers by kindergarten.

Kansas pre-K funding dropped by nearly \$1 million, a 5% cut from 2015-16 year. Spending per child fell to \$2,195, ranking 43rd out of 44 nationwide. Kansas has implemented several policies to support young Dual Language Learners in pre-k. The Kansas Preschool Program met seven of NIEER's 10 quality standards benchmarks and the Kansas State Pre-Kindergarten program met five.

"Our report highlights which states invest best in their young children and which leave too many children behind," said NIEER Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett. "Kansas is at risk of leaving children behind. Decreased funding and low spending-per-child raise concerns about program quality."

This year's report includes a special section on policies affecting Dual Language Learners (DLLs), and also highlights changes since 2002, when NIEER began tracking state pre-K. (*see box for KANSAS specifics*)

Enrollment in state-funded preschool programs has more than doubled since 2002, according to the report. Nationally, 43 states, D.C. and Guam now provide publicly funded preschool to more than 1.5 million children. However, funding has failed to keep pace, with spending-per-child *decreasing* when adjusted for inflation.

"Fifteen years ago, only three states and the District of Columbia enrolled more than one-third of their 4-year-olds in publicly funded pre-K," said Dr. Allison Friedman-Krauss, report co-author. "Today, that is the national average. But progress is patchy – 19 states still enroll less than 10% of their 4-year-olds."

KANSAS 2016-2017 Fast Facts

Met 5.3 of 10 new quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 8,011 children, an increase of 108 from 2015-16

Total state funding = \$17,583,501, a decrease of \$996,335 from 2015-16

State spending-per-child = \$2,195, compared to \$2,351 in 2015-16

Kansas has several policies to support preschool DLLs

National rankings:

- 28 in access for 4-year-olds
- 43 in state spending per child

The State of Preschool 2017 yearbook was supported with funding provided by the Heising-Simons Foundation. Data used in the report come from a general survey funded by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The supplemental survey of state policies related to dual language learners and report was supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates

Foundation. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions in this report are solely those of the authors. For more information and detailed state-by-state profiles on quality access, and funding, please visit www.nieer.org.

The National Institute for Early Education Research (www.nieer.org) at the Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, supports early childhood education policy and practice through independent, objective research. For more information, contact: Michelle Ruess mruess@nieer.org 848.932.4350

Local pre-K advocacy group: John Wilson, Kansas Action for Children, john@kac.org, 785.232.0550