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2017 State of Preschool Report Shows Little Progress in Louisiana *Preschool enrollment, spending fall despite statewide commitment to quality*

New Brunswick, NJ—A new state-by-state report shows more young children enrolled in public pre-K programs nationwide, but Louisiana reduced its pre-K investment and enrolled fewer children.

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.

Enrollment in Louisiana’s three state-funded preschool programs appears to have plateaued, along with state investment in preschool, as both declined compared to 2015-16. Policymakers have committed to providing high-quality pre-k in all three of the state’s preschool programs.

“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. “Louisiana has committed to providing public information on pre-K program quality—now they need to commit to expanding access to high-quality programs.”

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

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).

LOUISIANA 2016-2017 Fast Facts

Met 8 of 10 new quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 19,054 children, a decrease of 806 from 2015-16

Total state funding = \$89,665,275, a decrease of more than \$1.2 million from 2015-16

State spending-per-child = \$4,706, compared to \$4,575 in 2015-16

The state does not have policies to support preschool Duals Language Learners

National rankings:

- 19 in access for 4-year-olds
- 22 in state spending per child

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