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2017 State of Preschool Report Shows Progress in Maine *Maine increases pre-K investment; quality standards are high*

New Brunswick, NJ—A new state-by-state report shows more young children enrolled in public pre-K programs nationwide, with Maine investing more in pre-K and serving nearly 40% of 4-year-olds in high-quality pre-K.

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.

Maine pre-K served 39% of the state's 4-year-old population, above average nationwide. Maine boosted pre-K funding by more than \$1.1 million and continued to implement policies supporting high-quality pre-K and supporting young Dual Language Learners. State spending per child increased but remains relatively low, below the national average.

"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. "Maine is moving forward, thanks to progress in recent years to increase preschool enrollment, funding, and 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 MAINE 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). 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

MAINE 2016-2017 Fast Facts

Met 9 of 10 new quality standards benchmarks

Maine enrolled 5,440 children, a decrease of 2 from 2015-16

Total state funding = \$ 18,775,709, an increase of \$1,181,702 from 2015-16

State spending-per-child = \$3,451, compared to \$3,233 in 2015-16

Maine collects data on preschoolers' home language; several policies to support preschool DLLs

National rankings:

- 12 in access for 4-year-olds
- 35 in state spending per child

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