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2017 State of Preschool Report Highlights Progress in Minnesota *MN launches second state-funded program, expands pre-K enrollment*

New Brunswick, NJ—A new state-by-state report shows more young children enrolled in public pre-K programs nationwide, with Minnesota launching a second state-funded pre-K program and expanding enrollment and state investment.

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.

Minnesota launched the Voluntary Prekindergarten program, in addition to maintaining its supplemental funding to the federal Head Start preschool program. Enrollment remains well below 5,000 children statewide but the new state pre-K helped expand access by 185%.

“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. “Minnesota has expanded access but can do more to provide resources and implement policies supporting high-quality programs and child development.”

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 Minnesota 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

MINNESOTA 2016-2017 Fast Facts

Met 6.6 of 10 new quality standards benchmarks

Minnesota enrolled 4,306 children, an increase of 2,986 from 2015-16

Total state funding = \$28,982,528, an increase of more than \$16 million from 2015-16

State spending-per-child = \$6,296, compared to \$8,003 in 2015-16

Minnesota is one of only a few states to require lead teacher qualifications related to teaching Dual Language Learners

National rankings:

- 37 in access for 4-year-olds
- 24 in access for 3-year-olds
- 14 in state spending per child

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