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2017 State of Preschool Report Highlights Progress in New Mexico ***NM boosts pre-K funding, maintains quality standards as enrollment tops 10,000***

New Brunswick, NJ—A new state-by-state report shows more young children enrolled in public pre-K programs nationwide, with New Mexico enrolling more than 10,000 children, including more than a third of all 4-year-olds.

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.

New Mexico increased its investment in state pre-K; but as enrollment also grew, state spending-per-child dropped by \$245, when adjusted for inflation. New Mexico's policies support high-quality in most respects, meeting nine of NIEER's 10 minimum quality standards benchmarks, but teacher quality could benefit from higher standards and pay.

"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. "New Mexico is making good on its commitment to expand high-quality preschool, doubling enrollment over the past four years while maintaining quality standards."

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 NEW MEXICO 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

NEW MEXICO 2016-2017 Fast Facts

Met 9 of 10 new quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 10,379 children, an increase of 622 from 2015-16

Total state funding = \$52,310,000, an increase of \$744,118 from 2015-16

State spending-per-child = \$5,040 compared to \$5,285 in 2015-16

New Mexico collects data on preschoolers' home language and policies to support preschool Dual Language Learners

National rankings:

- 15 in access for 4-year-olds
- 18 in access for 3-year-olds
- 20 in state spending per child

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