

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **2018 State of Preschool Report Shows Progress in Massachusetts Pre-K Enrollment Surges but Funding Fails to Keep Pace, Few Quality Standards Met**

*New Brunswick, NJ*—Massachusetts nearly tripled the number of children in state-funded pre-K, compared to last year; but state funding failed to keep pace as spending per child ranks near the bottom nationally, according to new research from the National Institute for Early Education Research.

*The State of Preschool 2018* annual report, based on 2017-18 academic year data, finds just a third of 4-year-olds and 5.5 percent of 3-year-olds enrolled in public preschool programs nationwide—virtually no change in years. State funding is failing to keep pace with even the slow increases in enrollment and state spending per child has *decreased*, when adjusted for inflation. Inadequate funding undermines classroom quality, and most states fail to pay pre-K teachers comparably to K-3 teachers.

Massachusetts added more children to its state pre-K rolls due to including the Chapter 70 program for the first time. State spending increased, too; but per child expenditures lag and jeopardize pre-K quality. Massachusetts does not provide state pre-K teachers with salary or benefits parity with K-3 teachers.

“Nationally, we are disappointed by the lack of progress,” said NIEER Founder and Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett, Ph.D.

“Massachusetts is serving more 3- and 4-year-olds but needs a stronger investment in quality. The state should follow Boston’s example – the city recently committed to providing high-quality pre-K for all 4-year-olds in the next five years.”

This year’s report includes a special section on policies affecting the preschool teacher workforce, focusing on salary and benefit parity. (*see box for Massachusetts specifics*)

Enrollment has more than doubled since 2002—with almost 1.6 million children enrolled nationwide—but expansion has slowed in recent years. In some states, slow growth is due to a shift from part-day to full-day programs, which can better support child development as well as family work schedules, but nevertheless leaves many children unserved.

### **Massachusetts 2017-18 Fast Facts**

Met 6.2 of 10 quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 37,788 children, an increase of 25,131 from 2016-17

Total state funding = \$82,931,298, an increase of almost \$40 million from 2016-17

State spending-per-child = \$2,195, compared to \$3,402 in 2016-17

No state policies for salary or benefit parity with K-3

National rankings:

- 22 in access for 4-year-olds
- 6 in access for 3-year-olds
- 40 in state spending per child

The State of Preschool 2018 yearbook was supported with funding provided by the Heising-Simons Foundation. For more information and detailed state-by-state profiles on quality access, and funding, please visit [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org).

The National Institute for Early Education Research ([www.nieer.org](http://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](mailto:mruess@nieer.org) 848-932-4350