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2017 State of Preschool Report Highlights Achievements in West Virginia ***West Virginia ranks in the nation's Top 10 in pre-K access, quality, funding***

New Brunswick, NJ—A new state-by-state report shows more young children enrolled in public pre-K programs nationwide, with West Virginia enrolling 65% of 4-year-olds and 11% of 3-year-olds in high-quality programs.

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.

In West Virginia, both preschool enrollment and state funding for preschool fell slightly this year. But the state has continued investing in universal high-quality preschool to serve a high percentage of young children while meeting 9 of NIEER's 10 minimum quality standards benchmarks.

"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. "West Virginia is a good example of policymakers doing what's needed to achieve their goal of providing high-quality preschool for all children throughout the state."

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 West Virginia 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

WEST VIRGINIA 2016-17 Fast Facts

Met 9 of 10 new quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 16,300 children, a decrease of 87 from 2015-16

Total state funding = \$98,007,376, a decrease of \$769,325 from 2015-16

State spending-per-child = \$6,524, compared to \$6,536 in 2015-16

WV collects data on children's home language; policies support for preschool Dual Language Learners

National rankings:

- 6 in access for 4-year-olds
- 7 in access for 3-year-olds
- 10 in state spending per child

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 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