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2018 State of Preschool Report Shows Progress in North Dakota New Pre-K Program Enrolls 9 Percent of 4-year-olds, Meets Few Quality Benchmarks

New Brunswick, NJ—North Dakota’s state preschool program ranks below average on state investment, enrollment, and quality benchmarks during its second year of operation, according to new research by 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.

North Dakota invested \$750,000 and enrolled 9 percent of state’s 4-year-olds in its preschool program. The state does not require benefit or salary parity for pre-K teachers with K-3 teachers and the program met only 2 of 10 minimum quality standards.

“Nationally, we are disappointed by the lack of progress,” said NIEER Founder and Senior Co-Director Steven Barnett, Ph.D. “North Dakota is moving in the right direction by creating state preschool. Now more progress is needed, specifically on improving quality standards.”

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

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.

North Dakota 2017-18 Fast Facts

Met 2 of 10 quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 965 children in first year of implementation

Total state funding = \$750,000

State spending-per-child = \$777

Requires a BS and ND teaching license, but salary or benefit parity with K-3 is determined locally

National rankings:

- 36 in access for 4-year-olds
- 45 in state spending per child

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