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2018 State of Preschool Report Shows Some Progress in Kansas *State Increases Funding but Meets Few Quality Standards*

New Brunswick, NJ—Kansas increased state preschool funding compared to last year, but meets just 4 of 10 minimum quality standards, 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.

Kansas requires state pre-K teachers to have a BA but does not require salary or benefit 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. “Kansas is moving in the right direction by increasing funding—but they need to focus on meeting the minimum quality standards to provide children with the best opportunities.”

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

Kansas 2017-18 Fast Facts

Met 4 of 10 quality standards benchmarks

Enrolled 14,022 children, an increase of 6,011 from 2016-17

Total state funding = \$18,682,109, an increase of \$494,628 from 2016-17

State spending-per-child = \$1,332, compared to \$2,270 in 2016-17

Requires a BA, but no salary or benefit parity with K-3

National rankings:

- 15 in access for 4-year-olds
- 44 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