

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Maryland Makes Progress Serving Preschool Children *Poised To Provide Full-Day Preschool for All Low-Income 3- And 4-Year-Olds***

**NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ** — The COVID-19 pandemic is putting pre-K education at greater risk, including in Maryland, which enrolls 38 percent of its 4-year-olds and five percent of its 3-year-olds in pre-K, according to a new report from the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

Maryland is just above the national average in 4-year-old pre-K enrollment. Nationally, pre-K enrollment surpassed 1.6 million in the 2018-2019 academic year.

Maryland slightly increased overall pre-K spending and enrollment in 2018-2019, and is poised to increase both further in the future. A January 2020 report from the Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission) recommended full-day preschool for all low-income 3- and 4-year-olds.

NIEER's *The State of Preschool 2019* annual report finds states investing more than \$8.7 billion in pre-K. But progress has been uneven, exacerbating inequality in early education opportunity and widening gaps between the best and worst states for educating young children. The expected recession will make progress more difficult.

"Even when the economy has been strong, progress providing state pre-K has been slow and uneven," said Dr. Steven Barnett, NIEER's senior co-director and founder. "With another recession likely, extraordinary state and federal action will be needed to ensure our youngest learners are not just protected, but better served."

Maryland met seven of ten minimum standards for high-quality preschool education and spent \$4,184 in state funds per student. Ten states met fewer than half the minimum standards for quality. State spending per child varies by a factor of 10, from more than \$10,000 to less than \$1,000.

"Maryland will be a state to watch in the coming years as it looks to implement the strong findings from the Kirwan Commission," said Barnett. "We eagerly await Maryland's preschool expansion efforts."

Despite the economic outlook, pre-K can be protected and advance because politicians from both sides of the aisle and states with very different political leanings have found common ground in offering high quality education to young children.

"States that could not be more different politically, like Michigan and Alabama and Oklahoma and New Jersey, share a commitment to high-quality preschool education," said Barnett. "While there are issues dividing the country, our survey finds quality early childhood education is one where bipartisan agreement is possible."

*The National Institute for Early Education Research (www.nieer.org) at the Rutgers Graduate School of Education, New Brunswick, NJ, supports early childhood education policy and practice through independent, objective research.*

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### **MARYLAND: 2018-19 FAST FACTS**

Met seven of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

Enrolled 32,062 children, an increase of 588 from 2017-18.

Total state funding was \$134,159,629, an increase of \$4,972,504 from 2017-18 (inflation adjusted).

State spending-per-child was \$4,184 compared to \$4,105 in 2017-18 (inflation adjusted).

Maryland's national rankings:

- 14th in access for 4-year-olds
- 17th in access for 3-year-olds
- 28th in state spending per child