



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

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DC Remains the National Leader in Funding and Access to Pre-K Programming

*National Institute for Early Education Research gives the District of Columbia
high marks in its 2017 State of Preschool Yearbook*

The District of Columbia's pre-K program, overseen by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), continues to lead the nation in access and per-pupil funding for pre-K, reaching universal access for the percentage of pre-K students enrolled in the District and outspending all states, according to the 2017 State of Preschool Yearbook released today by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

The 2017 State of Preschool Yearbook ranks DC first out of 43 states in access to pre-K programming for 3- and 4-year-olds for the 2016-17 school year. In the 2016-17 school year, the District of Columbia pre-K program served 13,077 children, an increase of 175 children over the 2015-16 school year. Because the pre-K program serves 66 percent of District 3-year-olds and 88 percent of District 4-year-olds, DC has essentially reached universal access to pre-K programming, according to the yearbook.

The yearbook also ranked DC first in the nation in state funding for pre-K. In the 2016-17 school year, DC spent \$222,257,368, which amounts to \$16,996 in state funding per child, an increase over \$217 million in funding for the 2015-16 school year. The District also included extra funding to support Dual Language Learners.

With the passage of the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008, which called for universal pre-K by 2014, the District elevated early learning as a centerpiece of the District's education reform efforts. OSSE administers public pre-K programming in the District in a three-sector approach – DCPS, public charter schools and community-based organizations – and provides a high level of funding from a variety of sources.

“The District of Columbia has 157 schools/organizations that offer pre-K education across our three-sector system. Families have the opportunity to choose the program that best meets the needs of their child,” said Elizabeth Groginsky, OSSE's assistant superintendent of Early Learning. “The District invests in our youngest learners and their families because we recognize that access to high-quality early care and education is essential to achieving our goals to close the achievement gap and give all District families a fair shot.”

The State of Preschool Yearbook is the only national report on state-funded preschool programs with detailed information on enrollment, funding, teacher qualifications, and other policies related to quality. Decades of research shows that early childhood education can prepare children for greater success in elementary school and beyond, with benefits largest for the most disadvantaged -- but only if quality is high.

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.

According to OSSE's [2017 pre-K report](#), pre-K programs across the District experienced a trend of stable classroom quality over the past three years as measured by CLASS Pre-K®. CLASS is a research-based observational tool that provides a common lens, metric and language to identify and describe the quality of classroom interactions in three domains and 10 dimensions that promote children's development and learning. The CLASS Pre-K® tool assesses classroom quality in the areas of emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. The vast majority of DC's pre-K classrooms exceeded the threshold for quality in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization domains and show opportunities for growth and improvement in Instructional Support.

For more information and detailed state-by-state profiles on quality access, and funding, please visit <http://nieer.org/>.