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Delaware Office of Early Learning Executive Director, Harriet Dichter, to Testify Before Congressional Hearing on Early Childhood Education and Care Investment Proposed by President Obama

Wilmington, Delaware, February 5, 2014—Delaware Office of Early Learning Executive Director, Harriet Dichter, has been tapped to testify at a congressional hearing to discuss early childhood education and care programs.

The hearing, titled “The Foundation for Success: Discussing Early Childhood Education and Care in America,” was announced last week by House Education and the Workforce committee chairman John Kline (R-MN), and will take place on Wednesday, February 5, at 10:00 a.m. in room 2175 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The hearing will examine funding, research and programmatic issues.

The minority party selects one witness to testify and reached out to Ms. Dichter based on her extensive experience providing leadership in the field of early childhood learning. The request from George Miller (D-CA), the House sponsor of the bipartisan legislation that would implement the President’s early childhood proposal outline in his FY 2014 budget.

In her prepared testimony to be delivered at the hearing, Ms. Dichter highlights efforts in Delaware that have improved early learning opportunities and addresses ways the federal government can best support states to increase the number of children, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, who can enroll in high quality programs. Last year the number of low income children in Delaware who attend a high quality program increased by 50 percent meaning 2,200 more children are getting better opportunities to be prepared for success in school.

"Delaware's state investment in early learning increased by one-third in the 2011 legislative session, and has been further improved through our participation in the federal Early Learning Challenge," says Dichter in her prepared remarks. "We improved payment rates for our child care providers and funded a state-wide framework for early learning, known as Delaware Stars. States are committed to this work, but we can't do it alone. Partnership with the federal government to improve outcomes for young children is essential."

The hearing will focus on educating members about current federal investments in early care and education and the impact of those investments. The initiative is viewed as an important approach to addressing unmet need and quality concerns for children from low-income families. The President's legislation would establish a new, coordinated federal-state-local effort to increase quality pre-K programs for young children.

Additional information, including a witness list and a link to watch a live webcast of the hearing, will be posted at www.edworkforce.house@gov/calendar/list.aspx?EventTypeID=189

About the Delaware Office of Early Learning: Working together with the Delaware Children’s Department, Department of Education, and Department of Health and Social Services, The Delaware Office of Early Learning (OEL) provides leadership, to accomplish the ambitious and important goals of the Early Learning Challenge grant. It’s priorities include driving system-wide improvement through Delaware Stars, the quality-rating and improvement program for early learning, seeking to increase the numbers of programs and children participating, and moving programs to high levels of quality; aligning the early learning and the K-12 systems to better support children’s school readiness; addressing the health and development of the whole child; and supporting a strong community of informed advocates and leaders for quality early learning, including families, community members, and business leaders.

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