

***In Support of Increased State Funding of Early Childhood***

**WHEREAS**, the positive effects of participation in high quality early childhood programs for 3- and 4-year-old children is undeniable and well-supported by decades of research; and

**WHEREAS**, peer-reviewed research has demonstrated that participation in high quality early childhood programs for 3- and 4-year-old children leads to greater probability of positive school age and lifetime outcomes including reduction in grade retention, reduction in drop-out rates, reduction in criminal activity, increase in high school graduation rates, increase in college attendance, and increase in life-time earnings; and

**WHEREAS**, participation in high quality early childhood programs for 3- and 4-year-old children positively affects brain structure, expands curiosity, aids positive social development and behavior, provides more physical activity, builds a desire to learn, and gets kids ready for Kindergarten; and

**WHEREAS**, by age 5, 90% of human brain development has occurred; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2015, annual Pennsylvania state spending for each enrolled K-12 student was \$18,972 and for each enrolled early childhood (3- & 4-year-old) student was \$5,630; and

**WHEREAS**, Pennsylvania ranks 15th for 3-year-olds and 30th for 4-year-olds for access to high quality early childhood programs; and

**WHEREAS**, 64% of Pennsylvania 3- and 4-year-olds who are eligible for high-quality early childhood program do not get the opportunity to attend because the state does not allocate the needed money; and

**WHEREAS**, Governor Tom Wolf proposed a \$75 million increase to early childhood state funding for 2017-18, but the PA House reduced the amount to \$25 million in the budget it passed; therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that AFT Pennsylvania will advocate for passage of the 2017-18 budget proposed by Governor Tom Wolf; and be it finally

**RESOLVED**, that AFT Pennsylvania will advocate for local and statewide efforts to make high-quality early childhood programs accessible to every at-risk child and affordable for every middle-income family in Pennsylvania.