**Fiscal Facts: State funding for English Learners limited to few districts**

Under state and federal law, school districts must identify and assess students with limited English proficiency and adopt educational programming to support them. Such programming tends to exceed average per pupil costs.

However, the state only provides additional funding to a relatively small number of districts that are legally required to offer specialized bilingual-bicultural programming—52 districts in 2016-17 serving just over half the English Learner (EL) students in the state. These districts have certain concentrations of ELs who speak the same language in a given band of grades. (The thresholds are 10 students in grades K to 3, or 20 students in grades 4 to 8 or in high school.) The state’s only EL-specific aid reimburses those school districts for about 8 percent of a relatively narrow range of costs they incur to provide this programming. All other districts that enroll ELs must meet the mandates to serve these students (almost 23,000 in 2016-17) with existing district resources.

*This information is a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state’s leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education. Learn more at wispolicyforum.org.*