



# WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF Public Instruction

## Who is Eligible for State Categorical Aid?

### Requirements for Districts Enrolling Concentrations of English Learners (ELs):

The state statute on bilingual-bicultural education requires a written plan of services when a district enrolls at least the following numbers of ELs, from one language population, in one school, in at least one of the specified grade clusters:

- 10 students in grades K-3
- 20 students in grades 4-8
- 20 students in grades 9-12

### Categorical Aid

Districts meeting the above criteria, in one or more schools, are eligible for state categorical aid if all other statutorily set requirements are met, as outlined in the following section.

### Additional Requirements

#### Staff Certification—Teachers:

Staff serving ELs who meet the above statutorily set numbers must hold the appropriate certification. An ongoing, good faith effort to hire teachers with bilingual certification (English and target language) is required. If a district is unable to find a teacher with bilingual certification, an ESL teacher may be hired (for all target languages EXCEPT Spanish – for Spanish speakers, the teacher must hold bilingual certification.) Emergency (1 year) bilingual and ESL licenses will be approved.

#### Bilingual Aides:

For districts hiring ESL certified teachers, there must be at least one bilingual aide in the program, working with the ESL teacher in the provision of instructional services to the LEP pupils meeting the trigger numbers.

Districts meeting the statutorily set requirements for number of ELs in a given language group, but not providing the above staff, are out of compliance and will not be eligible for reimbursement.

#### Staff Certification – Bilingual Counselors:

Previously, there was a specific “bilingual counselor” license. However, coursework for such certification is no longer being offered at colleges and universities in the state. The department (DPI) will approve salaries/fringes for counselors holding a current counselor license if the district can verify that the counselor is fluent in the target language/culture.

**Aid vs. Grant:**

When districts satisfy all statutorily set requirements, they are eligible for state categorical aid. This aid differs from entitlement/formula grants in that districts are not limited to the amount spent on approvable items. The amount of the aid is therefore not predetermined by, for example, the number of eligible ELs enrolled. Districts are reimbursed a portion of their approved expenses after the aided school year has ended and upon receipt of claims and data from all aided districts.

**Selected Cites:**

- Bilingual-Bicultural Statute: ss. 115.95-115.996, Wis. Stats.
- Programs Required: s. 115.97(1)-(4), Wis. Stats.
- Certification Requirements: s. 115.97 (5) (a-b), Wis. Stats.
- Description of English Language Proficiency Levels: PI 13.08 (1-6), Admin. Rule