**Fiscal Facts: Wisconsin public school enrollment down as diversity increases**

Total enrollment in Wisconsin public schools declined for the fifth straight year in the 2018-19 school year, while the student population is more diverse due largely to increasing numbers of Hispanic students, according to updated findings of the Wisconsin Policy Forum’s 2019 School DataTool.

Declining school enrollment is a trend that started in Wisconsin in the 2014-15 school year. Statewide enrollment in 2018-19 was 858,833, having decreased every year since 2013-14, when it was 873,531.

High school graduation rates were up in the 2017-18 school year for black and Hispanic students in Wisconsin. Overall graduation rates also increased to 89.6%, up from 88.6% a year earlier.

Areas of concern include reading scores for Wisconsin third graders, for whom proficiency rates declined for the third straight year. The data also show significant disparities on the basis of ethnicity, household income, and English proficiency in key measures of student performance, such as graduation or dropout rates or test scores.

Not all metrics tracked by the tool have seen significant change. Many have remained relatively stable over time, such as statewide average composite ACT scores, which have hovered around 20 the last five years, declined slightly to 19.6 in 2018-19.

This is the first update to the tool since its February debut, offering another year of data plus an expanded range of metrics for assessing all 421 school districts in the state. Performance measures include student enrollment and demographics, school district finances, district staffing, graduation rates, and others.

*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.*