

2018 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 454

BY SENATOR MORRISH

TOPS. Provides additional TOPS awards for students who are successful in postsecondary education. (gov sig)

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5002(E)(2), 5024(B)(1)(d), the introductory paragraph of  
3 5025, and the introductory paragraph of 5026(A), and to enact R.S. 17:5002(H),  
4 5024(A)(1)(e) and (B)(1)(e), 5026.1, and 5042.1, relative to the Taylor Opportunity  
5 Program for Students; to create new program awards; to provide for initial award  
6 eligibility and continuation requirements; to provide relative to award amounts; and  
7 to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 17:5002(E)(2), 5024(B)(1)(d), the introductory paragraph of 5025,  
10 and the introductory paragraph of 5026(A) are hereby amended and reenacted, and R.S.  
11 17:5002(H), 5024(A)(1)(e) and (B)(1)(e), 5026.1, and 5042.1 are hereby enacted to read as  
12 follows:

13 §5002. Awards and amounts

14 \* \* \*

15 E.(1) \* \* \*

16 (2) No student shall be eligible for tuition payment pursuant to this Section  
17 for the TOPS-Tech Award, the TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award, or the TOPS Second

1           **Chance Award** for more than **four semesters or an equivalent number of units**  
 2           **in an eligible institution which operates on a schedule based on units other than**  
 3           **semesters, or** two years unless an extension is granted by the administering agency  
 4           in accordance with its rules.

\*       \*       \*

6           **H. Any student who is eligible for a TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award or a**  
 7           **TOPS Second Chance Award pursuant to this Chapter and who has enrolled in**  
 8           **any public four-year university in this state, in any regionally accredited**  
 9           **independent four-year university in the state which is a member of the**  
 10          **Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, or in an**  
 11          **out-of-state four-year university that is specifically designed to accommodate**  
 12          **deaf and hard-of-hearing students pursuant to R.S. 17:5027(C) shall be**  
 13          **awarded by the state an amount to be determined by the administering agency**  
 14          **in the same manner as provided in Subsection (B) of this Section.**

\*       \*       \*

16           §5024. Academic requirements

17           A.(1) Except as otherwise provided by this Subsection, students shall meet  
 18           the following minimum grade point average requirements, calculated on a 4.00 scale  
 19           using only the grades obtained by the student in completing the core curriculum  
 20           requirements established by this Chapter, for the respective awards:

\*       \*       \*

22           **(e) For a TOP-Tech 2Plus2 Award or a TOPS Second Chance Award, a**  
 23           **minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.50.**

\*       \*       \*

25           B.(1) Except as otherwise provided by this Subsection, a student shall earn  
 26           the following minimum test scores for the respective awards:

\*       \*       \*

28           (d) For a TOPS-Tech Award **or a TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award**, a composite  
 29           score on the specified ACT of seventeen or higher or an equivalent concordant value

1 on any enhanced or revised version of such test or on the SAT. The student may, as  
2 an alternative requirement, have attained a silver level score on the assessments of  
3 the ACT WorkKeys system.

4 **(e) For a TOPS Second Chance Award, a composite score on the**  
5 **specified ACT of seventeen or higher or an equivalent concordant value on any**  
6 **enhanced or revised version of such test or on the SAT.**

7 \* \* \*

8 §5025. High school core curriculum requirements; Opportunity, Performance,  
9 Honors, **TOPS Second Chance** Awards

10 To be eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, ~~or~~ Honors, **or TOPS Second**  
11 **Chance** Award pursuant to this Chapter, a student who graduates during or after the  
12 2017-2018 school year shall have successfully completed a core curriculum which  
13 consists of nineteen units of high school course work as follows:

14 \* \* \*

15 §5026. High school core curriculum requirements; TOPS-Tech **or TOPS-Tech**  
16 **2Plus2**

17 A. Except as otherwise provided by this Section, to be eligible for a TOPS-  
18 Tech **or a TOPS-Tech 2Plus2** Award pursuant to this Chapter, the student shall  
19 have successfully completed the core curriculum requirements of R.S. 17:5025 ~~or~~  
20 ~~5025.3~~ or the core curriculum defined as follows:

21 \* \* \*

22 **§5026.1. Initial Postsecondary eligibility requirements; TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 and**  
23 **TOPS Second Chance**

24 **A. To be eligible for a TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award pursuant to this**  
25 **Chapter, a student who graduated from high school during or after the**  
26 **2021-2022 school year shall:**

27 **(1) Have accepted his TOPS-Tech Award.**

28 **(2) Have earned an academic associate's degree in an eligible TOPS-Tech**  
29 **program within two academic years of accepting the award and enrolling in an**

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eligible institution.

(3) Have maintained a cumulative grade point average of a 3.20 on a 4.00 scale as evaluated at the end of each academic year.

(4) Enroll in a baccalaureate program at an eligible four-year postsecondary institution not later than the semester, excluding summer semesters and sessions, immediately following the first anniversary of the date the student graduated from the eligible academic associate's degree program.

B. To be eligible for a TOPS Second Chance Award pursuant to this Chapter, a student who graduated from high school during or after the 2021-2022 school year shall:

(1) Have enrolled in an eligible four-year postsecondary institution not later than the semester, excluding summer semesters and sessions, immediately following the first anniversary of the date that the student graduated from high school.

(2) Have remained continuously enrolled in an eligible four-year postsecondary institution and earned at least sixty hours of academic credit within two consecutive academic years of enrolling in an eligible institution.

(3) Have maintained a cumulative grade point average of a 3.20 on a 4.00 scale as evaluated at the end of each academic year.

(4) Remain enrolled in a baccalaureate program at a TOPS eligible four-year postsecondary institution.

\* \* \*

§5042.1. Maintaining eligibility; TOPS-Tech 2Plus2, TOPS Second Chance

(A) To maintain continued state payment of any amount pursuant to a TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 or TOPS Second Chance Award, a student shall meet all of the following:

(1) Make steady academic progress toward a degree as defined by the administering agency, earning not less than the minimum number of hours of credit required for full-time standing in each academic year or the required

1           **number of hours needed to complete the undergraduate degree during that**  
2           **semester or quarter.**

3                       **(2) Maintain continuous enrollment for not less than two semesters or**  
4                       **three quarters in each successive academic year, unless granted an exception for**  
5                       **cause by the administering agency.**

6                       **(3) Maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.50 on a 4.00**  
7                       **scale as evaluated at the end of each academic year.**

8                       **(4) Have no criminal conviction, except for misdemeanor traffic**  
9                       **violations.**

10                      **(5) If the student has been in the United States Armed Forces and has**  
11                      **separated from such service, has received an honorable discharge or general**  
12                      **discharge under honorable conditions.**

13                      **B. If at any time a student fails to maintain the requirements provided**  
14                      **in Subsection (A) of this Section, the student is ineligible for further payments.**

15           Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not  
16           signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature  
17           by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If  
18           vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become  
19           effective on the day following such approval.

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part  
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Cheryl Serrett.

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DIGEST

SB 454 Original                                      2018 Regular Session                                      Morrish

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students.

Proposed law retains present law. Proposed law additionally provides for two new awards  
called the TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award and the TOPS Second Chance award.

Proposed law provides a recipient of a TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award must have met the criteria  
of the TOPS-Tech award and the following criteria:

- (1) Graduated from high school during or after the 2021-2022 school year.
- (2) Accepted his TOPS-Tech Award.
- (3) Earned an academic associate's degree in an eligible TOPS-Tech program within two

academic years of accepting the award and enrolling in an eligible institution.

- (4) Maintained a cumulative grade point average of 3.20 each academic year.
- (5) Enroll in a baccalaureate program at a TOPS eligible four-year institution, not later than the semester, excluding summer semesters and sessions, immediately following the first anniversary of the date the student graduated from the eligible academic associate's degree program.

Proposed law provides that a TOPS Second Chance Award recipient must have a 2.50 GPA based on the TOPS Opportunity, Performance or Honors high school core curriculum, scored at least a 17 on the ACT test and meet the following criteria:

- (1) Graduated from high school during or after the 2021-2022 school year.
- (2) Enrolled in an eligible four-year institution not later than the semester, excluding summer semesters and sessions, immediately following the first anniversary of the date that the student graduated from high school.
- (3) Remained continuously enrolled in an eligible four-year institution and earned at least sixty hours of academic credit within two consecutive academic years of enrolling in an eligible institution.
- (4) Maintained a cumulative grade point average of 3.20 each academic year.
- (5) Remain enrolled in a baccalaureate program at a TOPS eligible four-year institution.

Proposed law provides that to maintain eligibility for either award, a student must:

- (1) Make steady academic progress toward a degree as defined by the administering agency.
- (2) Maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.50 on a 4.00 scale.
- (3) Maintain continuous enrollment.
- (4) Have no criminal conviction, except for misdemeanor traffic violations.
- (5) If the student has been in the United States Armed Forces and has separated from such service, has received an honorable discharge or general discharge under honorable conditions.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 17:5002(E)(2), 5024(B)(1)(d), 5025(intro para), 5026(A)(intro para); adds R.S. 17:5002(H), 5024(A)(1)(e) and (B)(1)(e), 5026.1, and 5042.1)