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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jeanne C. Johnston.

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## DIGEST

Present law provides a program of merit scholarships for first time freshman attending public postsecondary institutions or regionally accredited independent colleges or universities in this state who meet a specified GPA, ACT score, and core curriculum requirements as follows:

1. Opportunity Award in the amount of actual tuition for attendance at a public college or university, or the state average of public four-year colleges' tuition for attendance at a regionally accredited independent college or university.
2. Performance Award in the amount of actual tuition plus \$200 per semester for attendance at a public college or university, or the state average of public four-year colleges' tuition plus \$200 per semester for attendance at a regionally accredited independent college or university.
3. Honors Award in the amount of actual tuition plus \$400 per semester for attendance at a public college or university, or the state average of public four-year colleges' tuition plus \$400 per semester for attendance at a regionally accredited independent college or university.
4. TOPS-Tech Award in the amount of actual tuition for those enrolled in an eligible postsecondary institution pursuing nonacademic skills or occupational training.
5. TOPS-Tech Early Start Award in the amount of \$150/three-hour or equivalent time course taken by eligible 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade high school students enrolled in Louisiana public postsecondary education and pursuing an industry-based occupational or vocational-technical credential.

Proposed law retains present law and establishes an additional award - the TOPS-Tech Plus Award - for TOPS-Tech Award recipients who have been awarded an associate degree with a minimum GPA of 2.50 on 4.00 scale and who enroll in an eligible college or university to pursue an academic associate or undergraduate degree.

Proposed law provides that the recipient of a TOPS-Tech Plus Award shall receive from the state an amount equal to that provided to recipients of the Opportunity Award.

Proposed law requires TOPS-Tech Plus Award recipients to meet the continuation requirements established in present law for Opportunity Award recipients.

Proposed law limits eligibility for the TOPS-Tech Plus Award to four semesters or an equivalent

number of units in an eligible institution which operates on a schedule based on units other than semesters, unless an extension is granted by the administering agency in accordance with its rules.

Proposed law requires the office of student financial assistance to adopt rules for the administration of the TOPS-Tech Plus Award.

Effective July 1, 2009.

(Amends R.S. 17:3048.1(H)(2); adds R.S. 17:3048.1(B)(5))