

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 325

BY REPRESENTATIVES BRASS, BROUSSARD, CARLSON, CARVER,  
EDMONSTON, TERRY LANDRY, MARTINEZ, ST. BLANC, AND TAYLOR

TOPS: Revises initial academic eligibility requirements for a TOPS-Tech award and provides for award to part-time students

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5001 and 5042 and to enact R.S. 17:5024(D) and 5065(E),  
3 relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to revise academic initial  
4 eligibility criteria for a TOPS-Tech award; to provide for qualification based on the  
5 attainment of certain early college credits; to provide for initial and continuing  
6 eligibility for certain students; to provide for funding of certain awards; to provide  
7 for applicability; to provide for effectiveness; and to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 17:5001 and 5042 are hereby amended and reenacted and R.S.  
10 17:5024(D) and 5065(E) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

11 §5001. Taylor Opportunity Program for Students

12 As part of the Louisiana Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, the state  
13 shall provide financial assistance to any eligible student who enrolls on a full-time  
14 basis, unless otherwise provided by law, in an eligible college or university to pursue  
15 an academic undergraduate degree or skill or occupational training as defined by the  
16 administering agency including a vocational or technical education certificate or  
17 diploma program or a nonacademic undergraduate degree.

18 \* \* \*

1 §5024. Academic requirements

2 \* \* \*

3 D.(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Section, a student who is  
4 otherwise eligible for a TOPS-Tech award pursuant to this Chapter shall qualify for  
5 the award if he meets at least two of the following requirements as determined by the  
6 administering agency:

7 (a) Attainment of a minimum grade point average on the core curriculum as  
8 provided in Subsection A of this Section.

9 (b) Attainment of a minimum ACT score as provided in Subsection B of this  
10 Section.

11 (c) Successful completion of either at least nine credit hours of early college  
12 credit, which may be attained through academic or technical dual enrollment courses,  
13 or equivalent validated skills and learning measures as approved by the Statewide  
14 Articulation and Transfer Council.

15 (2) The provisions of Paragraph (1) of this Subsection are applicable to  
16 students graduating from high school during or after the 2026-2027 academic year.

17 \* \* \*

18 §5042. Maintaining eligibility; TOPS-Tech

19 A. Through the 2025-2026 academic year, to ~~To~~ maintain continued state  
20 payment of any amount pursuant to a TOPS-Tech Award once enrolled in an  
21 institution, a student shall meet all of the following:

22 (1) Make steady academic progress as defined by the administering agency  
23 toward completion of the requirements of the program in which enrolled, earning not  
24 less than the minimum number of hours of credit required for full-time standing or  
25 the required number of hours needed to complete the program's requirements. If at  
26 any time a student fails to maintain the cumulative grade point average required for  
27 continuation in the program or as of the end of any term during the school year fails  
28 to make steady academic progress as defined by the administering agency, the  
29 student shall become ineligible for further payments. Payments may be reinstated

1 upon attainment of the grade point average required for continuation of the original  
2 award and the standards for steady academic progress as defined by the  
3 administering agency, provided that the student has maintained other continuation  
4 requirements and the period of ineligibility did not persist for more than one year  
5 from the date of loss of eligibility. If this one-year period is interrupted due to a  
6 student's active duty service in the United States Armed Forces, the one-year period  
7 shall be extended for a length of time equal to the student's active duty service, not  
8 to exceed four years, unless the student reenlists in the United States Armed Forces  
9 and maintains continuous active duty, in which case the period shall be extended for  
10 a length of time equal to the student's active duty service; or unless the student is  
11 granted an exception for cause by the administering agency.

12 (2) Maintain continuous enrollment as a full-time student unless granted an  
13 exception for cause by the administering agency.

14 (3) Have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.50 calculated on a  
15 4.00 scale.

16 (4) Have no criminal conviction, except for misdemeanor traffic violations  
17 and, if the student has been in the United States Armed Forces and has separated  
18 from such service, has received an honorable discharge or general discharge under  
19 honorable conditions.

20 B. Beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year, to maintain continued state  
21 payment of any amount pursuant to a TOPS-Tech Award once enrolled in an  
22 institution, a student shall meet all of the following:

23 (1) Make steady academic progress as defined by the administering agency  
24 toward completion of the requirements of the program in which enrolled, while  
25 enrolled either part-time or full-time. If at any time a student fails to maintain the  
26 cumulative grade point average required for continuation in the program or as of the  
27 end of any term during the school year fails to make steady academic progress as  
28 defined by the administering agency, the student shall become ineligible for further  
29 payments. Payments may be reinstated upon attainment of the grade point average



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 DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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HB 325 Reengrossed

2026 Regular Session

Brass

**Abstract:** Expands eligibility criteria for a TOPS-Tech award to include the attainment of early college credit in high school through completion of dual enrollment courses or other approved skills and learning measures. Authorizes TOPS-Tech awards for qualifying part-time students beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), a merit scholarship program for full-time students who meet certain academic criteria in high school and other requirements. Proposed law authorizes TOPS awards for part-time students in certain circumstances.

Present law provides for four award levels, including TOPS-Tech, for which academic initial eligibility criteria include both of the following:

- (1) GPA of at least 2.5 on the specific TOPS-Tech high school core curriculum provided in present law.
- (2) ACT score of at least 17 or silver on WorkKeys.

Proposed law adds a third academic criterion: at least nine credit hours of early college credit attained through dual enrollment courses or equivalent validated skills and learning measures as approved by the Statewide Articulation and Transfer Council. Provides that a student qualifies for a TOPS-Tech award if he meets at least two of the three requirements provided in present law and proposed law. Applicable to students graduating from high school during or after the 2026-2027 academic year.

Present law establishes criteria for continued receipt of TOPS-Tech awards. Proposed law provides that, beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year, this criteria also applies to part-time students.

Proposed law restricts funding for TOPS-Tech awards for part-time students to remaining funding appropriated for full-time TOPS awards.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:5001 and 5042; Adds R.S. 17:5024(D) and 5065(E))

#### Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill:

1. Change applicable students from those enrolling in college as first-time freshmen beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year to students graduating from high school during the 2026-2027 academic year and thereafter.

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Appropriations to the engrossed bill:

1. Add provision authorizing part-time students to receive TOPS-Tech awards beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.
2. Add requirement that funding for part-time TOPS-Tech awards be made from remaining funds appropriated for full-time TOPS awards.
3. Make technical changes.