

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE BILL NO. 760

BY REPRESENTATIVE ORTEGO

HIGHER EDUCATION: Provides relative to the TOPS-Tech Award

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(a)(iii)(dd)(II), (B)(1), (2)(introductory
3 paragraph), (a), (b)(introductory paragraph), and (c)(introductory paragraph),
4 (3)(introductory paragraph), and (4)(a) and (b), (D)(2), (H)(2), (O)(1),
5 (P)(1)(introductory paragraph), (Q)(1)(introductory paragraph) and (5)(b)(i), and
6 (V)(1)(introductory paragraph) and (b) and (3)(b), 3048.2(C), 3048.5(A),
7 (B)(1)(introductory paragraph), (2), and (3), (C), (D)(introductory paragraph),
8 (E)(introductory paragraph), (F)(1), and (G), 3048.6(B)(1)(a), and
9 3048.7(B)(1)(a)(iv), relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to
10 provide relative to initial eligibility requirements for the TOPS-Tech Award; to
11 lower the minimum standardized test score required; to provide with respect to the
12 name of the TOPS-Tech Award; and to provide for related matters.

13 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

14 Section 1. R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(a)(iii)(dd)(II), (B)(1), (2)(introductory paragraph),
15 (a), (b)(introductory paragraph), and (c)(introductory paragraph), (3)(introductory
16 paragraph), and (4)(a) and (b), (D)(2), (H)(2), (O)(1), (P)(1)(introductory paragraph),
17 (Q)(1)(introductory paragraph) and (5)(b)(i), and (V)(1)(introductory paragraph) and (b) and
18 (3)(b), 3048.2(C), 3048.5(A), (B)(1)(introductory paragraph), (2), and (3), (C),

(D)(introductory paragraph), (E)(introductory paragraph), (F)(1), and (G), 3048.6(B)(1)(a), and 3048.7(B)(1)(a)(iv) are hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

§3048.1. Program awards; eligibility; amounts; limitations; funding; administration

A.(1) As part of the Louisiana Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, the state shall financially assist any student who enrolls on a full-time basis in a public college or university in this state or a regionally accredited independent college or university in the state that is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, hereafter in this Chapter referred to collectively as "eligible colleges and universities", to pursue an academic undergraduate degree or, as provided by this Subsection, skill or occupational training as defined by the Board of Regents, including a vocational or technical education certificate or diploma program or a nonacademic undergraduate degree, and who meets the qualifications of Subparagraph (b), (c), or (d) of this Paragraph and all of the applicable following qualifications:

- (a)
- * * *
- (iii)
- * * *
- (dd)
- * * *

(II) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Section to the contrary, a displaced student who meets the residency requirement of this Subitem shall not be required to have for the respective awards a higher minimum composite score on the American College Test or on the Scholastic Aptitude Test than required for a student who graduates from an eligible Louisiana high school provided such student has, for ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College and Opportunity awards, a cumulative high school grade point average on all courses on the high school transcript of at least 2.50 calculated on a 4.00 scale or, for Performance and Honors awards, a cumulative high school

1 grade point average on all courses on the high school transcript of at least 3.50
2 calculated on a 4.00 scale.

3 * * *

4 B.(1) A student who meets the requirements of this Subsection shall be the
5 recipient of a "~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award" for the purposes of this program.

6 (2) As part of the Louisiana Taylor Opportunity Program for Students, for
7 ~~students graduating from high school through the 1999-2000 school year the state~~
8 ~~shall award an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the actual~~
9 ~~cost of tuition of any student who enrolls on a full-time basis in a Louisiana public~~
10 ~~postsecondary institution to pursue skill or occupational training, including a~~
11 ~~vocational or technical education certificate or diploma program or a nonacademic~~
12 ~~undergraduate degree, and who meets the following qualifications and all other~~
13 ~~applicable qualifications of this Chapter and for students graduating from high~~
14 ~~school during the 2000-2001 school year and thereafter~~ the state shall award an
15 amount determined by the administering agency in accordance with the provisions
16 of Subparagraph (f) of this Paragraph for any student who enrolls on a full-time basis
17 in an eligible college or university as defined in Subsection A of this Section to
18 pursue skill or occupational training as defined by the Board of Regents, including
19 a vocational or technical education certificate or diploma program or a nonacademic
20 undergraduate degree, and who meets the following qualifications and all other
21 applicable qualifications of this Chapter:

22 (a)(i) ~~For any student graduating from high school through the 1999-2000~~
23 ~~school year, complies with the provisions of Subparagraphs (A)(1)(a) and (b) of this~~
24 ~~Section, except that enrollment shall be in a Louisiana public postsecondary~~
25 ~~institution and except that the student shall have a composite score on the specified~~
26 ~~American College Test of nineteen or higher or an equivalent concordant value on~~
27 ~~any enhanced or revised version of such test or on the Scholastic Aptitude Test.~~

28 (ii) ~~For any student graduating from high school during the 2000-2001~~
29 ~~school year and thereafter, complies~~ Complies with the provisions of Subparagraphs

(A)(1)(a) and (b) of this Section, except that the student shall have a composite score on the specified American College Test of ~~seventeen~~ sixteen or higher or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised version of such test or on the Scholastic Aptitude Test. ~~For any student graduating from high school during the 2010-2011 school year and thereafter, the~~ The student may, as an alternative requirement, have attained a silver level score on the assessments of the ACT WorkKeys system.

(b) Through the 2001-2002 school year and except as otherwise provided by this Section, has successfully completed at least sixteen and one-half units of high school course work, which constitutes a core curriculum, and meets standards for admission to the desired eligible college or university. Except as otherwise provided by this Section, a student may qualify for a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ Tops-College Award by meeting the core curriculum requirements of Subparagraph (A)(1)(e) or (B)(2)(c) of this Section or the core curriculum defined as follows:

* * *

(c) Except as otherwise provided by this Section, has successfully completed a core curriculum, and meets standards for admission to the desired eligible college or university. The core curriculum specified in Subparagraph (b) of this Paragraph shall be effective only for high school graduates through the 2001-2002 school year; thereafter, a student shall meet the core curriculum requirements as specified in this Subparagraph. Except as otherwise provided by this Section, a student may qualify for a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award by meeting the core curriculum requirements of Subparagraph (A)(1)(e) of this Section or the core curriculum defined as follows:

* * *

(3) To maintain continued state payment of an amount equal to tuition pursuant to a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award once enrolled in an institution, a student shall meet all of the following:

* * *

(4)(a) In addition to the provisions of the introductory paragraph of Paragraph (A)(1) of this Section and effective for the 2009-2010 award year and thereafter, for purposes of the ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award as provided by this Chapter, the term "eligible colleges and universities" shall include any school that has a valid and current certificate of registration issued by the State Board of Cosmetology in accordance with law and that is accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of Education and any proprietary school that has a valid and current license issued by the Board of Regents in accordance with law and that is accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of Education. Such a school also shall comply with all other applicable provisions of this Chapter and rules adopted by the administering agency relative to a college or university being initially eligible and remaining eligible for program purposes.

(b) For a student who is the recipient of a ~~TOPS-Tech award~~ TOPS-College Award and who enrolls in a school that is eligible pursuant to the provisions of Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph to pursue skill or occupational training as defined by the Board of Regents, including a vocational or technical education certificate or diploma program or a nonacademic undergraduate degree, the state shall award an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid under this Section for students attending public colleges and universities who are enrolled in the permitted skill or occupational training, as may be applicable.

* * *

D. Each city and parish school board for the high school under its jurisdiction or the principals of such high schools and the principal or headmaster of each nonpublic high school approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall:

* * *

(2) Using the criteria in Subparagraphs (A)(1)(b) and (B)(2)(b) as the minimum qualifications for selection, identify and certify to the administering agency those achieving the required academic standards to qualify for a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ award TOPS-College Award pursuant to this Section.

5 * *

6 H.

7 * * *

(2) No student shall be eligible for tuition payment pursuant to this Section for the ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award for more than two years unless an extension is granted by the administering agency in accordance with its rules.

11 * *

O. In lieu of the payment of tuition as provided in this Section, any student participating in the program provided by R.S. 29:36.1 for persons serving in the Louisiana National Guard shall receive the tuition exemption as provided therein. However, in addition to any other payments provided for by this Section:

(1) For any student who is participating in the tuition exemption program provided by R.S. 29:36.1 and who also meets the qualifications provided in this Section for receipt of an Opportunity Award or a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award, the state shall pay on behalf of such student a sum of three hundred dollars per semester or six hundred dollars per academic year to be applied toward the cost of books and other instructional materials.

22 * * *

P.(1) Notwithstanding any initial student eligibility requirement of this Chapter to the contrary, a student shall be eligible to receive a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award pursuant to this Section provided each of the applicable following conditions are met:

27 * * *

Q.(1) Notwithstanding any initial student eligibility requirement of this Chapter to the contrary, a student shall be eligible to receive a TOPS-Tech TOPS-

1 College Award pursuant to this Section provided each of the following conditions
2 are met:

3 * * *

4 (5)

5 * * *

6 (b)(i) Notwithstanding any provision of Subparagraph (1)(c), (2)(b), (3)(b),
7 or (4)(b) of this Subsection to the contrary and effective for a student qualifying for
8 an initial ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award or Opportunity Award for the 2008-
9 2009 award year or thereafter pursuant to this Subsection, the student shall have a
10 minimum composite score on the 1990 version of the American College Test which
11 is at least two points higher than that otherwise required by this Section for a student
12 graduating from a Louisiana public high school or nonpublic high school which has
13 been approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education or an
14 equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or revised version of such test or on the
15 Scholastic Aptitude Test.

16 * * *

17 V.(1) Notwithstanding any initial student eligibility requirement of this
18 Chapter to the contrary, a student shall be eligible to receive a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-
19 College Award pursuant to this Section provided each of the following conditions
20 are met:

21 * * *

22 (b) The student has a composite score on the 1990 version of the American
23 College Test which is at least three points higher than that otherwise required by this
24 Section for a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award for a student graduating from a
25 Louisiana public high school or an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or
26 revised version of such test or on the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

27 * * *

28 (3)

29 * * *

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of Subparagraph (1)(b) or (2)(b) of this Subsection to the contrary and effective for a student qualifying for an initial ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College or Opportunity award for the 2007-2008 award year or thereafter pursuant to this Subsection, the student, if a completer of a home study program approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, shall have a minimum composite score on the 1990 version of the American College Test which is at least two points higher than that otherwise required by this Section for a student graduating from a Louisiana public high school or nonpublic high school which has been approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education or an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or revised version of such test or on the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

* * *

§3048.2. Effectiveness of Chapter; continuance of certain tuition payments

* * *

C. Students graduating from high school or who have successfully completed at the twelfth grade level a home study program approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education during the 1997-1998 school year and thereafter may apply for and if otherwise qualified be eligible to receive the ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award as provided by this Chapter.

* * *

§3048.5. ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Early Start Award; purpose; eligibility; award amounts limitations; administration; implementation; reports

A. The ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Early Start Award is hereby established as part of the Louisiana Taylor Opportunity Program for Students for eligible eleventh and twelfth grade students attending Louisiana public high schools.

B.(1) A ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Early Start Award may be used at a Louisiana public postsecondary education institution for the purpose of pursuing an

1 industry-based occupational or vocational education credential as defined by the
2 Board of Regents when such credential also meets all of the following conditions:

3 * * *

4 (2) An eligible recipient may receive a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Early
5 Start Award for two semesters during the eleventh grade and two semesters during
6 the twelfth grade, excluding summer sessions.

7 (3) The administering agency, on behalf of a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College
8 Early Start Award recipient, shall pay to the Louisiana postsecondary education
9 institution in which the student is enrolled in an eligible program of studies an
10 amount of one hundred fifty dollars for each three credit-hour or equivalent time
11 course taken by the student, not to exceed two such courses per high school semester
12 for an eleventh-grade student and two such courses per high school semester for a
13 twelfth-grade student.

14 * * *

15 C. An application for a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Early Start Award shall
16 be required at a time and in a manner and form established by the administering
17 agency. At a minimum, information necessary to fully inform Louisiana public high
18 school students and their parents on the requirements of and procedures for applying
19 for the award shall be made available by the administering agency in the same
20 manner as required by law for other awards provided by the Taylor Opportunity
21 Program for Students.

22 D. To be eligible for an initial ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Early Start Award,
23 a student shall meet each of the following conditions and comply with other
24 applicable provisions of this Section and administering agency rules:

25 * * *

26 E. To maintain continuing eligibility for a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Early
27 Start Award, a student must meet each of the following conditions and comply with
28 other applicable provisions of this Section and administering agency rules:

29 * * *

1 F.(1) The provisions of this Section shall be administered by the Louisiana
2 Student Financial Assistance Commission, herein referred to as the "administering
3 agency". Except as otherwise provided by this Section, the authority granted to and
4 limitations placed on the administering agency by R.S. 17:3048.1 relative to
5 administering other awards pursuant to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students
6 shall be deemed to apply also to the administration of the ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College
7 Early Start Award.

8 * * *

9 G. Prior to the convening of each regular legislative session, the Board of
10 Regents, in consultation with the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance
11 Commission, shall provide to the governor, the House Committee on Education, and
12 the Senate Committee on Education a written review and analysis of ~~TOPS-Tech~~
13 TOPS-College Early Start awards relative to award use by students and the benefits
14 therefrom as well as the impact on subsequent use by students of ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-
15 College awards.

16 §3048.6. Initial eligibility for program awards; students displaced by certain natural
17 disasters; waivers and exceptions; limitations

18 * * *

19 B.(1) Relative to initial eligibility requirements for a Taylor Opportunity
20 Program for Students award applicable to a student displaced during the 2005-2006
21 school year, the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission, in accordance
22 with the Administrative Procedure Act, shall provide by rule as follows:

23 (a) A displaced student who has been certified by the principal or headmaster
24 to have graduated during the 2005-2006 school year from an out-of-state high school
25 that meets the criteria to be an eligible out-of-state high school as provided in R.S.
26 17:3048.1(P)(1)(a) shall not be required to have for the respective awards a higher
27 minimum composite score on the American College Test or on the Scholastic
28 Aptitude Test than required for a student who graduates from an eligible Louisiana
29 high school provided such student has, for a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award or

1 Opportunity Award, a cumulative high school grade point average on all courses on
2 the high school transcript of at least 2.50 calculated on a 4.00 scale or, for a
3 Performance or Honors award, a cumulative high school grade point average on all
4 courses on the high school transcript of at least 3.50 calculated on a 4.00 scale.

5 * * *

6 §3048.7. Continuing eligibility for program awards; students displaced by certain
7 natural disasters; waivers and exceptions; limitations

8 * * *

9 B.(1) Relative to continuing eligibility requirements for a Taylor
10 Opportunity Program for Students award applicable for the 2005-2006 academic year
11 to a student displaced during the 2005-2006 academic year, the Louisiana Student
12 Financial Assistance Commission, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure
13 Act, shall provide by rule as follows:

14 (a)

15 * * *

16 (iv) In addition to the provisions of R.S. 17:3048.1(B)(2) permitting a
17 recipient to use a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award at an eligible Louisiana college
18 or university to pursue skill or occupational training, as defined by the Board of
19 Regents, including a vocational or technical education certificate or diploma program
20 or a nonacademic degree, a ~~TOPS-Tech~~ TOPS-College Award also may be used
21 during the 2005-2006 academic year by a displaced student to enroll on a full-time
22 basis at an eligible Louisiana college or university granting academic undergraduate
23 degrees to take courses that contribute to the pursuit of a skill or occupation. In such
24 case, the award amount paid by the state on behalf of the student shall be at the
25 Opportunity Award level.

26 * * *

27 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
28 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
29 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If

- 1 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
2 effective on the day following such approval.

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)]

Ortego

HB No. 760

Abstract: Lowers the minimum ACT score required for initial TOPS-Tech Award eligibility from 17 to 16 and changes name of the TOPS-Tech Award.

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) as a program of merit scholarships for students attending certain postsecondary education institutions who meet specific grade point average, ACT score, and core curriculum requirements and certain other qualifications. Provides for the TOPS-Tech Award for students who enroll in certain colleges and universities to pursue skill or occupational training, including vocational or technical education certificates or diploma programs or nonacademic undergraduate degrees. For initial eligibility for the TOPS-Tech Award, a student must have a composite ACT score (or equivalent SAT score) of at least 17 or attain a silver level score on the assessments of the ACT WorkKeys system.

Proposed law lowers the minimum ACT score (or equivalent SAT score) required for initial TOPS-Tech Award eligibility from 17 to 16. Also changes name of TOPS-Tech Award to TOPS-College Award; otherwise retains present law.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(a)(iii)(dd)(II), (B)(1), (2)(intro. para.), (a), (b)(intro. para.), and (c)(intro. para.), (3)(intro. para.), and (4)(a) and (b), (D)(2), (H)(2), (O)(1), (P)(1)(intro. para.), (Q)(1)(intro. para.) and (5)(b)(i), and (V)(1)(intro. para.) and (b) and (3)(b), 3048.2(C), 3048.5(A), (B)(1)(intro. para.), (2), and (3), (C), (D)(intro. para.), (E)(intro. para.), (F)(1), and (G), 3048.6(B)(1)(a), and 3048.7(B)(1)(a)(iv))