DIGEST

Nevers (SB 126)

Present law provides that a TOPS-Tech Early Start Award may be used at a Louisiana public postsecondary education institution for the purpose of pursuing an industry-based occupational or vocational education credential as defined by the Board of Regents when such credential also meets all of the following conditions:

(1)   Is identified by the Occupation Forecasting Conference as a credential for an occupation in top demand in Louisiana.

(2)   Is recognized by the State Industry-Based Certification Council.

(3)   Is approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and by the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges.

Proposed law expands the use of the award so that it may be used to fund any technical or applied course leading to an Industry Based Certification, a Certificate of Applied Sciences, and a Certificate of Technical Sciences at a Louisiana public postsecondary education institution when such certification or certificate is approved by the Workforce Investment Council as meeting the following requirements:

(1)   Is identified by the Occupation Forecasting Conference as a credential for an occupation in top demand in Louisiana.

(2)   Is recognized by the State Industry-Based Certification Leadership Council.

Proposed law eliminates the requirement that credentials be approved by BESE and by the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges.

Present law authorizes the administering agency, in accordance with a plan approved by the Board of Regents, to implement the provisions of present law initially on a pilot basis. However, if implemented on a pilot basis, it is the intention of the legislature that full implementation be achieved at the earliest time possible.

Proposed law repeals present law.

Present law provides that in order to be eligible for an initial TOPS-Tech Early Start Award, a student shall meet each of the following conditions and comply with other applicable provisions of present law and administering agency rules:

(1)   Be in the eleventh or twelfth grade in a Louisiana public school.

(2)   Have prepared a five-year education and career plan, including a sequence of related courses with a career focus as provided by present law.

(3)   Have a cumulative high school grade point average on all courses attempted of not less than 2.0 when calculated on a 4.0 scale.

(4)   Have at least the minimum scores required to pass the mathematics and English portions of the graduation exit exam established by BESE.

(5)   Score at least 15 on the English subsection and 15 on the mathematics subsection of the ACT PLAN assessment administered as part of Louisiana's Educational Planning and Assessment System.

Proposed law eliminates the requirement that the student must have at least the minimum scores required to pass the mathematics and English portions of the graduation exit exam established by BESE.

Present law provides that prior to the convening of each regular legislative session, the Board of Regents, in consultation with the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission (LASFAC), shall provide to the governor, the House Committee on Education, and the Senate Committee on Education a written review and analysis of TOPS-Tech Early Start awards relative to award use by students and the benefits therefrom as well as the impact on subsequent use by students of TOPS-Tech awards.

Proposed law requires that LASFAC, rather than the Board of Regents, issue the report currently required by present law.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:3048.5(B)(1), (D), (F) and (G))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

        Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Education to the original bill

        1.   Makes technical correction.