

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 549

BY REPRESENTATIVE AMEDEE

TOPS: Provides relative to initial eligibility requirements for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students Award for home school students

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5023(B)(5)(d), 5029(B), and 5062(C)(6)(a)(introductory
3 paragraph), relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to revise initial
4 eligibility qualifications for home school graduates; to remove requirement that their
5 home study program be approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary
6 Education; to remove requirements relative to attainment of a certain ACT score; to
7 provide for applicability; and to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 17:5023(B)(5)(d), 5029(B), and 5062(C)(6)(a)(introductory
10 paragraph) are hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

11 §5023. Residency requirements

12 * * *

13 B. Except as provided by Subsection D of this Section, to be eligible for an
14 award pursuant to this Chapter, a dependent student, as defined by the administering
15 agency, shall meet one of the following requirements:

16 * * *

17 (5) His parent or court-ordered custodian meets all of the following criteria:

18 * * *

19 (d) He has remained a resident of Louisiana through the date of the student's
20 graduation from high school or completion of a home study program approved by

1 the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education or, as applicable, graduation
2 from a home school as provided in R.S. 17:5029(B).

3 * * *

4 §5029. Alternative initial eligibility requirements

5 * * *

6 B. (1) A student who graduates from a home study program during the 2023-
7 2024 school year or thereafter shall be eligible to receive an award pursuant to this
8 Chapter if the student meets the requirements of R.S. 17:5022, 5023, 5027, and 5028.

9 (2) A student who completes a home study program prior to the 2023-2024
10 school year shall be eligible to receive an award pursuant to this Chapter if each of
11 the following conditions is met:

12 ~~(1)(a)~~ (a)(i) The student has been certified by a parent or court-ordered
13 custodian to have successfully completed at the twelfth grade level a home study
14 program approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

15 ~~(b)(i)~~ (ii) Any such student who has previously attended a Louisiana public
16 high school or nonpublic high school that has been approved by the State Board of
17 Elementary and Secondary Education shall have begun his studies in the approved
18 home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth grade year.

19 ~~(ii)~~ (iii) Any such student who has previously attended a Louisiana public
20 high school, a Louisiana nonpublic high school, or an out-of-state high school shall
21 be required to provide certification from the principal, headmaster, or other
22 appropriate person at the high school previously attended that the student was in
23 good standing at the time the student last attended such school.

24 ~~(2)(b)~~ (b) The student meets the requirements of R.S. 17:5022, 5023, 5027, and
25 5028.

26 ~~(3)(a)~~ (c)(i) Except as provided in ~~Subparagraph (b) of this Paragraph, Item~~
27 (ii) of this Subparagraph, the student has a composite score on the 1990 version of
28 the ACT which is at least three points higher than that required by R.S. 17:5024(B)

1 for the particular award or an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or revised
2 version of such test or on the SAT.

3 ~~(b)(i)~~ (ii)(aa) For a student qualifying for an initial program award for the
4 2005-2006 through the 2007-2008 award year pursuant to this Subsection, the
5 student shall have a composite score on the 1990 version of the ACT which is at least
6 two points higher than that required by R.S. 17:5024(B) for the particular award or
7 an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or revised version of such test or on
8 the SAT.

9 ~~(ii)~~ (bb) For a student qualifying for an initial TOPS-Tech or Opportunity
10 Award for the 2008-2009 award year or thereafter pursuant to this Subsection, the
11 student shall have a composite score on the 1990 version of the ACT which is at least
12 two points higher than that required by R.S. 17:5024(B) for the particular award or
13 an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or revised version of such test or on
14 the SAT.

15 ~~(iii)~~ (cc) For a student qualifying for an initial Performance or Honors Award
16 for the 2008-2009 award year or thereafter pursuant to this Subsection, the student
17 shall have a composite score on the 1990 version of the ACT which is at least one
18 point higher than that required by R.S. 17:5024(B) for the particular award or an
19 equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or revised version of such test or on the
20 SAT.

21 * * *

22 §5062. Rules, procedures, and guidelines

23 * * *

24 C. The administering agency shall provide the following:

25 * * *

26 (6)(a) Guidelines and procedures by which the administering agency may
27 receive and consider, beginning with awards made for the 2020-2021 academic year,
28 an application for an initial award from an applicant who graduated from an

1 approved home study program who did not meet the requirements of ~~R.S.~~
2 ~~17:5029(B)(1)(b)(i)~~ R.S. 17:5029(B)(2)(a)(ii) provided that:

3 * * *

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)]

HB 549 Original 2024 Regular Session Amedee

Abstract: Removes requirements that home school students complete state-approved home study programs and attain a higher ACT score for initial qualification for a TOPS award.

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) as a merit scholarship program for students who graduate from a La. public high school or approved nonpublic high school and meet specific initial eligibility requirements, including the following academic requirements, which vary depending on award level:

- (1) Successful completion of a specific high school core curriculum.
- (2) Attainment of a minimum grade point average on such curriculum.
- (3) Attainment of a minimum ACT score.

Present law provides alternative eligibility requirements for other students, including those who complete home study programs and are exempt from the requirements provided in (1) and (2) above but must attain a higher ACT score. Limits eligibility to those who complete home study programs that are approved by the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).

Proposed law, applicable to students graduating from a home school during the 2023-2024 school year or thereafter, extends eligibility to graduates of any home school rather than limiting eligibility to BESE-approved home study programs and removes the requirement for the higher ACT score.

Present law provides that home school students must also meet general TOPS requirements relative to residency, citizenship, postsecondary enrollment, and criminal history. Proposed law retains present law.

(Amends R.S. 17:5023(B)(5)(d), 5029(B), and 5062(C)(6)(a)(intro. para.))