

Regular Session, 2013

SENATE BILL NO. 202

BY SENATOR NEVERS

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

TOPS. Revises core curriculum requirements and the method of calculating the grade point average for TOPS awards. (gov sig)

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(b)(ii), (c)(ii), and (d)(ii), the introductory  
3 paragraph of (A)(1)(e), (f), and (g), and (C)(2)(e), and to enact R.S.  
4 17:3048.1(A)(1)(h) relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to  
5 revise the core curriculum requirements and the method of calculating the grade  
6 point average required for program awards; to provide with respect to the method of  
7 approval of core curriculum course substitutions; to provide an effective date; and  
8 to provide for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(b)(ii), (c)(ii), and (d)(ii), the introductory paragraph  
11 of (A)(1)(e), (f), and (g), and (C)(2)(e) are hereby amended and reenacted and R.S.  
12 17:3048.1(A)(1)(h) is hereby enacted to read as follows:

13 §3048.1. Program awards; eligibility; amounts; limitations; funding; administration

14 A. \* \* \*

15 (1) \* \* \*

16 (b) \* \* \*

17 (ii)(aa) Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year and thereafter, the

1 minimum cumulative grade point average specified in Item (i) of this Subparagraph  
2 shall be calculated by using only the grades obtained by the student in completing  
3 the core curriculum requirements established by this Section.

4 **(bb) Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year and thereafter, the**  
5 **calculation of the minimum cumulative grade point average specified in Item**  
6 **(i) of this Subparagraph shall utilize a five-point scale for grades earned in**  
7 **certain Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, and**  
8 **dual enrollment courses as approved by the Board of Regents and the State**  
9 **Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, which may result in a student**  
10 **earning a cumulative grade point average that exceeds 4.00. For such courses,**  
11 **five quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "A", four quality points**  
12 **shall be assigned to a letter grade of "B", three quality points shall be assigned**  
13 **to a letter grade of "C", two quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of**  
14 **"D", and zero quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "F".**

15 (c) \* \* \*

16 (ii)(~~aa~~) Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year and thereafter, the  
17 minimum cumulative grade point average specified in Item (i) of this Subparagraph  
18 shall be calculated by using only the grades obtained by the student in completing  
19 the core curriculum requirements established by this Section.

20 **(bb) Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year and thereafter, the**  
21 **calculation of the minimum cumulative grade point average specified in Item**  
22 **(i) of this Subparagraph shall utilize a five-point scale for grades earned in**  
23 **certain Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, and**  
24 **dual enrollment courses as approved by the Board of Regents and the State**  
25 **Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, which may result in a student**  
26 **earning a cumulative grade point average that exceeds 4.00. For such courses,**  
27 **five quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "A", four quality points**  
28 **shall be assigned to a letter grade of "B", three quality points shall be assigned**  
29 **to a letter grade of "C", two quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of**

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**"D", and zero quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "F".**

\* \* \*

(d) \* \* \*

(ii)(aa) Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year and thereafter, the minimum cumulative grade point average specified in Item (i) of this Subparagraph shall be calculated by using only the grades obtained by the student in completing the core curriculum requirements established by this Section.

**(bb) Beginning with the 2013-2014 school year and thereafter, the calculation of the minimum cumulative grade point average specified in Item (i) of this Subparagraph shall utilize a five-point scale for grades earned in certain Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, and dual enrollment courses as approved by the Board of Regents and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, which may result in a student earning a cumulative grade point average that exceeds 4.00. For such courses, five quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "A", four quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "B", three quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "C", two quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "D", and zero quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "F".**

(e) Except as otherwise provided by this Section and through the 2006-2007 school year, 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 college or university. Except as otherwise provided by this Section and beginning with the 2007-2008 school year through the 2012-2013 school year, meets standards for admission to the desired college or university and has successfully completed at least seventeen and one-half units of high school course work as permitted by this Subparagraph, which constitutes a core curriculum. Except as otherwise provided by this Section and beginning with the 2013-2014 school year and thereafter **through the 2016-2017 school year**, meets the standards for admissions to the desired college or university and has successfully completed

1 at least nineteen units of high school course work as permitted by this Subparagraph,  
 2 which constitutes a core curriculum. For students qualifying under Subparagraph  
 3 (A)(1)(c) of this Section, the core curriculum requirements of this Subparagraph  
 4 shall become effective beginning with the high school graduating class of the year  
 5 1998, except that the core curriculum requirement for a Performance Award shall be  
 6 waived for any student graduating during the 1997-1998 school year who is certified  
 7 as having graduated within the top five percent of his graduating class at a Louisiana  
 8 public high school or nonpublic high school which is approved by the State Board  
 9 of Elementary and Secondary Education. Except as otherwise provided by this  
 10 Section, the core curriculum shall be defined as follows:

11 \* \* \*

12 (f) **Except as otherwise provided by this Section and beginning with the**  
 13 **2017-2018 school year and thereafter, meets the standards for admissions to the**  
 14 **desired college or university and has successfully completed a core curriculum**  
 15 **which consists of nineteen units of high school course work as follows:**

16 **(i) English - Four Units**

17 **(aa) English I.**

18 **(bb) English II.**

19 **(cc) One unit chosen from the following: English III, AP English**  
 20 **Language Arts and Composition, or English III IB (Language A or Literature**  
 21 **and Performance).**

22 **(dd) One unit chosen from the following: English IV, AP English**  
 23 **Literature and Composition, or English IV IB (Language A or Literature and**  
 24 **Performance).**

25 **(ii) Mathematics - Four Units**

26 **(aa) Algebra I (one unit), Geometry (one unit), and Algebra II (one unit).**  
 27 **Integrated Mathematics I, Integrated Mathematics II, and Integrated**  
 28 **Mathematics III may be substituted for the Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra**  
 29 **II sequence.**

1                   **(bb) One credit chosen from the following: Algebra III; Advanced Math**  
2                   **Functions and Statistics, Advanced Math-Pre-Calculus, Pre-Calculus, or Math**  
3                   **Methods I IB (Mathematical Studies SL); Calculus, AP Calculus AB, or Math**  
4                   **Methods II IB (Mathematics SL); AP Calculus BC; Probability and Statistics**  
5                   **or AP Statistics; IB Further Mathematics HL; IB Mathematics HL.**

6                   **(iii) Science - Four Units**

7                   **(aa) Biology I.**

8                   **(bb) Chemistry I.**

9                   **(cc) Two units chosen from the following: Earth Science; Environmental**  
10                  **Science; Physical Science; AP Chemistry or IB Chemistry II; AP**  
11                  **Environmental Science or IB Environmental Systems; Physics I, AP Physics B,**  
12                  **or IB Physics I; AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism, AP Physics C:**  
13                  **Mechanics, or IB Physics II; AP Physics I and AP Physics II; AP Biology or IB**  
14                  **Biology II.**

15                  **(iv) Social Studies - Four Units**

16                  **(aa) One unit chosen from the following: U.S. History, AP US History or**  
17                  **IB US History.**

18                  **(bb) One-half unit chosen from the following: Government, AP US**  
19                  **Government and Politics: Comparative, or AP US Government and Politics:**  
20                  **United States.**

21                  **(cc) One-half unit chosen from the following: Economics, AP**  
22                  **Macroeconomics, or AP Microeconomics.**

23                  **(dd) Two units chosen from the following: Western Civilization,**  
24                  **European History or AP European History; World Geography, AP Human**  
25                  **Geography or IB Geography; World History, AP World History, or World**  
26                  **History IB; History of Religion; IB Economics.**

27                  **(v) Foreign Language - Two Units**

28                  **Two units in the same language, which may also include the following:**  
29                  **AP Chinese Language and Culture, AP French Language and Culture, AP**

1 **German Language and Culture, AP Italian Language and Culture, AP Japanese**  
2 **Language and Culture, AP Latin, AP Spanish Language and Culture, French**  
3 **IV IB, French V IB, Spanish IV IB, and Spanish V IB.**

4 **(vi) Art - One unit**

5 **One unit chosen from the following: Performance course in Music,**  
6 **Dance, or Theatre; Fine Arts Survey; Talented Art I, II, III, and IV; Talented**  
7 **Music I, II, III, and IV; Talented Theater Arts I, II, III, and IV; AP Art**  
8 **History; AP Studio Art: 2-D Design; AP Studio Art: 3-D Design; AP Studio Art:**  
9 **Drawing; AP Music Theory; Film Study I IB; Film Study II IB; Music I IB;**  
10 **Music II IB; Art Design III IB; Art Design IV IB; or Theatre I IB.**

11 (f) ~~(g)~~ **(g)** Has no criminal conviction, except for misdemeanor traffic violations  
12 and, if the student has been in the United States Armed Forces and has separated  
13 from such service, has received an honorable discharge or general discharge under  
14 honorable conditions.

15 ~~(g)~~ **(h)** Students funded through the Louisiana minimum foundation program  
16 and who are attending any high school in an adjoining state pursuant to an agreement  
17 in effect as of June 4, 1994, between the parish school system and the local  
18 governing authority of the school in the adjoining state, shall be considered as having  
19 graduated from a state-approved nonpublic high school for the purpose of qualifying  
20 under Subparagraphs (A)(1)(b), (c), and (d).

21 \* \* \*

22 C. \* \* \*

23 (2) Except as otherwise provided by this Paragraph, the administering agency  
24 by rule shall provide for:

25 \* \* \*

26 (e) Guidelines and procedures by which the administering agency, **subject**  
27 **to prior approval by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education,**  
28 may update the course name and establish course equivalencies for any course  
29 included in the definition of core curriculum provided by this Section. The

1 guidelines and procedures shall include but not be limited to a requirement that any  
 2 change in a course name and the establishment of any course equivalency be done  
 3 by rule adopted by the administering agency and a requirement that prior to issuing  
 4 a notice of intent to consider any such rule the administering agency shall consult  
 5 with and seek the written comments and recommendations of the ~~State Board of~~  
 6 ~~Elementary and Secondary Education and the~~ Board of Regents on making the name  
 7 change or establishing the course equivalency.

8 \* \* \*

9 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not  
 10 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature  
 11 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If  
 12 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become  
 13 effective on the day following such approval.

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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

Nevers (SB 202)

Present law provides that the minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) required for a student to be eligible for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Opportunity, Performance, or Honors award must be calculated using only the grades obtained by the student in completing courses contained in the TOPS core curriculum as defined by present law.

Proposed law retains present law and additionally provides that, beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, that this GPA calculation shall utilize a five-point scale for grades earned in certain Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and dual enrollment courses as approved by the Board of Regents and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Provides that for such courses, five quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "A", four quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "B", three quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "C", two quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "D", and zero quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "F".

Present law provides for a specified core curriculum applicable to students graduating from high school during certain past time periods and provides that subsequent changes in the TOPS core curriculum do not apply to these students. Further provides specifically for the eligibility standards for the Performance award for the 1997-1998 school year.

Proposed law retains these provisions.

Present law provides that beginning with the 2013-2014 school year, an otherwise eligible student must successfully complete at least 19 units of high school credit from the courses contained in the TOPS core curriculum as follows:

- (1) English - Four Units
  - (a) English I.
  - (b) English II.
  - (c) English III.
  - (d) English IV.
- (2) Mathematics - Four Units
  - (a) Algebra I (one unit) or Applied Algebra 1A and 1B (two units).
  - (b) Algebra II (one unit).
  - (c) Two units from the following: Geometry, Trigonometry, Calculus, or comparable Advanced Mathematics.
- (3) Science - Four Units
  - (a) Biology (one unit).
  - (b) Chemistry (one unit).
  - (c) Two units from the following: Earth Science, Environmental Science, Physical Science, Biology II, Chemistry II, Physics, Physics II, Physics for Technology, or Agriscience I and II (both for one unit).
- (4) Social Studies - Four Units
  - (a) American History (one unit).
  - (b) Two units from the following: World History, Western Civilization, World Geography, or History of Religion.
  - (c) Civics and Free Enterprise (one unit combined) or Civics (one unit, nonpublic).
- (5) Foreign Language - Two Units  
Two units in a single language.
- (6) Art - One Unit  
One unit from the following: Fine Arts Survey (one unit or substitute one unit of a performance course in music, dance, or theater; or substitute one unit of a visual art course; or substitute one unit of a studio art course).

Proposed law retains the TOPS core curriculum defined in present law through the 2016-2017 school year but provides that beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, an otherwise eligible student must successfully complete 19 units of high school credit from the courses contained in the TOPS core curriculum as follows:

- (1) English - Four Units
  - (a) English I.
  - (b) English II.
  - (c) One unit chosen from the following: English III, AP English Language Arts and Composition, or English III IB (Language A or Literature and Performance).
  - (d) One unit chosen from the following: English IV, AP English Literature and Composition, or English IV IB (Language A or Literature and Performance).
- (2) Mathematics - Four Units
  - (a) Algebra I (one unit), Geometry (one unit), and Algebra II (one unit). Integrated Mathematics I, Integrated Mathematics II, and Integrated Mathematics III may be substituted for the Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II sequence.
  - (b) One credit chosen from the following: Algebra III; Advanced Math Functions and Statistics, Advanced Math-Pre-Calculus, Pre-Calculus, or Math Methods I IB (Mathematical Studies SL); Calculus, AP Calculus AB, or Math Methods II IB (Mathematics SL); AP Calculus BC; Probability and Statistics or AP Statistics; IB Further Mathematics HL; IB Mathematics HL.

- (3) Science - Four Units
- (a) Biology I.
  - (b) Chemistry I.
  - (c) Two units chosen from the following: Earth Science; Environmental Science; Physical Science; AP Chemistry or IB Chemistry II; AP Environmental Science or IB Environmental Systems; Physics I, AP Physics B, or IB Physics I; AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism, AP Physics C: Mechanics, or IB Physics II; AP Physics I and AP Physics II; AP Biology or IB Biology II.
- (4) Social Studies - Four Units
- (a) One unit chosen from the following: U.S. History, AP US History or IB US History.
  - (b) One-half unit chosen from the following: Government, AP US Government and Politics: Comparative, or AP US Government and Politics: United States.
  - (c) One-half unit chosen from the following: Economics, AP Macroeconomics, or AP Microeconomics.
  - (d) Two units chosen from the following: Western Civilization, European History or AP European History; World Geography, AP Human Geography or IB Geography; World History, AP World History, or World History IB; History of Religion; IB Economics.
- (5) Foreign Language - Two Units
- Two units in the same language, which may also include the following: AP Chinese Language and Culture, AP French Language and Culture, AP German Language and Culture, AP Italian Language and Culture, AP Japanese Language and Culture, AP Latin, AP Spanish Language and Culture, French IV IB, French V IB, Spanish IV IB, and Spanish V IB.
- (6) Art - One unit
- One unit chosen from the following: Performance course in Music, Dance, or Theatre; Fine Arts Survey; Talented Art I, II, III, and IV; Talented Music I, II, III, and IV; Talented Theater Arts I, II, III, and IV; AP Art History; AP Studio Art: 2-D Design; AP Studio Art: 3-D Design; AP Studio Art: Drawing; AP Music Theory; Film Study I IB; Film Study II IB; Music I IB; Music II IB; Art Design III IB; Art Design IV IB; or Theatre I IB.

Present law requires the administering agency for TOPS to establish guidelines and procedures by which to update the course name and establish course equivalencies for any course included in the TOPS core curriculum. Provides that such guidelines and procedures include a requirement that such changes be done by rule, and additionally requires the administering agency to consult with and seek written comments and recommendations from the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Board of Regents (BoR) prior to issuing a notice of intent to consider any such rule.

Proposed law retains the requirement that changes in course names and course equivalencies be done by rule, but now requires that the administering agency obtain approval from BESE prior to updating course names or establishing course equivalencies for any course included in the TOPS core curriculum. Retains requirement that the administering agency consult with and seek written comments and recommendations from the BoR prior to issuing a notice of intent to consider any such rule change.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(b)(ii), (c)(ii), and (d)(ii), (A)(1)(e)(intro para), (f), and (g), and (C)(2)(e); adds R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(h))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by SenateCommittee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Education to the original bill

1. Provides that grades earned in dual enrollment courses are eligible for increased weights when calculating TOPS GPA. Specifies that only grades earned in AP, IB, and dual enrollment courses approved by the Bd. of Regents and BESE will be given such extra weight.
2. Restores present law provisions preserving core curriculum requirements applicable to students graduating during specified prior time periods.
3. Restores present law provisions requiring consultation with the Bd. of Regents when making changes in TOPS course names and equivalencies.