

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 390

BY REPRESENTATIVE NANCY LANDRY

STUDENT/LOANS-SCHOLARSHIP: Provides relative to Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award amounts

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5002(A), (B), and (D) and 5024(B)(1)(a), relative to the
3 Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to provide with respect to the monetary
4 amounts for awards granted pursuant to the program; to provide relative to the
5 minimum ACT score required for eligibility for the Opportunity Award; and to
6 provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S. 17:5002(A), (B), and (D) and 5024(B)(1)(a) are hereby amended and
9 reenacted to read as follows:

10 §5002. Awards and amounts

11 A.(1) A student shall be eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, Honors,
12 or TOPS-Tech Award based on his academic achievement.

13 (2) The award amount as provided for in Subsection B or D of this Section
14 to a student enrolled at any given institution shall be equal to the award amount paid
15 for a student at that institution during the 2016-2017 academic year unless the
16 legislature, by law, increases the award amount.

17 B. Any student who is eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors
18 Award pursuant to this Chapter and who has enrolled:

1 (a) In an eligible public college or university that does not offer an academic
2 undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level in those associate's degree or other
3 shorter-term training and education programs that are aligned to state workforce
4 priorities as determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce
5 Investment Council shall be awarded by the state an amount determined by the
6 administering agency to equal the tuition charged by the college or university during
7 the 2016-2017 academic year. If the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce
8 Investment Council determine that a program is no longer aligned with those
9 priorities, an otherwise eligible student who had previously received an award and
10 enrolled in that program may continue to use the award.

11 (b) In an eligible college or university other than as provided for in
12 Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph in those associate's degree or other shorter-term
13 training education programs that are aligned to state workforce priorities as
14 determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment
15 Council shall be awarded by the state an amount determined by the administering
16 agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid to students attending an
17 eligible public college or university that does not offer an academic undergraduate
18 degree at the baccalaureate level during the 2016-2017 academic year. If the Board
19 of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council determine that a
20 program is no longer aligned with those priorities, an otherwise eligible student who
21 had previously received an award and enrolled in that program may continue to use
22 the award.

23 (2) A student who graduated prior to the 2016-2017 school year, who is
24 eligible for a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this Chapter, and who is enrolled:

25 (a) In an eligible college or university that does not offer an academic
26 undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level shall be awarded by the state an
27 amount determined by the administering agency to equal the tuition charged by the
28 college or university during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), Generally

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 Opportunity, Performance and Honors Awards (eight semesters) and TOPS-Tech Awards (two years).

Establishment of Baseline Award Amounts

Present law provides as follows relative to the amount awarded for recipients of a TOPS-Tech Award, which is only awarded if a student is enrolled in programs aligned to state workforce priorities as determined by the Bd. of Regents and La. Workforce Investment Council:

TOPS-Tech Award	
Institution Type	Award Amount
Public college or university that does not offer an academic undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level	Tuition charged by the institution
Other eligible college or university	Equal to the weighted average of amounts paid to students attending an eligible public college or university that does not offer an academic undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level

Present law provides as follows relative to the amount awarded to recipients of Opportunity, Performance, or Honors awards:

Opportunity, Performance, or Honors Award	
Institution Type	Award Amount
La. public college or university	Tuition charged by the institution
La. nonpublic college or university	Weighted average of amounts paid for students attending La. public colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees at the baccalaureate level
Out-of-state college or university designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students	Weighted average of amounts paid for students attending La. public colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees
Certain cosmetology and proprietary schools	Weighted average of amounts for students attending public colleges and universities who are enrolled in skill or occupational training

Proposed law provides that amounts for all TOPS awards shall not increase beyond the amount awarded in the 2016-17 academic year.

ACT Score

Present law provides that to qualify for an Opportunity Award, a student must have a composite ACT score equal to or higher than the state average composite score, rounded to the nearest whole number, reported for the previous year, but never less than 20.

Proposed law retains the requirement that a student have a minimum ACT score equal to or greater than the state average, but never less than 20, but specifies that the state average be truncated to a whole number instead of being rounded to the nearest whole number.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:5002(A), (B), and (D) and 5024(B)(1)(a))