

Regular Session, 2014

SENATE BILL NO. 520

BY SENATOR DONAHUE

POSTSECONDARY ED. Revises academic requirements for initial eligibility to receive certain TOPS awards and allocates additional funding to the La. GO Grant program. (gov sig)

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:3048.1(C)(5) and to enact R.S. 17:3046.3 and  
3 3048.1(A)(1)(b)(iii), (c)(iv), and (d)(iii), relative to financial assistance for certain  
4 postsecondary students; to provide relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for  
5 Students; to revise the academic requirements for initial eligibility to receive certain  
6 program awards; to provide with respect to funding for the Louisiana GO Grant  
7 program; to provide for effectiveness; and to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 17:3048.1(C)(5) is hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:  
10 3048.1(A)(1)(b)(iii), (c)(iv), and (d)(iii) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

11 §3048.1. Program awards; eligibility; amounts; limitations; funding; administration

12 A. \* \* \*

13 (1)(a) \* \* \*

14 (b) \* \* \*

15 **(iii)(aa) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary,**  
16 **effective for students who graduate during the 2017-2018 school year and**  
17 **thereafter from a Louisiana public high school or nonpublic high school that**

1 has been approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education,  
2 the minimum cumulative high school grade point average required for such  
3 students to be eligible for an initial Opportunity award shall be 3.00 on a 4.00  
4 scale, and the minimum required composite score on the American College Test,  
5 or equivalent concordant score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, shall be twenty-  
6 four.

7 (bb) The minimum cumulative grade point average specified in this Item  
8 shall be calculated using only the grades obtained by the student in completing  
9 the core curriculum requirements established by this Section.

10 (c) \* \* \*

11 (iv)(aa) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary,  
12 effective for students who graduate during the 2017-2018 school year and  
13 thereafter from a Louisiana public high school or nonpublic high school that  
14 has been approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education,  
15 the minimum cumulative high school grade point average required for such  
16 students to be eligible for an initial Performance award shall be 3.25 on a 4.00  
17 scale, and the minimum required composite score on the American College Test,  
18 or equivalent concordant score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, shall be twenty-  
19 seven.

20 (bb) The minimum cumulative grade point average specified in this Item  
21 shall be calculated using only the grades obtained by the student in completing  
22 the core curriculum requirements established by this Section.

23 (d) \* \* \*

24 (iii)(aa) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary,  
25 effective for students who graduate during the 2017-2018 school year and  
26 thereafter from a Louisiana public high school or nonpublic high school that  
27 has been approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education,  
28 the minimum cumulative high school grade point average required for such  
29 students to be eligible for an initial Honors award shall be 3.50 on a 4.00 scale,

1 **and the minimum required composite score on the American College Test, or**  
2 **equivalent concordant score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, shall be twenty-**  
3 **nine.**

4 **(bb) The minimum cumulative grade point average specified in this Item**  
5 **shall be calculated using only the grades obtained by the student in completing**  
6 **the core curriculum requirements established by this Section.**

7 \* \* \*

8 (C) \* \* \*

9 (5) Notwithstanding any provision of this Section to the contrary, including  
10 but not limited to Items (A)(1)(c)(i) and (d)(i) and effective ~~with~~ **for** students who  
11 graduate during the 2007-2008 school year ~~and thereafter~~ **through the 2016-2017**  
12 **school year** from a Louisiana public high school or nonpublic high school which has  
13 been approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and that  
14 meets other provisions of this Section applicable to nonpublic schools, the minimum  
15 cumulative high school grade point average necessary for such students to be eligible  
16 for an initial Performance Award or Honors Award shall be 3.00 on a 4.00 scale and  
17 such grade point average shall be calculated by using only the grades obtained by the  
18 student in completing the core curriculum requirements established by this Section.

19 \* \* \*

20 Section 2. R.S. 17:3046.3 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

21 **§3046.3. Funding**

22 **A. Beginning with the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the legislature shall**  
23 **appropriate ten percent of any savings attributable to the implementation of**  
24 **Section 1 of the Act that originated as Senate Bill No. of the 2014 Regular**  
25 **Session of the Legislature for the purpose of increasing the number of students**  
26 **participating in the Louisiana GO Grant program pursuant to this Chapter.**

27 **B. The monies appropriated by the legislature for the Louisiana GO**  
28 **Grant program pursuant to this Section shall not displace, replace, or supplant**  
29 **the average amount of the monies appropriated by the legislature for the**

1            **program for the three most recent fiscal years.**

2            Section 3. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not  
3 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature  
4 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If  
5 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become  
6 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

Donahue (SB 520)

Present law provides for minimum academic standards required for initial eligibility for awards pursuant to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) for students who graduate from a La. public high school or a nonpublic high school approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) as follows:

- (1) For an Opportunity award, the student must have a minimum grade point average (GPA) on the core curriculum of 2.50 calculated on a 4.00 scale, and a composite ACT score (or concordant Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) score) of 20.
- (2) For a Performance award, the student must have a minimum GPA on the core curriculum of 3.00 calculated on a 4.00 scale, and a composite ACT score (or concordant SAT score) of 23.
- (3) For an Honors award, the student must have a minimum GPA on the core curriculum of 3.00 calculated on a 4.00 scale, and a composite ACT score (or concordant SAT score) of 27.

Proposed law retains present law for students graduating from high school through the 2016-2017 school year.

Present law provides, effective for students graduating from high school during the 2017-2018 school year and thereafter, that the minimum GPA and ACT score (or SAT concordant score) required for initial eligibility for a TOPS award shall be as follows:

- (1) For an Opportunity award, the student must have a minimum GPA on the core curriculum of 3.00 calculated on a 4.00 scale, and a composite ACT score (or concordant SAT score) of 24.
- (2) For a Performance award, the student must have a minimum GPA on the core curriculum of 3.25 calculated on a 4.00 scale, and a composite ACT score (or concordant SAT score) of 27.
- (3) For an Honors award, the student must have a minimum GPA on the core curriculum of 3.50 calculated on a 4.00 scale, and a composite ACT score (or concordant SAT score) of 29.

Present law requires that a student who has successfully completed a BESE-approved home study program at the 12th-grade level must have a composite ACT score (or the specified equivalent) that is at least two points higher than that required for a student graduating from

a La. public high school or BESE-approved nonpublic high school to be eligible for an Opportunity Award, and at least one point higher to qualify for a Performance or Honors award.

Proposed law retains present law.

Present law provides for the La. GO Grant program to provide financial assistance to postsecondary students with demonstrated financial need and who meet the eligibility requirements established for participation in the program as follows:

- (1) Is a La. resident at the time of application.
- (2) Meets the admission requirements and is enrolled in a La. public college or university or a regionally accredited independent college or university that is a member of the La. Association of Independent Colleges and Universities "eligible colleges and universities".
- (3) Is a recipient of a federal Pell Grant or has submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid and is a recipient of a financial need grant from an eligible college or university or any other need-based aid as determined by the Bd. of Regents (BOR).
- (4) Is determined to have unmet need with regards to the ability to pay the cost of attendance for the eligible college or university in which the student is enrolled.
- (5) Maintains steady academic progress as defined by the BOR for continued participation.
- (6) Meets any other eligibility criteria the BOR may require.

Present law requires the Bd. of Regents to establish the criteria for initial and continuing eligibility, the method for determining the award amount, and other program requirements as required by the board. Further provides that the La. Student Financial Assistance Commission, through the office of student financial assistance, shall administer the program.

Proposed law retains present law and additionally provides that beginning with the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the legislature shall appropriate ten percent of any savings attributable to the implementation of Section 1 of proposed law for the purpose of increasing the number of students participating in the La. GO Grant program. Further provides that the monies appropriated by the legislature for the GO Grant program pursuant to proposed law shall not displace, replace, or supplant the average amount of the monies appropriated by the legislature for the program for the three most recent fiscal years.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:3048.1(C)(5); adds 17:3046.3 and 3048.1(A)(1)(b)(iii), (c)(iv), and (d)(iii))