

2016 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 79

BY SENATOR MORRISH

TOPS. Provides relative to TOPS awards amounts. (gov sig)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17

AN ACT

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

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

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

§5002. Awards and amounts

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

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

B. Any student who is eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors

1 Award pursuant to this Chapter and who has enrolled:

2 (1) In any public college or university in this state, shall be awarded by the
3 state an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the tuition charged
4 by the public college or university **during the 2016-2017 academic year.**

5 (2) At any regionally accredited independent college or university in the state
6 which is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and
7 Universities to pursue an academic undergraduate degree, shall be awarded by the
8 state an amount to be determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted
9 average of amounts paid under this Section for students attending public colleges and
10 universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees at the baccalaureate level
11 **during the 2016-2017 academic year.**

12 (3) In a school that has a valid and current certificate of registration issued
13 by the Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology in accordance with law and that is
14 accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States
15 Department of Education or in any proprietary school that has a valid and current
16 license issued by the Board of Regents in accordance with law and that is accredited
17 by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of
18 Education, shall be awarded by the state an amount determined by the administering
19 agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid under this Section for students
20 attending public colleges and universities **during the 2016-2017 academic year and**
21 who are enrolled in the permitted skill or occupational training, as may be applicable.

22 (4) In an out-of-state college or university that is specifically designed to
23 accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students under R.S. 17:5027(C), shall be
24 awarded an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted
25 average of amounts paid under this Section for students attending Louisiana public
26 colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees **during the**
27 **2016-2017 academic year.**

28 * * *

29 D.(1) Except as otherwise provided in this Subsection, a student who is

1 eligible for a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this Chapter and who is enrolled:

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

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

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

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

- (2) For a recipient who attends an eligible state nonpublic college or university, the award amount is an amount determined by LASFAC to equal the weighted average amount of amounts paid for students attending public colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees at the baccalaureate level.
- (3) For a recipient who is eligible to use the award at an out-of-state nonpublic college or university specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students to pursue an academic undergraduate degree, the award amount is an amount determined by LASFAC to equal the weighted average of amounts paid for students attending La. public colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees.
- (4) For a recipient who enrolls in a cosmetology school registered by the La. State Board of Cosmetology or a proprietary school licensed by the Board of Regents, the award amount is equal to the amount determined by LASFAC to equal the weighted average of amounts for students attending public colleges and universities who are enrolled in the permitted skill or occupational training.
- (5) Provides an additional \$200 per semester, or \$400 per academic year, to a recipient of a Performance Award, and provides an additional \$400 per semester, or \$800 per academic year, to a recipient of an Honors Award.

Relative to the amount of a TOPS-Tech Award, present law provides as follows:

- (1) For a recipient who attends an eligible La. public college or university that does not offer an academic undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level in those associate's degree or other shorter-term training and education programs aligned to state workforce priorities as determined by the Board of Regents and the La. Workforce Investment Council, the award amount equals the actual cost of tuition.
- (2) For a recipient who attends any other eligible postsecondary education institution that offers an associate's degree or other shorter-term training and education programs aligned to state workforce priorities as determined by the Board of Regents and the La. Workforce Investment Council, the award amount equals the amount determined by LASFAC to equal the weighted average of amounts paid for students attending public institutions that do not offer a baccalaureate degree.

Present law provides that for students who graduated prior to the 2016-2017 school year, eligibility for a TOPS-Tech award is not contingent upon a determination by the Board of Regents and the La. Workforce Investment Council that the students course of study is aligned with state workforce priorities. Proposed law retains present law.

Proposed law provides that the amount awarded by the state to a student who is the recipient of any TOPS award shall be equal to the award amount established for each respective award at the postsecondary institution in which the student is enrolled for the 2016-2017 award year, unless the legislature, by law, increases the award amount.

Proposed law retains payment of the supplemental amounts established in present law for a recipient of a Performance or Honors award.

Present law provides with respect to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) that a recipient, among other eligibility criteria, 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 or an equivalent value on the SAT in order to receive a TOPS Opportunity award.

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

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

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