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## DIGEST

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HB 482 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

Turner

**Abstract:** Revises the initial and continuing eligibility requirements for a TOPS-Tech award and provides for the award amount to equal \$4,500 or the award amount for a specific program at a specific institution during the 2025-2026 academic year, whichever is greater.

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), a merit scholarship program for students who meet certain academic criteria in high school and other requirements. Provides that the Bd. of Regents is the administering agency of the program. Proposed law revises certain award amounts and eligibility criteria as explained below.

### Award amount

Present law bases award amounts on the amount of tuition charged by the institution during the 2016-2017 academic year. Proposed law retains present law except provides that the award amount for a TOPS-Tech eligible student who enrolls in an eligible program at a public college or university shall be either the award amount for that program at that institution for the 2025-2026 academic year or \$4,500, whichever is greater. Proposed law provides that proposed law is applicable to those enrolling as first-time freshmen during or after the 2026-2027 academic year.

### TOPS-Tech, initial eligibility

Present law provides that academic initial eligibility criteria for a TOPS-Tech award include both of the following:

- (1) GPA of at least 2.50 on a specified high school core curriculum.
- (2) ACT score of at least 17 or silver on WorkKeys.

Proposed law adds a third academic criterion, at least nine credit hours of early college credit attained through dual enrollment courses or equivalent validated skills and learning measures as approved by the Statewide Articulation and Transfer Council. Provides that a student qualifies for a TOPS-Tech award if he meets at least two of the three requirements provided in present law and proposed law. Applicable to students enrolling in college as first-time freshmen beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.

Present law provides that a student must enroll in college as a first-time freshman not later than the semester immediately following the first anniversary of his high school graduation. Proposed law

provides that a student who is otherwise eligible for a TOPS-Tech award may defer his award acceptance while retaining eligibility if he enrolls as a first-time freshman in an eligible program at any public college or university prior to turning 25 years old.

### **TOPS-Tech, continuing eligibility**

Present law provides that to maintain eligibility for TOPS-Tech, a student must:

- (1) Make steady academic progress as defined by the administering agency, earning not less than the minimum hours required for full-time standing, and maintain continuous enrollment as a full-time student. Proposed law allows part-time enrollment.
- (2) Have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.50 calculated on a 4.00 scale. Proposed law lowers the minimum GPA from 2.50 to 2.00.

(Amends R.S. 17:5027(A)(1) and 5042(1)-(3); Adds R.S. 17:5002(D)(1)(c) and 5024(D))

### Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the original bill:

1. Provide that the award amount is either \$4,500 or the 2025-2026 academic year award amount, whichever is greater, and apply this revised award amount to students enrolled in an eligible program at any public college or university (not just an LCTCS institution).
2. Allow TOPS-Tech-eligible students to defer their award and maintain eligibility if they enroll in any public college or university (not just an LCTCS institution) prior to turning 25.