

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 18 (SB 174)

2016 Regular Session

Donahue

With respect to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), prior law provided that a student, 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.

New 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.

Prior law provided as follows relative to the amount awarded to TOPS recipients of Opportunity, Performance, or Honors awards:

- (1) For a recipient who attends a La. public college or university to pursue an academic undergraduate degree or skill or occupational training, the award amount is an amount determined by the La. Student Financial Assistance Commission (LASFAC) to equal the tuition charged by the college or university attended.
- (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 or an amount determined by LASFAC to equal the weighted average of amounts paid for students attending public colleges and universities who are enrolled in permitted skill or occupational training.
- (3) For a recipient who is eligible to use the award at an out-of-state nonpublic college or university 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 student who is the recipient of an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors award 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 the 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, prior law provided 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 or higher to pursue permitted skill or occupational training, the award amount equals the actual cost of tuition.
- (2) For a recipient who attends any other eligible postsecondary education institution, the award amount equals the amount determined by LASFAC to equal the weighted average of amounts paid for students attending public institutions who are enrolled in the permitted skill or occupational training.

New law provides that, beginning with the 2017-2018 award year:

- (1) 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.

- (2) The legislature may, by law, increase the amount awarded at a postsecondary institution in any given award year to a student who is the recipient of any TOPS award.
- (3) Any increase in award amounts at a postsecondary institution granted by the legislature shall be established as the minimum amount to be awarded to a student who is the recipient of any TOPS award, subject to any limitations on award amounts otherwise imposed by prior law.
- (4) The amount awarded to a student who is the recipient of any TOPS award shall not be less than the amount paid for the previous award year at the postsecondary institution in which the student is enrolled, subject to any limitations on award amounts otherwise imposed by prior law.
- (5) Retains payment of the supplemental amounts established in prior law for a recipient of a Performance or Honors award.

Effective upon signature of the governor (May 9, 2016).

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