

2017 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 194

BY REPRESENTATIVE REYNOLDS

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

TOPS: Raises the minimum GPA required for initial eligibility for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Opportunity Award and provides for exceptions granted with respect to enrollment requirements for initial and continuing eligibility

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5024(A) and (B), to enact R.S. 17:5024.1 and 5062(A)(3),
3 and to repeal R.S. 17:5024(C), relative to eligibility requirements for a Taylor
4 Opportunity Program for Students award; to raise the minimum grade point average
5 required for initial eligibility for an Opportunity Award; to provide relative to
6 exceptions to initial and continuing eligibility requirements pertaining to enrollment;
7 to require the administering agency to establish a procedure for requesting such an
8 exception; to provide that the bases for such an exception shall include entry into the
9 workforce; to provide relative to the maximum duration of such an exception; to
10 provide relative to applicability; and to provide for related matters.

11 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

12 Section 1. R.S. 17:5024(A) and (B) are hereby amended and reenacted and R.S.
13 17:5024.1 and 5062(A)(3) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

14 §5024. Academic requirements

15 A.(1) ~~Except as otherwise provided by this Subsection, students~~ Students
16 shall meet the following minimum grade point average requirements, calculated on
17 a 4.00 scale using only the grades obtained by the student in completing the core
18 curriculum requirements established by this Chapter, for the respective awards:

1 (a) For an Opportunity Award, a minimum cumulative grade point average
2 of ~~2.50~~ 3.00.

3 (b) For a Performance Award, a minimum cumulative grade point average
4 of 3.25.

5 (c) For an Honors Award, a minimum cumulative grade point average of
6 3.50.

7 (d) For a TOPS-Tech Award, a minimum cumulative grade point average of
8 2.50.

9 ~~(2)(a) For a student who graduated prior to the 2002-2003 school year, the~~
10 ~~minimum cumulative grade point average shall be calculated by using the grades~~
11 ~~obtained by the student in completing all classes taken.~~

12 ~~(b) For a student who graduated prior to the 2007-2008 school year, the~~
13 ~~minimum cumulative high school grade point average necessary for such student to~~
14 ~~be eligible for a Performance Award or Honors Award shall be 3.50 on a 4.00 scale.~~

15 ~~(c)(i) For a student who graduated during or after the 2007-2008 school year~~
16 ~~but prior to the 2020-2021 school year, the minimum cumulative high school grade~~
17 ~~point average necessary for such student to be eligible for an Opportunity Award~~
18 ~~shall be 2.50 on a 4.00 scale.~~

19 ~~(ii) For a student who graduated during or after the 2007-2008 school year~~
20 ~~but prior to the 2020-2021 school year, the minimum cumulative high school grade~~
21 ~~point average necessary for such student to be eligible for a Performance Award~~
22 ~~shall be 3.00 on a 4.00 scale.~~

23 ~~(iii) For a student who graduated during or after the 2007-2008 school year~~
24 ~~but prior to the 2020-2021 school year, the minimum cumulative high school grade~~
25 ~~point average necessary for such student to be eligible for an Honors Award shall be~~
26 ~~3.00 on a 4.00 scale.~~

27 ~~(3)(a)~~ The calculation of the minimum cumulative grade point average
28 specified in Paragraph (1) of this Subsection shall utilize a five-point scale for grades
29 earned in certain Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses,

1 gifted and talented courses, honors courses, articulated courses for college credit, and
2 dual enrollment courses as approved by the Board of Regents and the State Board of
3 Elementary and Secondary Education, which may result in a student earning a
4 cumulative grade point average that exceeds 4.00. For such courses, five quality
5 points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "A", four quality points shall be assigned
6 to a letter grade of "B", three quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "C",
7 two quality points shall be assigned to a letter grade of "D", and zero quality points
8 shall be assigned to a letter grade of "F".

9 ~~(b) The provisions of Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph do not apply to~~
10 ~~students who graduated prior to the 2017-2018 school year.~~

11 ~~B.(1) Except as otherwise provided by this Subsection, a A student shall earn~~
12 ~~the following minimum test scores for the respective awards:~~

13 ~~(a) (1) For an Opportunity Award, a composite score on the 1990 version of~~
14 ~~the ACT which is at least equal to or higher than the state's average composite score,~~
15 ~~truncated to a whole number, reported for the prior year but never less than twenty~~
16 ~~or an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or revised version of such test or~~
17 ~~on the SAT.~~

18 ~~(b) (2) For a Performance Award, a composite score on the 1990 version of~~
19 ~~the ACT of twenty-three or higher or an equivalent concordant value on any~~
20 ~~enhanced or revised version of such test or on the SAT.~~

21 ~~(c) (3) For an Honors Award, a score of twenty-seven or higher on the 1990~~
22 ~~version of the ACT or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised~~
23 ~~version of such test or on the SAT.~~

24 ~~(d) (4) For a TOPS-Tech Award, a composite score on the specified ACT of~~
25 ~~seventeen or higher or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised~~
26 ~~version of such test or on the SAT. The student may, as an alternative requirement,~~
27 ~~have attained a silver level score on the assessments of the ACT WorkKeys system.~~

1 ~~(2)(a) For a student who graduated prior to the 2010-2011 school year, the~~
2 ~~ACT WorkKeys system is not an alternative assessment for establishing eligibility~~
3 ~~for a TOPS-Tech Award.~~

4 ~~(b) For a student who graduated prior to the 2000-2001 school year, the~~
5 ~~minimum ACT score for a TOPS-Tech Award is nineteen.~~

6 * * *
7 §5024.1. Academic requirements; exceptions

8 A. Exceptions to R.S. 17:5024(A), academic eligibility requirements
9 pertaining to a student's grade point average, are as follows:

10 (1) For an Opportunity Award, a student who graduates from high school
11 prior to the 2020-2021 school year shall have a minimum grade point average of
12 2.50, calculated on a 4.00 scale using only the grades obtained by the student in
13 completing the core curriculum requirements established by this Chapter.

14 (2) For a Performance Award or an Honors Award, a student shall meet the
15 following minimum grade point average requirement, calculated on a 4.00 scale
16 using only the grades obtained by the student in completing the core curriculum
17 requirements established by this Chapter:

18 (a) For a student graduating during or after the 2007-2008 school year and
19 prior to the 2020-2021 school year, a minimum cumulative grade point average of
20 3.00.

21 (b) For a student graduating prior to the 2007-2008 school year, a minimum
22 cumulative grade point average of 3.50.

23 (3) The provisions of R.S. 17:5024(A)(2) do not apply to students graduating
24 prior to the 2017-2018 school year.

25 (4) For a student who graduated prior to the 2002-2003 school year, the
26 minimum cumulative grade point average shall be calculated by using the grades
27 obtained by the student in completing all classes taken.

28 B. Exceptions to R.S. 17:5024(B), academic requirements pertaining to a
29 student's ACT score, are as follows:

1 (1) For a student who graduated prior to the 2010-2011 school year, the ACT
 2 WorkKeys system is not an alternative assessment for establishing eligibility for a
 3 TOPS-Tech Award.

4 (2) For a student who graduated prior to the 2000-2001 school year, the
 5 minimum ACT score for a TOPS-Tech Award is nineteen.

6 C. Notwithstanding R.S. 17:5024, a student who graduated after the 2002-
 7 2003 school year but prior to the 2006-2007 school year is eligible to receive a
 8 Performance Award pursuant to this Chapter if he meets the other requirements of
 9 this Chapter and each of the following conditions is met:

10 (1) The student achieved a minimum cumulative high school grade point
 11 average of 3.00 on a 4.00 scale when calculated in accordance with applicable rules
 12 adopted by the administering agency and such calculation is based on ten or more of
 13 the grades being grades for completion of honors curriculum courses, gifted
 14 curriculum courses, or advanced placement courses, or any combination of such
 15 courses, and the high school awards grades for such courses on a 4.00 scale or
 16 higher.

17 (2) The student has a composite score on the 1990 version of the ACT of
 18 twenty-four or higher or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised
 19 version of such test or on the SAT.

20 * * *

21 §5062. Rules, procedures, and guidelines

22 A. The administering agency shall provide by rule for the following:

23 * * *

24 (3)(a) A procedure for requesting an exception to the initial enrollment
 25 requirement provided in R.S. 17:5027 and the continuous enrollment requirements
 26 provided in R.S. 17:5041 and 5042. The causes for which the administering agency
 27 grants such exceptions shall include but not be limited to a student's entry into the
 28 workforce. The maximum duration of an extension granted for such cause shall be
 29 five years.

1 (b) The provisions of this Paragraph shall be applicable to students
2 graduating from high school during or after the 2016-2017 school year.

3 * * *

4 Section 2. R.S. 17:5024(C) is hereby repealed in its entirety.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 194 Original 2017 Regular Session Reynolds

Abstract: Raises the minimum GPA required for initial eligibility for a TOPS Opportunity Award from 2.50 to 3.00; provides for exceptions to enrollment requirements.

Initial Eligibility Requirements – GPA

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 initial eligibility requirements pertaining to grade point average (GPA), ACT score, and core curriculum requirements and certain other qualifications. For initial award eligibility, requires a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50 for both a TOPS-Tech Award and an Opportunity Award and a 3.00 for both a Performance Award and an Honors Award. Increases, effective with students graduating from high school in the 2020-2021 school year, the minimum GPA for initial eligibility for a Performance Award from 3.00 to 3.25 and for an Honors Award from 3.00 to 3.50.

Proposed law raises the minimum GPA requirement for initial eligibility for the Opportunity Award from 2.50 to 3.00 and is applicable to students graduating from high school during or after the 2020-2021 school year.

Initial and Continuing Eligibility Requirements – Enrollment

Present law:

- (1) Relative to initial eligibility, requires a student to enroll as a first-time college freshman not later than the semester immediately following the first anniversary of high school graduation.
- (2) Relative to continuing eligibility, requires a student to maintain continuous enrollment.
- (3) Authorizes the administering agency to grant exceptions to these requirements for cause.

Proposed law retains present law and adds that:

- (1) The administering agency shall establish by rule a procedure for requesting an exception to present law requirements.
- (2) Specifies that the causes for which enrollment exceptions are granted include entry into the workforce.

- (3) Provides that the maximum length of an extension granted for entering the workforce is five years.

Proposed law is applicable to students graduating from high school during or after the 2016-2017 school year.

(Amends R.S. 17:5024(A) and (B); Adds R.S. 17:5024.1 and 5062(A)(3); Repeals R.S. 17:5024(C))