

2018 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 394

BY SENATOR WHITE

TOPS. Creates the TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award. (gov sig)

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AN ACT

To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5002(E)(2), 5024(B)(1)(d), and the introductory paragraph of 5026(A), and to enact R.S. 17:5002(H), 5024(A)(1)(e), 5026.1, and 5042.1, relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to create a new program award; to provide for initial award eligibility and continuation requirements; to provide relative to award amounts; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:5002(E)(2), 5024(B)(1)(d), and the introductory paragraph of 5026(A) are hereby amended and reenacted, and R.S. 17:5002(H), 5024(A)(1)(e), 5026.1, and 5042.1 are hereby enacted to read as follows:

§5002. Awards and amounts

* * *

E.(1) * * *

(2) No student shall be eligible for tuition payment pursuant to this Section for the TOPS-Tech Award; **or the TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award** for more than **four semesters or an equivalent number of units in an eligible institution which operates on a schedule based on units other than semesters, or** two years unless

1 an extension is granted by the administering agency in accordance with its rules.

2 * * *

3 **H. Any student who is eligible for a TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award or the**
4 **TOPS Second Chance Award pursuant to this Chapter and who has enrolled in**
5 **any public four-year institution in this state, any regionally accredited**
6 **independent four-year institution in the state which is a member of the**
7 **Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, or in an out-of-**
8 **state four-year institution that is specifically designed to accommodate deaf and**
9 **hard-of-hearing students pursuant to R.S. 17:5027(C) shall be awarded by the**
10 **state an amount to be determined by the administering agency in the same**
11 **manner as provided in Subsection B of this Section.**

12 * * *

13 §5024. Academic requirements

14 A.(1) Except as otherwise provided by this Subsection, students shall meet
15 the following minimum grade point average requirements, 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, for the respective awards:

18 * * *

19 **(e) For a TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award, a minimum cumulative grade point**
20 **average of 2.50.**

21 * * *

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

24 * * *

25 (d) For a TOPS-Tech Award **or a TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award**, a composite
26 score on the specified ACT of seventeen or higher or an equivalent concordant value
27 on any enhanced or revised version of such test or on the SAT. The student may, as
28 an alternative requirement, have attained a silver level score on the assessments of
29 the ACT WorkKeys system.

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§5026. High school core curriculum requirements; TOPS-Tech, **TOPS-Tech 2Plus2**

A. Except as otherwise provided by this Section, to be eligible for a TOPS-Tech **or TOPS-Tech 2Plus2** Award pursuant to this Chapter, the student shall have successfully completed the core curriculum requirements of R.S. 17:5025 ~~or 5025.3~~ or the core curriculum defined as follows:

* * *

§5026.1. Initial postsecondary eligibility requirements, TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award

To be eligible for a TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award pursuant to this Chapter, a student who graduated from high school during or after the 2021-2022 school year shall:

(1) Have accepted his TOPS-Tech Award.

(2) Have earned an academic associate's degree in an eligible TOPS-Tech program within two academic years of accepting the award and enrolling in an eligible institution.

(3) Have maintained a cumulative grade point average of a 3.20 on a 4.00 scale as evaluated at the end of each academic year.

(4) Enroll in a baccalaureate program at a TOPS eligible four-year postsecondary institution, not later than the semester, excluding summer semesters and sessions, immediately following the first anniversary of the date the student graduated from the eligible academic associate's degree program.

* * *

§5042.1. Maintaining eligibility; TOPS-Tech 2Plus2

(A) To maintain continued state payment of any amount pursuant to a TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award, a student shall meet all of the following:

(1) Make steady academic progress toward a degree as defined by the administering agency, earning not less than the minimum number of hours of credit required for full-time standing in each academic year or the required

1 number of hours needed to complete the undergraduate degree during that
2 semester or quarter.

3 (2) Maintain continuous enrollment for not less than two semesters or
4 three quarters in each successive academic year, unless granted an exception for
5 cause by the administering agency.

6 (3) Maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.50 on a 4.00
7 scale as evaluated at the end of each academic year.

8 (4) Have no criminal conviction, except for misdemeanor traffic
9 violations.

10 (5) Received an honorable discharge or general discharge under
11 honorable conditions if the student had been in the United States Armed Forces
12 and separated from such service.

13 **B. If at any time a student fails to maintain the requirements provided**
14 **in Subsection A of this Section, the student is ineligible for further payments.**

15 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
16 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
17 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
18 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
19 effective on the day following such approval.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Cheryl Serrett.

SB 394 Original	DIGEST 2018 Regular Session	White
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Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students.

Proposed law retains present law. Proposed law additionally provides for a new award called
the TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award.

Proposed law provides that a recipient of a TOPS-Tech 2Plus2 Award must meet all
requirements for the TOPS-Tech award and also meet the following criteria:

- (1) Graduated from high school during or after the 2021-2022 school year.
- (2) Accepted his TOPS-Tech Award.
- (3) Earned an academic associate's degree in an eligible TOPS-Tech program within two

academic years of accepting the award and enrolling in an eligible institution.

- (4) Maintained a cumulative grade point average of 3.20 each academic year.
- (5) Enrolled in a baccalaureate program at a TOPS eligible four-year institution, not later than the semester, excluding summer semesters and sessions, immediately following the first anniversary of the date the student graduated from the eligible academic associate's degree program.

Proposed law provides that to maintain eligibility for the award, a student must:

- (1) Make steady academic progress toward a degree as defined by the administering agency.
- (2) Maintain a cumulative grade point average 2.50 on a 4.0 scale.
- (3) Maintain continuous enrollment.
- (4) Have no criminal conviction, except for misdemeanor traffic violations.
- (5) Have received an honorable discharge or general discharge under honorable conditions if the student had been in the United States Armed Forces and separated from such service.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:5002(E)(2), 5024(B)(1)(d), and 5026(A)(intro para); adds R.S. 17:5002(H), 5024(A)(1)(e), 5026.1, and 5042.1)