

**LEGISLATIVE FISCAL OFFICE**  
**Fiscal Note**



Fiscal Note On: **HB 548** HLS 24RS 650  
 Bill Text Version: **ORIGINAL**  
 Opp. Chamb. Action:  
 Proposed Amd.:  
 Sub. Bill For.:

<b>Date:</b> April 8, 2024	12:39 PM	<b>Author:</b> AMEDEE
<b>Dept./Agy.:</b> Higher Education/Student Financial Assistance		<b>Analyst:</b> Chris Henry
<b>Subject:</b> TOPS Requirements for Home Study Students		

TOPS OR INCREASE GF EX See Note Page 1 of 1  
 Subjects students who complete approved home study programs and satisfy certain academic requirements to the same ACT requirements as graduates of public and approved nonpublic high schools for qualification for a Taylor Opportunity Program Present Law requires students who complete an approved home study program to score at least two points higher on the ACT standardized test than typical students in order to qualify for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Performance or Honors award and one point higher to qualify for a TOPS-Tech or Opportunity award. These students are not required to complete the TOPS Core Curriculum and obtain the requisite grade point average on core courses. Proposed legislation would retain present law and allow these students to have the second option to obtain a TOPS award through meeting the same requirements as traditional public and approved nonpublic school students including earning the requisite ACT score, cumulative grade point average, and completion of the TOPS Core Curriculum.

The proposed legislation would be effective beginning with the 2024-25 award year.

EXPENDITURES	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	5 -YEAR TOTAL
State Gen. Fd.	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	
Agy. Self-Gen.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Ded./Other	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Local Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Annual Total</b>						
REVENUES	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	5 -YEAR TOTAL
State Gen. Fd.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Agy. Self-Gen.	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	<b>INCREASE</b>	
Ded./Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Local Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Annual Total</b>						

**EXPENDITURE EXPLANATION**

**Participation:**

The proposed measure is likely to increase expenditures from SGF and Dedications out of the TOPS Fund for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) by an indeterminable amount resulting from the potential increase in home study students who might qualify for a TOPS award or a higher level award from the proposed change. The actual amount needed will vary from year-to-year based on the number of student awards, which institution the student enrolls, and the award levels qualified. The LFO cannot predict the amount of students who would qualify for a TOPS award via the new process as opposed to the current home study requirements. Over the last five years, an average of 313 home study students were processed annually for TOPS. Of that amount 265 (81%) were eligible for an award based on the existing criteria, with 67 (21%) qualifying for Honors, 84 (27%) Performance, 65 (21%) Opportunity, and 48 (15%) TOPS-Tech.

**Administration:**

The proposed measure will result in a potentially significant increase in expenditures assumed to be SGF to process home study students for TOPS awards. Currently, to process a home study student for TOPS, the only academic requirement is the official ACT score. To process students who choose the new option based on the traditional TOPS requirements, course transcripts and a calculated GPA based on the core curriculum would be necessary. In the existing process, this information is obtained by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) for public and approved nonpublic students via the Student Transcript System administered by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE). To securely obtain this information from home study students, significant updates would be needed to this system without which LOSFA would not be able to process student applications. The Legislative Fiscal Office is in communication with LDOE related to the costs and time that would be required to make the necessary changes to the Student Transcript System to allow parents or designated individuals to upload home study student transcripts to the system. This fiscal note will be updated to reflect this information once it has been received and reviewed.

**REVENUE EXPLANATION**

There will likely be a nominal increase in SGR revenues at postsecondary institutions due to enrollment of additional students who now qualify for a TOPS award or a higher tier award as a result of this measure.

Senate  
 13.5.1 >= \$100,000 Annual Fiscal Cost {S & H}  
 13.5.2 >= \$500,000 Annual Tax or Fee Change {S & H}

House  
 6.8(F)(1) >= \$100,000 SGF Fiscal Cost {H & S}  
 6.8(G) >= \$500,000 Tax or Fee Increase or a Net Fee Decrease {S}

**Patrice Thomas**  
 Deputy Fiscal Officer