

2025 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 77

BY REPRESENTATIVES TURNER AND SCHLEGEL

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

TOPS: Revises Taylor Opportunity Program for Students award amounts and adds an award category for students with an ACT score of 31 or above

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5002, 5025(introductory paragraph), 5027(C)(introductory
3 paragraph) and (D)(2), 5029(B)(3)(b)(iii) and (D)(1)(introductory paragraph),
4 5041(introductory paragraph), (1)(c), and (4), and 5043(1) and to enact R.S.
5 17:5024(A)(1)(e) and (B)(1)(e), relative to the Taylor Opportunity Program for
6 Students; to revise program award amounts; to create a new program award level;
7 to provide a definition of tuition for program purposes; to provide for applicability;
8 and to provide for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 17:5002, 5025(introductory paragraph), 5027(C)(introductory
11 paragraph) and (D)(2), 5029(B)(3)(b)(iii) and (D)(1)(introductory paragraph),
12 5041(introductory paragraph), (1)(c), and (4), and 5043(1) are hereby amended and
13 reenacted and R.S. 17:5024(A)(1)(e) and (B)(1)(e) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

14 §5002. Awards and amounts

15 A.(1) A student shall be eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, Honors,
16 Excellence, or TOPS-Tech Award based on his academic achievement.

17 (2) ~~The award amount shall be as provided in Subsection B or D of this~~
18 ~~Section unless the legislature, by law, increases the award amount.~~ For purposes of
19 this Section, applicable to award amounts for students enrolling as first-time
20 freshmen during or after the 2025-2026 academic year, "tuition" means the annual

1 resident tuition and fees charged by the institution as reported in the Board of
2 Regents annual mandatory tuition and fees survey.

3 B.(1) Any student who is eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, ~~or~~
4 Honors, or Excellence Award pursuant to this Chapter and who has enrolled as a
5 first-time freshman during or after the 2025-2026 academic year:

6 ~~(1)~~ (a) In any public college or university in this state, shall be awarded by
7 the state either an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the
8 tuition charged by the public college or university ~~during the 2016-2017 academic~~
9 ~~year.~~ or the following amount based on award level, whichever is less:

10 (i) Opportunity Award, six thousand dollars.

11 (ii) Performance Award, six thousand five hundred dollars.

12 (iii) Honors Award, nine thousand dollars.

13 (iv) Excellence Award, eleven thousand three hundred dollars.

14 ~~(2)~~ (b) At any independent college or university in the state that is a member
15 of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and that is
16 accredited by an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the United States
17 Department of Education to pursue an academic undergraduate degree, shall be
18 awarded by the state either an amount ~~to be~~ determined by the administering agency
19 to equal ~~the weighted average of the tuition amounts charged to students attending~~
20 ~~public colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees at the~~
21 ~~baccalaureate level during the 2016-2017 academic year.~~ by the college or university
22 or the following amount based on award level, whichever is less:

23 (i) Opportunity Award, five thousand five hundred dollars.

24 (ii) Performance Award, six thousand five hundred dollars.

25 (iii) Honors Award, seven thousand five hundred dollars.

26 (iv) Excellence Award, eight thousand five hundred dollars.

27 ~~(3)~~ (c) In a school that has a valid and current certificate of registration
28 issued by the Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology in accordance with law and that
29 is accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States

1 Department of Education or in any proprietary school that has a valid and current
2 license issued by the Board of Regents in accordance with law and that is accredited
3 by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of
4 Education, shall be awarded by the state either an amount determined by the
5 administering agency to equal ~~the weighted average of the tuition amounts charged~~
6 ~~to students attending public colleges and universities during the 2016-2017 academic~~
7 ~~year and who are enrolled in the permitted skill or occupational training, as may be~~
8 ~~applicable.~~ charged by the school or the following amount based on award level,
9 whichever is less:

10 (i) Opportunity Award, three thousand five hundred dollars.

11 (ii) Performance Award, four thousand dollars.

12 (iii) Honors Award, four thousand five hundred dollars.

13 (iv) Excellence Award, five thousand dollars.

14 ~~(4)~~ (d) In an out-of-state college or university that is specifically designed
15 to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students under R.S. 17:5027(C), shall be
16 awarded by the state either an amount determined by the administering agency to
17 equal ~~the weighted average of the tuition amounts charged to students attending~~
18 ~~Louisiana public colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees~~
19 ~~during the 2016-2017 academic year.~~ charged by the college or university or the
20 following amount based on award level, whichever is less:

21 (i) Opportunity Award, five thousand five hundred dollars.

22 (ii) Performance Award, six thousand five hundred dollars.

23 (iii) Honors Award, seven thousand five hundred dollars.

24 (iv) Excellence Award, eight thousand five hundred dollars.

25 (2) Any student who is eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors
26 Award pursuant to this Chapter and who has enrolled as a first-time freshman prior
27 to the 2025-2026 academic year:

1 (a) In any public college or university in this state, shall be awarded by the
2 state an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the tuition charged
3 by the public college or university during the 2016-2017 academic year.

4 (b) At any independent college or university in the state that is a member of
5 the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and that is
6 accredited by an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the United States
7 Department of Education to pursue an academic undergraduate degree, shall be
8 awarded by the state an amount to be determined by the administering agency to
9 equal the weighted average of the tuition amounts charged to students attending
10 public colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees at the
11 baccalaureate level during the 2016-2017 academic year.

12 (c) In a school that has a valid and current certificate of registration issued
13 by the Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology in accordance with law and that is
14 accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States
15 Department of Education or in any proprietary school that has a valid and current
16 license issued by the Board of Regents in accordance with law and that is accredited
17 by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of
18 Education, shall be awarded by the state an amount determined by the administering
19 agency to equal the weighted average of the tuition amounts charged to students
20 attending public colleges and universities during the 2016-2017 academic year and
21 who are enrolled in the permitted skill or occupational training, as may be applicable.

22 (d) In an out-of-state college or university that is specifically designed to
23 accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students under R.S. 17:5027(C), shall be
24 awarded an amount determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted
25 average of the tuition amounts charged to students attending Louisiana public
26 colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees during the 2016-
27 2017 academic year.

1 C.(1)(a) A student who is eligible for the Performance Award shall receive
2 the sum of two hundred dollars per semester or four hundred dollars per academic
3 year in addition to the amount provided for in Subsection B of this Section.

4 ~~(2)~~ (b) A student who is eligible for the Honors Award shall receive the sum
5 of four hundred dollars per semester or eight hundred dollars per academic year in
6 addition to the amount provided for in Subsection B of this Section.

7 (c) Except as provided in Subsection I of this Section, the provisions of
8 Subparagraphs (a) and (b) of this Paragraph shall not apply to students enrolling
9 during or after the 2025-2026 academic year.

10 (2) A student who is enrolled at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge
11 or Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans and is eligible
12 for the Opportunity, Performance, Honors, or Excellence Award shall receive the
13 sum of three hundred fifty dollars per semester or seven hundred dollars per
14 academic year in addition to the amount provided for in Subsection B of this Section.

15 D.(1) ~~Except as otherwise provided in this Subsection, a~~ A student who is
16 eligible for a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this Chapter and who is enrolled as a
17 first-time freshman during or after the 2025-2026 academic year:

18 (a) In an eligible public college or university that does not offer an academic
19 undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level in those associate's degree or other
20 shorter-term training and education programs that are aligned to state workforce
21 priorities as determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce
22 Investment Council, shall be awarded by the state either an amount determined by
23 the administering agency to equal the tuition charged by the college or university
24 ~~during the 2016-2017 academic year.~~ or three thousand five hundred dollars,
25 whichever is less. If the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment
26 Council determine that a program is no longer aligned with those priorities, an
27 otherwise eligible student who had previously received an award and enrolled in that
28 program may continue to use the award.

1 (b) In an eligible college or university other than as provided for in
2 Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph in those associate's degree or other shorter-term
3 training education programs that are aligned to state workforce priorities as
4 determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment
5 Council, shall be awarded by the state either an amount determined by the
6 administering agency to equal ~~the weighted average of the tuition amounts charged~~
7 ~~to students attending an eligible public college or university that does not offer an~~
8 ~~academic undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level during the 2016-2017~~
9 ~~academic year.~~ charged by the college or university or three thousand dollars,
10 whichever is less. If the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment
11 Council determine that a program is no longer aligned with those priorities, an
12 otherwise eligible student who had previously received an award and enrolled in that
13 program may continue to use the award.

14 (2) A student who ~~graduated prior to the 2016-2017 school year, who is~~
15 eligible for a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this ~~Chapter,~~ Chapter and who is
16 enrolled as a first-time freshman prior to the 2025-2026 academic year:

17 (a) In an eligible college or university that does not offer an academic
18 undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level in those associate's degree or other
19 shorter-term training and education programs that are aligned to state workforce
20 priorities as determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce
21 Investment Council, shall be awarded by the state an amount determined by the
22 administering agency to equal the tuition charged by the college or university during
23 the 2016-2017 academic year. If the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce
24 Investment Council determine that a program is no longer aligned with those
25 priorities, an otherwise eligible student who had previously received an award and
26 enrolled in that program may continue to use the award.

27 (b) In an eligible college or university other than as provided for in
28 Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph in those associate's degree or other shorter-term
29 training education programs that are aligned to state workforce priorities as

1 determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment
2 Council, shall be awarded by the state an amount determined by the administering
3 agency to equal the weighted average of the tuition amounts charged to students
4 attending an eligible public college or university that does not offer an academic
5 undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level during the 2016-2017 academic year.
6 If the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council determine
7 that a program is no longer aligned with those priorities, an otherwise eligible
8 student who had previously received an award and enrolled in that program may
9 continue to use the award.

10 E.(1) No student shall be eligible for tuition payment pursuant to this Section
11 for the Opportunity Award, the Performance Award, ~~or~~ the Honors Award, or the
12 Excellence Award for more than eight semesters or an equivalent number of units
13 in an eligible institution which operates on a schedule based on units other than
14 semesters, unless an extension is granted by the administering agency in accordance
15 with its rules.

16 (2) No student shall be eligible for tuition payment pursuant to this Section
17 for the TOPS-Tech Award for more than two years unless an extension is granted by
18 the administering agency in accordance with its rules.

19 (3)(a) Any student receiving an Opportunity, Performance, ~~or~~ Honors, or
20 Excellence Award who successfully completes an academic undergraduate degree
21 in less than the eight semesters or its equivalent of award benefits provided by this
22 Subsection shall be eligible to continue to receive all applicable award benefits, in
23 accordance with the limitations as specified in Subparagraph (b) of this Paragraph,
24 for any remaining semester or semesters or the equivalent thereof of eligibility not
25 used to obtain the undergraduate degree if the student pursues a postgraduate
26 academic degree at an eligible institution and the student continues to meet all
27 academic and other requirements provided by this Section and by rule of the
28 administering agency for continued receipt of the award as an undergraduate except
29 as such requirements, including requirements provided by this Section for

1 undergraduate students, may be modified by the administering agency as necessary
2 to apply such requirements to postgraduate study.

3 (b) In developing rules to implement this Paragraph, the administering
4 agency shall establish reasonable time lines and deadlines for receipt of any
5 information required to implement this Paragraph both for current and subsequent
6 students receiving Opportunity, Performance, ~~or~~ Honors, or Excellence awards and
7 for any student previously receiving such an award who successfully completed an
8 academic undergraduate degree in less than eight semesters. Such rules shall also
9 provide for appropriate notice to all such students of the time lines, deadlines, and
10 rules governing implementation of this Paragraph.

11 (c) The amount of the award benefits as provided for in Subparagraph (a) of
12 this Paragraph shall not exceed the amounts determined by the administering agency
13 to equal the tuition charged for the postgraduate study or for undergraduate full-time
14 enrollment charged by the highest cost public college or university in the state,
15 whichever amount is less.

16 F.(1) No student shall receive a grant pursuant to this Section in an amount
17 greater than the tuition charged by the institution attended or, if the student is the
18 recipient of a Performance or an Honors Award as provided for in Subsection C of
19 this Section, the amount stipulated therein.

20 (2) The institution shall credit any amount in excess of the cost of tuition to
21 the student's account to pay room and board or other cost of attendance.

22 G. In lieu of the payment of tuition as provided in this Section, any student
23 participating in the program provided by R.S. 29:36.1 for persons serving in the
24 Louisiana National Guard shall receive the tuition exemption as provided therein.
25 In addition to any other payments provided for by R.S. 29:36.1:

26 (1) For any student who also meets the qualifications provided in this
27 ~~Section~~ Chapter for receipt of an Opportunity Award or a TOPS-Tech Award, the
28 state shall pay on behalf of such student a sum of three hundred dollars per semester

1 or six hundred dollars per academic year to be applied toward the cost of books and
2 other instructional materials.

3 (2) For any student who also meets the qualifications provided in this
4 ~~Section~~ Chapter for receipt of a Performance Award, the state shall pay on behalf of
5 the student a sum of three hundred dollars per semester or six hundred dollars per
6 academic year to be applied toward the cost of books and other instructional
7 materials plus the sum of four hundred dollars per semester or eight hundred dollars
8 per academic year for other educational expenses as defined by the administering
9 agency.

10 (3) For any student who also meets the qualifications provided in this
11 ~~Section~~ Chapter for receipt of an Honors Award, the state shall pay on behalf of the
12 student a sum of three hundred dollars per semester or six hundred dollars per
13 academic year to be applied toward the cost of books and other instructional
14 materials plus the sum of eight hundred dollars per semester or one thousand six
15 hundred dollars per academic year for other educational expenses as defined by the
16 administering agency.

17 (4) For any student who also meets the qualifications provided in this
18 Chapter for receipt of an Excellence Award, the state shall pay on behalf of the
19 student a sum of three hundred dollars per semester or six hundred dollars per
20 academic year to be applied toward the cost of books and other instructional
21 materials plus the sum of one thousand dollars per semester or two thousand dollars
22 per academic year for other educational expenses as defined by the administering
23 agency.

24 H. In lieu of the payment of tuition as provided in this Section, any student
25 participating in the program provided by R.S. 17:1688 for disabled veterans shall
26 receive the tuition exemption provided in that Section.

27 I.(1) Notwithstanding any provision of this Section to the contrary and
28 applicable only to students enrolling at an eligible public college or university:

1 (a) The administering agency shall determine if a student would qualify for
2 a higher award amount under the provisions of Paragraph (B)(1) or (B)(2) of this
3 Section for an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors Award, including stipends
4 awarded pursuant to Subsection C of this Section, as applicable, and the state shall
5 pay the higher of the award amounts on behalf of the student.

6 (b) The administering agency shall determine if a student would qualify for
7 a higher award amount under the provisions of Paragraph (D)(1) or (D)(2) of this
8 Section for a TOPS-Tech award, and the state shall pay the higher of the award
9 amounts on behalf of the student.

10 (2) The provisions of Paragraph (1) of this Subsection shall apply only to
11 students enrolled either as first-time freshmen or continuing students during the
12 2025-2026 academic year and shall continue through subsequent academic years
13 until the end of their eligibility for a program award.

14 * * *

15 §5024. Academic requirements

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

20 * * *

21 (e) For an Excellence Award, a minimum cumulative grade point average
22 of 3.50.

23 * * *

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

26 * * *

27 (e) For an Excellence Award, a score of thirty-one or higher on the 1990
28 version of the ACT or an equivalent concordant value on any enhanced or revised
29 version of such test or on the SAT.

30 * * *

§5025. High school core curriculum requirements; Opportunity, Performance,
Honors, Excellence Awards

To be eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, ~~or~~ Honors, or Excellence
Award pursuant to this Chapter, a student shall have successfully completed a core
curriculum which consists of twenty units of high school course work as follows:

* * *

§5027. Postsecondary institution enrollment

* * *

C. Notwithstanding any provision of Subsection B of this Section, any
student who meets all applicable initial and continuing program eligibility
requirements of this Chapter for an Opportunity, Performance, ~~or~~ Honors, or
Excellence Award may use the award at an out-of-state nonpublic college or
university when each of the following conditions is met:

* * *

D.

* * *

(2) Effective for the 2010-2011 award year and thereafter, a student who is
the recipient of an Opportunity, Performance, ~~or~~ Honors, or Excellence award and
who pursues skill or occupational training as defined by the administering agency,
including a vocational or technical education certificate or diploma program or a
nonacademic undergraduate degree, may use the award at any school that has a valid
and current certificate of registration issued by the Louisiana State Board of
Cosmetology in accordance with law and that is accredited by an accrediting
organization recognized by the United States Department of Education and at any
proprietary school that has a valid and current license issued by the Board of Regents
in accordance with law and that is accredited by an accrediting organization
recognized by the United States Department of Education. Such a school shall
comply with all other applicable provisions of this Chapter and rules adopted by the

1 administering agency relative to a college or university being initially eligible and
 2 remaining eligible for program purposes.

3 * * *

4 §5029. Alternative initial eligibility requirements

5 * * *

6 B. A student who completes a home study program shall be eligible to
 7 receive an award pursuant to this Chapter if each of the following conditions is met:

8 * * *

9 (3)

10 * * *

11 (b)

12 * * *

13 (iii) For a student qualifying for an initial Performance, ~~or Honors, or~~
 14 Excellence Award for the 2008-2009 award year or thereafter pursuant to this
 15 Subsection, the student shall have a composite score on the 1990 version of the ACT
 16 which is at least one point higher than that required by R.S. 17:5024(B) for the
 17 particular award or an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced or revised version
 18 of such test or on the SAT.

19 * * *

20 D.(1) Beginning with the 2004-2005 award year, a student who does not
 21 graduate from high school or complete a home study program shall be eligible to
 22 receive an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors Award pursuant to this Chapter and
 23 beginning with the 2025-2026 award year, a student who does not graduate from
 24 high school or complete a home study program shall be eligible to receive an
 25 Excellence Award pursuant to this Chapter if each of the following conditions is met:

26 * * *

1 §5041. Maintaining eligibility; Excellence, Honors, Performance, Opportunity

2 To maintain continued state payment of any amount pursuant to an
3 Opportunity, Performance, ~~or~~ Honors, or Excellence Award once enrolled in college
4 a student shall meet all of the following:

5 (1)

6 * * *

7 (c) If at any time a student fails to maintain the cumulative grade point
8 average required for continuation in the program or, as of the end of any semester or
9 term during the academic year, fails to make steady academic progress as defined by
10 the administering agency, such student shall become ineligible for further payments.
11 Payments limited to those provided in R.S. 17:5002(B), regardless of whether the
12 originally granted award was an Opportunity, Performance, ~~or~~ Honors, or Excellence
13 Award, may be reinstated upon attainment of the grade point average required by this
14 Section for a student to maintain continued state payments once enrolled in college
15 and the standards for steady academic progress as defined by the administering
16 agency, provided that the student has maintained other continuation requirements
17 and the period of ineligibility did not persist for more than two years from the date
18 of loss of eligibility. If this two-year period is interrupted due to a student's active
19 duty service in the United States Armed Forces, the two-year period shall be
20 extended for a length of time equal to the student's active duty service, not to exceed
21 four years, unless the student reenlists in the United States Armed Forces and
22 maintains continuous active duty, in which case the period shall be extended for a
23 length of time equal to the student's active duty service; or unless the student is
24 granted an exception for cause by the administering agency.

25 * * *

26 (4)(a) For students qualifying to receive a Performance, ~~or an~~ Honors, or
27 Excellence Award, have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00 on a 4.00
28 scale at the end of each academic year.

(b) However, if at any time an otherwise eligible student receiving a Performance, ~~Award or an~~ Honors, or Excellence Award in accordance with the provisions of this Chapter fails to have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00 on a 4.00 scale at the end of any academic year but has and continues to maintain a cumulative grade point average at least equal to that required by Paragraph (3) of this Subsection for continued participation by a recipient of an Opportunity Award, the student receiving a Performance, ~~Award or an~~ Honors, or Excellence Award shall remain eligible for state payments but only in the amount provided for in R.S. 17:5002(B) for a recipient of an Opportunity Award. The provisions of this Subparagraph shall apply to all students who receive state payments pursuant to a Performance, ~~Award or an~~ Honors, or Excellence Award, including all such students from the beginning of the program.

* * *

§5043. Returning students

Notwithstanding any provision of this Chapter to the contrary, any otherwise qualified student who meets each of the following conditions and who enrolls as a first-time freshman in an out-of-state college or university, or beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year, first enrolls as a first-time freshman in an eligible college or university in Louisiana and subsequently enrolls in an out-of-state college or university, may use the program award provided for by this Section at an eligible college or university in Louisiana in accordance with this Section and other applicable provisions of this Chapter; however, the time period of award eligibility set forth in R.S. 17:5002(E) shall be reduced by an equivalent number of units as may be applicable for each semester or equivalent time period that the student is enrolled in an out-of-state college or university:

(1) The student has been determined by the administering agency to meet the initial eligibility requirements established by this Section for an Opportunity, Performance, ~~or~~ Honors, or Excellence Award.

* * *

1 Section 2.(A) Qualification for an Excellence Award shall begin with students
2 enrolling as first-time freshmen during the 2025-2026 academic year.

3 (B) Notwithstanding the provisions of R.S. 17:5025 as amended and reenacted by
4 this Act, the core curriculum requirements for a student qualifying for an Excellence Award
5 shall be the same as those requirements provided in R.S. 17:5025.1 et seq. that apply to
6 students qualifying for an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors Award according to the year
7 such student graduates from high school.

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 77 Engrossed

2025 Regular Session

Turner

Abstract: : Revises TOPS award amounts and adds an award level, Excellence, for students who score 31 or higher on the ACT.

TOPS generally

Present law provides for the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), a merit scholarship program for certain students attending the following postsecondary education institutions: public institutions, institutions that are members of the La. Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU), certain out-of-state institutions for deaf students, and cosmetology/proprietary schools.

Award levels

Present law provides for four award levels based on high school academic criteria, including completion of a specific core curriculum, a minimum GPA on that core curriculum, and a minimum ACT score: TOPS-Tech, Opportunity, Performance, and Honors, which is the highest award level for students who score a 27 or higher on the ACT. Proposed law creates Excellence, a new award level, for students who score 31 or higher on the ACT, beginning with students enrolling as first-time freshmen in the 2025-2026 academic year. Retains academic criteria for other award levels.

Award amounts

Present law ties the calculation of all award amounts to the amount of tuition charged during the 2016-2017 academic year. Proposed law, applicable beginning with students enrolling as first-time freshmen in the 2025-2026 academic year, removes the connection of award amounts to the tuition charged during that prior academic year and instead provides for maximum award amounts, not to exceed tuition, according to current tuition amounts. Proposed law also provides, beginning with this class of students, that "tuition" includes both tuition and mandatory fees and provides that award amounts shall be either the following amount or tuition (including fees), whichever is less:

Award level	Public	LAICU and colleges for deaf students	Cosmetology / Proprietary
Opportunity	\$6,000	\$5,500	\$3,500
Performance	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$4,000
Honors	\$9,000	\$7,500	\$4,500
Excellence	\$11,300	\$8,500	\$5,000
Tech	\$3,500	N/A	\$3,000

Present law provides for stipends of \$200 per semester / \$400 per year for the Performance Award and \$400 per semester / \$800 per year for the Honors Award. Proposed law eliminates these stipends and instead provides for a stipend of \$350 per semester / \$700 per year for Opportunity, Performance, Honors, and Excellence for students enrolled at LSU-Baton Rouge or LSU Health Sciences Center-New Orleans.

Proposed law provides that notwithstanding proposed law, the administering agency shall determine if a student enrolling in a public college or university would receive a higher award under present law or proposed law (including stipends), and the student shall receive the higher of the two amounts for that year. Applies to students (both freshmen and continuing students) enrolled during the 2025-2026 academic year and continues through the end of their eligibility for a program award.

National Guard stipends

Present law provides that students who qualify for both TOPS and a National Guard tuition exemption as provided in present law receive the latter tuition exemption but also receive a stipend based on the TOPS award level for which they qualify. Proposed law adds a higher stipend for those students who qualify for an Excellence award.

(Amends R.S. 17:5002, 5025(intro. para.), 5027(C)(intro. para.) and (D)(2), 5029(B)(3)(b)(iii) and (D)(1)(intro. para.), 5041(intro. para.), (1)(c), and (4), and 5043(1); Adds R.S. 17:5024(A)(1)(e) and (B)(1)(e))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

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

1. Lower amount of Excellence award at public institutions from \$12,000 to \$11,300.
2. Provide a stipend of \$350 per semester / \$700 per academic year for students who qualify for an Opportunity, Performance, Honors, or Excellence Award and are enrolled at LSU-Baton Rouge or LSU Health Sciences Center-New Orleans.