

New law provides that the TOPS fine arts survey may include one unit of drafting as a substitute unit.

Prior law provided that a TOPS-Tech Early Start Award may be used at a Louisiana public postsecondary education institution for the purpose of pursuing an industry-based occupational or vocational education credential as defined by the Board of Regents when such credential also meets all of the following conditions:

- (1) Is identified by the Occupation Forecasting Conference as a credential for an occupation in top demand in Louisiana.
- (2) Is recognized by the State Industry-Based Certification Council.
- (3) Is approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and by the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges.

New law expands the use of the award so that it may be used to fund any technical or applied course leading to an Industry Based Certification, a Certificate of Applied Sciences, and a Certificate of Technical Sciences offered at a Louisiana public or nonpublic postsecondary education institution or by any Louisiana training provider recognized by the la workforce commission as approved by BESE when such certification or certificate is approved by the Workforce Investment Council as meeting the following requirements:

- (1) Is identified by the Occupation Forecasting Conference as a credential for an occupation in top demand in Louisiana.
- (2) Is recognized by the State Industry-Based Certification Leadership Council.

New law eliminates the requirement that credentials be approved by BESE and by the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges.

New law provides for payment of TOPS-Tech Early Start Awards to students enrolled in an eligible program of study or a training program provider.

New law requires BESE to determine which training program provider it approves for each academic year. Provides that for the 2014-2015 academic year, the number of training program providers be limited to five selected by BESE in accordance with these rules.

Prior law authorized the administering agency, in accordance with a plan approved by the Board of Regents, to implement the prior law initially on a pilot basis. However, if implemented on a pilot basis, it is the intention of the legislature that full implementation be achieved at the earliest time possible. New law repeals prior law.

Prior law provided that in order to be eligible for an initial TOPS-Tech Early Start Award, a student shall meet each of the following conditions and comply with other applicable provisions of prior law and administering agency rules:

- (1) Be in the eleventh or twelfth grade in a Louisiana public school.
- (2) Have prepared a five-year education and career plan, including a sequence of related courses with a career focus as provided by prior law.
- (3) Have a cumulative high school grade point average on all courses attempted of not less than 2.0 when calculated on a 4.0 scale.
- (4) Have at least the minimum scores required to pass the mathematics and English portions of the graduation exit exam established by BESE.
- (5) Score at least 15 on the English subsection and 15 on the mathematics subsection of the ACT PLAN assessment administered as part of Louisiana's Educational Planning and Assessment System.

New law eliminates the requirement that the student must have at least the minimum scores required to pass the mathematics and English portions of the graduation exit exam established by BESE.

New law includes students in a nonpublic postsecondary education institution or a training program in the requirements to maintain TOPS eligibility

Prior law provided that prior to the convening of each regular legislative session, the Board of Regents, in consultation with the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission (LASFAC), shall provide to the governor, the House Committee on Education, and the Senate Committee on Education a written review and analysis of TOPS-Tech Early Start awards relative to award use by students and the benefits therefrom as well as the impact on subsequent use by students of TOPS-Tech awards.

New law requires that LASFAC, rather than the Board of Regents, issue the report currently required by prior law.

New law removes requirement that a student take chemistry or applied chemistry to receive a TOPS-TECH Award and instead includes these courses in the list of science courses from which students must choose two units to satisfy science requirements.

Effective upon signature of the governor (June 19, 2014).

(Amends R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(e)(x) and (f)(vi) and (B)(2)(c)(intro para), (vi), and (x)(aa)(aaa), 3048.5(B) and (D) through (G)); repeals R.S. 17:3048.1(B)(2)(c)(v))