

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 390

BY REPRESENTATIVE NANCY LANDRY

STUDENT/LOANS-SCHOLARSHIP: Provides relative to Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award amounts

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:5002(A), (B), and (D) and 5024(B)(1)(a), relative to the  
3 Taylor Opportunity Program for Students; to provide with respect to the monetary  
4 amounts for awards granted pursuant to the program; to provide relative to the  
5 minimum ACT score required for eligibility for the Opportunity Award; and to  
6 provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S. 17:5002(A), (B), and (D) and 5024(B)(1)(a) are hereby amended and  
9 reenacted to read as follows:

10 §5002. Awards and amounts

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

13 (2) The award amount as provided for in Subsection B or D of this Section  
14 to a student enrolled at any given institution shall be equal to the award amount paid  
15 for a student at that institution during the 2016-2017 academic year unless the  
16 legislature, by law, increases the award amount.

17 B. Any student who is eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors  
18 Award pursuant to this Chapter and who has enrolled:

1 (1) 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 (2) At any regionally accredited independent college or university in the state  
5 which is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and  
6 Universities to pursue an academic undergraduate degree, shall be awarded by the  
7 state an amount to be determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted  
8 average of amounts paid under this Section for students attending public colleges and  
9 universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees at the baccalaureate level  
10 during the 2016-2017 academic year.

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

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

27 \* \* \*

28 D.(1) Except as otherwise provided in this Subsection, a student who is  
29 eligible for a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this Chapter and who is enrolled:

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

11           (b) In an eligible college or university other than as provided for in  
12 Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph in those associate's degree or other shorter-term  
13 training education programs that are aligned to state workforce priorities as  
14 determined by the Board of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment  
15 Council shall be awarded by the state an amount determined by the administering  
16 agency to equal the weighted average of amounts paid to students attending an  
17 eligible public college or university that does not offer an academic undergraduate  
18 degree at the baccalaureate level during the 2016-2017 academic year. If the Board  
19 of Regents and the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council determine that a  
20 program is no longer aligned with those priorities, an otherwise eligible student who  
21 had previously received an award and enrolled in that program may continue to use  
22 the award.

23           (2) A student who graduated prior to the 2016-2017 school year, who is  
24 eligible for a TOPS-Tech Award pursuant to this Chapter, and who is enrolled:

25           (a) In an eligible college or university that does not offer an academic  
26 undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level shall be awarded by the state an  
27 amount determined by the administering agency to equal the tuition charged by the  
28 college or university during the 2016-2017 academic year.

1 (b) In an eligible college or university other than as provided for in  
 2 Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph shall be awarded by the state an amount  
 3 determined by the administering agency to equal the weighted average of amounts  
 4 paid to students attending an eligible public college or university that does not offer  
 5 an academic undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level during the 2016-2017  
 6 academic year.

7 \* \* \*

8 §5024. Academic requirements

9 \* \* \*

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

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

17 \* \* \*

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

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 390 Original

2016 Regular Session

Nancy Landry

**Abstract:** Fixes Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award amounts at the 2016-17 academic year level.

**Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS), Generally**

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 grade point average, ACT score, and core curriculum requirements and certain other qualifications. Provides for Opportunity, Performance and Honors Awards (eight semesters) and TOPS-Tech Awards (two years).

**Establishment of Baseline Award Amounts**

Present law provides as follows relative to the amount awarded for recipients of a TOPS-Tech Award, which is only awarded if a student is enrolled in programs aligned to state workforce priorities as determined by the Bd. of Regents and La. Workforce Investment Council:

<b>TOPS-Tech Award</b>	
<b>Institution Type</b>	<b>Award Amount</b>
Public college or university that does not offer an academic undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level	Tuition charged by the institution
Other eligible college or university	Equal to the weighted average of amounts paid to students attending an eligible public college or university that does not offer an academic undergraduate degree at the baccalaureate level

Present law provides as follows relative to the amount awarded to recipients of Opportunity, Performance, or Honors awards:

<b>Opportunity, Performance, or Honors Award</b>	
<b>Institution Type</b>	<b>Award Amount</b>
La. public college or university	Tuition charged by the institution
La. nonpublic college or university	Weighted average of amounts paid for students attending La. public colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees at the baccalaureate level
Out-of-state college or university designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students	Weighted average of amounts paid for students attending La. public colleges and universities that offer academic undergraduate degrees
Certain cosmetology and proprietary schools	Weighted average of amounts for students attending public colleges and universities who are enrolled in skill or occupational training

Proposed law provides that amounts for all TOPS awards shall not increase beyond the amount awarded in the 2016-17 academic year.

**ACT Score**

Present law provides that to qualify for an Opportunity Award, a student must have a composite ACT score equal to or higher than the state average composite score, rounded to the nearest whole number, reported for the previous year, but never less than 20.

Proposed law retains the requirement that a student have a minimum ACT score equal to or greater than the state average, but never less than 20, but specifies that the state average be truncated to a whole number instead of being rounded to the nearest whole number.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:5002(A), (B), and (D) and 5024(B)(1)(a))