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 DIGEST

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Nevers

SB No. 98

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 that eligible students may use TOPS to pursue an academic undergraduate degree or skill or occupational training as defined by the Bd. of Regents. Proposed law retains present law but provides that the program's administering agency (La. Office of Student Financial Assistance or LOSFA) rather than the Bd. of Regents shall define such skill or occupational training for which students may use TOPS.

Present law requires the minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) required for a student to be eligible for an Opportunity, Performance, or Honors award to be calculated using only the grades obtained in TOPS core curriculum courses. Provides that, beginning with students graduating in 2017-18, the TOPS GPA calculation shall utilize a five-point scale for grades earned in certain Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), gifted, and dual enrollment courses as approved by the Bd. of Regents and the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). Further provides that for such courses, five quality points shall be assigned to an "A", four to a "B", three to a "C", two to a "D", and zero to an "F". Proposed law retains present law and additionally includes honors courses among those for which TOPS GPA calculation shall use a five-point scale.

Present law provides for the following with respect to the high school core curriculum a student must complete to be eligible for TOPS:

- (1) 19 units of specified coursework for students graduating in 2013-14 through 2016-17.
- (2) 19 units of specified but different coursework for students graduating in 2017-18 and beyond.

Present law allows students to qualify for TOPS-Tech by completing the core curriculum in (1) or a core curriculum specifically provided for TOPS-Tech. Present law adds the core curriculum in (2) as an option for such students.

Present law requires LOSFA to provide for certain guidelines and procedures by rule, including those for which LOSFA, subject to BESE approval, may update names and establish equivalencies for TOPS core curriculum courses. Proposed law specifically includes AP and IB courses as prescribed by the College Bd. or the IB Foundation among those for which LOSFA may do this.

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

(Amends R.S. 17:3048.1(A)(1)(intro. para.), (b)(ii)(bb), (c)(ii)(bb), and (d)(ii)(bb), (B)(2)(c)(intro. para.), and (C)(2)(e))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Education to the original bill

1. Provides that the GPA for talented courses shall also be computed on a five-point scale for TOPS purposes.

Senate Floor Amendments to engrossed bill

1. Makes technical correction.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Education to the reengrossed bill.

1. Grants present law authority to define skill or occupational training for which an eligible student may use a TOPS award to the La. Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) instead of to the Bd. of Regents.
2. Specifically includes AP and IB courses among those for which LOSFA may update names and establish equivalencies.
3. Adds the core curriculum applicable to students graduating from high school in 2017-18 and thereafter as an optional curriculum for TOPS-Tech students.