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AGENDA

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, November 2, 2016 • 11:25 a.m.

Squire Creek Club House
289 Squire Creek Parkway
Choudrant, Louisiana

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Consent Agenda

A. TOPS Rulemaking: Final Rule to Amend the Scholarship and Grant Program Rules to Implement Acts 18, Act 388, and Act 503 of the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature

B. TOPS Exceptional Circumstances

IV. Other Business

V. Adjournment

Committee Members: Marty Chabert, Chair; Gray Stream, Vice Chair; Thomas Henning; Benson Kinney; Robert Levy; Collis Temple III; Joseph Wiley

Statewide Programs Committee Executive Summary

Consent Agenda Agenda Item III.A.

Publication of final rule to final rule to implement Acts 18, Act 388, and Act 503 of the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature.

BACKGROUND:

The rulemaking amends the following Sections of the Scholarship and Grant Program Rules :

- Sections 301 and 703 – Implement Act 18 of the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature which sets a floor for the TOPS Award Amount and provides that the qualifying ACT score shall be truncated to a whole number rather than rounded to the next whole number.
- Section 703 – Also implements Act 388 of the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature which increases the grade point average (GPA) requirement to qualify for a TOPS Performance Award from 3.0 to 3.25 and increases the GPA requirement to qualify for a TOPS Honors Award from 3.0 to 3.50 beginning with 2021 high school graduates.
- Section 2107 – Implements Act 503 of the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature which changes the methodology for eliminating student's TOPS Awards in the event of a budget shortfall. Act 503 deletes the provisions which requires the elimination of awards through a combination of the student's ACT score and expected family contribution (EFC) and replaces it with a pro-rata distribution of the available funding. All awards, including stipends, are subject to a reduction except for the TOPS Tech Early Start Award and National Guard stipends. In addition, Act 503 provides that a student may choose not to accept his award or to enroll full time in school or maintain continuous enrollment in school during a budget shortfall. The student must use all of his TOPS eligibility within 5 years of the budget shortfall, which time may be extended if the student requests an exception for cause in accordance with the administrative rules.

The Notice of Intent was published in the *Louisiana Register* on July 20, 2016.

No comments have been received.

Consent Agenda Agenda Item III.B.

Requests for exception to the TOPS regulatory provisions that require students to enroll full-time, to remain continuously enrolled, and to earn at least 24 credit hours during the academic year.

BACKGROUND:

Sections 705.A.6 and 7 of the TOPS administrative rules require TOPS recipients to continue to enroll full-time for the fall and spring semesters of each academic year, to remain enrolled throughout the semester, and to earn a minimum of 24 credit hours by the end of the academic year. Section 2103.E authorizes the governing body to grant an exception to the full-time, continuous enrollment and 24-hour requirements when the "student/recipient has exceptional circumstances that are beyond his immediate control and that necessitate full or partial withdrawal from or non-enrollment in an eligible postsecondary institution."

Five requests for exception to the full-time, continuous enrollment, and 24 hour requirements were reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting of October 13, 2016. The students have presented facts and circumstances that the students believe justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance.