

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND TOPS AWARD RECOGNITION

Q-1. As a high school guidance counselor, what terminology should I use to recognize a potential TOPS recipient at graduation?

A. It is inappropriate for a high school to state that a student is eligible for or has been awarded TOPS. The Louisiana Board of Regents is the only entity that is authorized by law to make a determination as to a student's eligibility for TOPS. We recognize that many schools announce scholarships/award at graduation, so if you choose to do so, you are advised to clearly state that the TOPS Award is contingent upon a determination by LOSFA/BOR that the student is eligible and upon appropriations by the Louisiana Legislature to fully fund the program.

The high school electronically forwards the student's academic transcript through the Local Education Agency to the Student Transcript System (STS). STS will determine each student's compliance with the TOPS core curriculum requirements and compute the student's highest TOPS Core GPA. In addition a qualifying high school GPA on the core curriculum courses, eligibility is based on official ACT/SAT scores, timely receipt of application, compliance with the requirement to apply for federal grant aid, and information relating to the student's citizenship, residency and criminal record.

If the high school elects to specifically notify students of their tentative TOPS eligibility based upon data available to the school, the high school must make the following disclaimer:

"Although it appears that you have satisfied the academic requirements for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Award based on this school's review of the TOPS core curriculum courses you have completed and calculation of your TOPS Core GPA, you must meet all of the following conditions to redeem a scholarship under this program:

1. The Louisiana Board of Regents (the Board) must determine that you have in fact completed the TOPS core curriculum courses;
2. The Board must determine that your TOPS Core GPA based on the TOPS core curriculum meets the statutory requirements;
3. You must be a Louisiana resident as defined by the Board;
5. You must be accepted for enrollment by an eligible Louisiana postsecondary institution and be registered as a full-time undergraduate student no later than the next semester following the first anniversary of your graduation from high school;
6. You must apply for federal grant aid, if you are eligible for such aid, by the deadline required for consideration for state aid; and
7. You must have met all academic and nonacademic requirements and be officially notified of your award by the Board."

Q-2. I was notified at graduation that I have TOPS. Now, my college has no record of that award. What is going on?

A. While some high schools honor their graduates by naming those who are expected to qualify for a TOPS award, the only official notice that you have qualified for a TOPS scholarship is the notice of your TOPS eligibility from the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA), a Program of the Board of Regents. You will receive this notice at the most recent email address that is contained in your Student Hub Account. If you do not have a Student Hub account, you should sign up for one at <https://mylosfa.la.gov/applications/student-hub/>.