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AGENDA

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, September 22, 2016 • 10:35 a.m.

Louisiana Purchase Room, W.C.C. Claiborne Building
1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consent Agenda
 - A. TOPS Rulemaking: Final Rule Adding AP Computer Science A as an Equivalent of Math to TOPS Core Curriculum for 2014 and Later Graduates
 - 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

Agenda Item III.A. (Consent Agenda)

Publication of final rule to amend Section 703 of the Scholarship and Grant Program Rules to add AP Computer Science A as an equivalent of Mathematics in the TOPS Core Curriculum for students graduating from high school in 2014 and later.

BACKGROUND:

The TOPS statute authorizes the administering agency to “establish course equivalencies for any course included in the definition of core curriculum” provided that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) has given prior approval. The statute also requires the administering agency to consult with and seek the written comments and recommendations of the Board of Regents on establishing a TOPS Core Curriculum course equivalency.

By email dated March 10, 2016, the agency was notified that BESE had approved AP Computer Science A as an equivalent to Advanced Mathematics in the TOPS University Diploma Core retroactively for students graduating from high school in 2014 and thereafter.

On March 29, 2016, the agency sent a letter to the Board of Regents seeking its recommendations regarding establishing AP Computer Science A as an equivalent to Advanced Mathematics in the TOPS core curriculum (copy included). Regents responded on April 11, 2016, in support of AP Computer Science A as an equivalent to Advanced Mathematics.

At the time the Emergency Rules and Notice of Intent were approved and adopted on April 20, 2016, the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission was the administering agency. Effective August 1, 2016, in accordance with Act 314 of the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Board of Regents became the administering agency and has the authority to approve final rules to implement this change to the TOPS Core Curriculum.

The Notice of Intent was published in the *Louisiana Register* on May 20, 2016. The text of the rule changes is reflected on the attached excerpts from the *Louisiana Register*.

No comments have been received.

Agenda Item III.B. (Consent Agenda)

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.”

Fifteen 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 August 31, 2016. The students have presented facts and circumstances that the students believe justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance.