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Agenda

Statewide Programs

Wednesday, December 10, 2025
11:55 AM

Claiborne Building, 1st Floor ▪ Thomas Jefferson Rooms A&B (1–136)
1201 N. Third St. ▪ Baton Rouge, LA 70802

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consent Agenda
 - A. TOPS Home Study Exceptions – TOPS statutory provision that requires a student to begin a home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth-grade year
 - B. TOPS Exceptions – TOPS regulatory provisions that require students to remain continuously enrolled and to earn the annual credit hours required during the academic year.
- IV. Statewide Programs Spotlight: Early Childhood Initiatives
- V. Other Business
- VI. Adjournment

Committee Members: Wilbert D. Pryor, Chair; Samer Shamieh, Vice Chair; Phillip May Jr.; Christy Oliver Reeves; Terrie P. Sterling; Devesh Sarda (Student Member)
Staff: Carrie Robison, Deputy Commissioner for Research and Sponsored Initiatives

AGENDA ITEM III.A

Consent Agenda: TOPS Home Study Exceptions

Requests for exception to the TOPS statutory provision that requires a student to begin a home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth-grade year

BACKGROUND

The TOPS statute requires that a student begin a home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth-grade year. Act 95 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature implemented a provision which allows the administering agency to grant exceptions to this requirement when a student provides documentation that the transfer to a home study program later than the statutorily provided timeframe was beyond the student's control.

One request for exception to the deadline to begin a home study program was reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting on September 17, 2025. The student has presented facts and documentation that the student believes justifies the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance.

LOSFA Advisory Board Recommendation

The LOSFA Advisory Board recommends approval of the request for exception to the deadline to begin a home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth-grade year.

AGENDA ITEM III.B

Consent Agenda: TOPS Exceptions

Requests for exception to the TOPS regulatory provisions that require students to remain continuously enrolled and to earn the annual credit hours required 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 number of 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 the annual earned-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.”

Twenty-four requests for exception to the TOPS requirements were reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting on September 17, 2025. The students have presented facts and circumstances that the students believe justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance.

LOSFA Advisory Board Recommendation

The LOSFA Advisory Board recommends approval of the requests for exception to the TOPS regulatory provisions that require students to remain continuously enrolled and to earn the annual credit hours required during the academic year.

AGENDA ITEM IV.

Statewide Programs Spotlight: Early Childhood Initiatives

BACKGROUND

Nearly four million U.S. undergraduate students (18%) are raising children while attending a postsecondary education institution. About half (49%) of student parents are raising a child under the age of six. Most student parents are mothers (74%), and over 52% of all student parents are single mothers. Most student parents are students of color (54%), with Black and Indigenous women in college being particularly likely to be parenting compared with other women and men in college. The largest share of student parents (51%) are enrolled at community colleges. Another 20% attend for-profit institutions, 16% public four-year institutions, 13% attend private non-profit institutions, and 5% attend other institution types or more than one institution (Urban Institute 2025).

Student parents often face numerous demands on their time. Notably, 37% of students work 25 hours or more each week while attending school full-time. Furthermore, 28% of undergraduate student parents indicate that they have limited disposable income and cannot come up with five hundred dollars in the next month (Student-Parent Action Through Research Knowledge (SPARK) 2024). In 2024, 7% of student families were recently homeless, 29% food insecure, and 30% participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (SPARK, 2024).

Securing affordable and reliable childcare is important for student parents to enroll in college and to remain enrolled (Contreras-Mendez and Rechlin Cruse, 2021). On average, families pay approximately \$14,000 annually for center-based care. The challenge that student parents face regarding childcare access during college entry and completion can make it more difficult for them to successfully graduate compared to students who are not parents.

Understanding Campus-Based Child Care Services

Understanding the importance of quality early childhood programming plays a critical role in a student's ability to complete college. Campus Early Learning Centers are unique and play a pivotal role in student success; however, many families with young children struggle to access information, resources, programs, and services for young children. Research shows that 90% of a child's brain architecture is developed by the time they turn three years old. This developmental period forms a foundation for all future behavior, learning, and health. It also represents the period when many parents are learning to parent for the first time. Quality early childhood programs are the key to our economic future. Presently, there are nineteen early learning sites at higher education institutions in Louisiana. Knowing this, the Campus Early Learning Center Collaborative was formed. This Collaborative provides campus early learning center staff skills on business development, enrollment, family support, grant writing, and early childhood capacity building on and near campus.

Early Childhood Initiatives

To provide context for the work of campus early childhood education in the state, Dr. Michelle DeMeulenaere, Assistant Commissioner of Strategic Planning and Student Success, will highlight the campus-based childcare centers including key efforts to increase student access, as well as the work of the collaborative to support and expand the early childhood professionals in our state:

- "Cradle to Career"
 - 18% of college students are parents
 - More than half have a child under the age of six
- Benefits of an Early Learning Center on Campus
 - Support for the Academic Success of Students

- Parenting Support
- Campus Early Learning Center Collaborative
 - Campus Early Learning Centers stay up-to-date on public assistance for families
- Assistance with Grant Applications
 - Provide grant writing support to expand access for children on campuses
- Support with licensing, quality rating system, and tax incentives
 - Assist Centers with all licensing, health, and safety guidelines for early learning centers
- Local community and educational partnerships
 - Provide opportunities for campus and community partnerships

The future priorities are to promote an understanding of how the Louisiana Board of Regents can support collaborative relationships between campus early learning centers and communities, as well as prioritize enrollment opportunities for student families in communities across the state. In addition, the Collaborative will support campus early learning centers to maintain strong business models and funding opportunities to sustain quality early learning centers for children.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only; no action is required.