

LOUISIANA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATES 2026

M.J. Foster Promise Program

The Governor's executive budget proposal successfully secured a **\$14.5 million funding increase for the M.J. Foster Promise Program**, bringing its total annual budget to \$25 million. This financial aid initiative provides grants for adults pursuing degrees and credentials in high-demand technical and vocational fields.

TOPS-Tech Expansion - HB 325 (*Rep. Brass*)

This bill expands the pathways students can use to qualify for TOPS-Tech, creating new on-ramps for students who may not meet traditional score or GPA thresholds — a direct win for LCTC's access mission.

- A third qualifying path was added: at least 9 hours of early college credit through dual enrollment or equivalent skills measures approved by the Statewide Articulation and Transfer Council.
- Beginning 2026–2027, students qualify by meeting any two of three criteria: minimum core GPA, minimum ACT score, or the new early college credit standard.
- TOPS-Tech students may now maintain their award while enrolled part-time (not just full-time), provided they make steady academic progress, maintain a 2.50 GPA, remain continuously enrolled, and avoid disqualifying criminal convictions.

Workforce Instructor Capacity Investment Program - HB 807 (*Rep. Brass*)

Creates a dedicated program and funding vehicle to expand instructional capacity in high-wage, high-demand workforce programs and support shared instructor models between two-year public institutions and private sector employers. Program includes:

- Rapid-response instructor deployment tied to major economic development projects
- Expedited recruitment incentives
- Compensation for temporary or contract-based instructors
- Salary differential supplements
- Accelerated program expansion

Tuition and Fees Autonomy – HB 1084 - (*Rep. Turner*)

Beginning January 1, 2027, public postsecondary institutions will have the authority to set their own tuition and fees, subject to a cap of no more than 10% in any single year. Institutions may lower tuition and fees without limitation. This represents a significant shift in institutional flexibility and will require LCTC colleges to develop thoughtful pricing strategies that preserve access for the students we serve.

Workforce Alignment and Data Reporting

A suite of workforce-focused bills advanced to final passage this session. Measures tied to work-based learning, internships, apprenticeships, and workforce outcome dashboards will increase expectations for:

- Data collection and reporting by LCTC colleges
- Coordination with the Board of Regents and Louisiana Works
- Alignment of academic programming with labor market outcomes

Hazing Prevention “The Caleb Wilson Hazing Prevention Act” – HB 636 - Act 309 (*Rep. LaFleur*)

Requires comprehensive annual campus-wide education and enhances accountability through improved reporting, fair adjudication, consistent consequences, and statewide oversight; provides for sanctions for institutions and organizations for hazing incidents.

Standard of Evidence (Student Disciplinary Hearings) - HB 738 - Act 441 (*Rep. McMakin*)

Revises student disciplinary procedures by clarifying notice requirements, updating terminology, maintaining the clear and convincing evidence standard with a limited exception, expanding evidence access, extending appeal deadlines, requiring written decisions, and providing an automatic stay of sanctions pending appeal.

Suicide Prevention – HB 626 (*Rep. Jordan*)

Requires colleges and universities to implement suicide prevention plans.