

**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

***Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)  
Bulletin***

TOPS BULLETIN NUMBER:	T2018-5
DATE ISSUED:	August 23, 2018
EFFECTIVE DATE:	Immediately
DISTRIBUTION:	High School Counselors, High School Principals, Parish Superintendents, College and University Financial Aid Offices and Registrars, LAICU Financial Aid Offices and Registrars, and Louisiana Community and Technical College System Personnel
TOPICS:	Consent Form for the TOPS Tracker, Determination of TOPS Eligibility, and College Admissions

As you know, Act 837 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature requires the governing authority of each school to provide a form to the parent or legal guardian of each student enrolled in grades eight through twelve which explains that the parent has the right to determine whether their child's Personally Identifiable Information (PII) can be released to LOSFA and to the postsecondary education institution(s) to which their child applies. The form must be provided every year. During the 2018 Regular Session, the Legislature passed Act 241 which requires that parents opt in for the type of consent they are granting. In addition, Act 241 adds that information may be shared with the Board of Regents to the Board provide required aggregate reporting to the student's school board on remediation needs, retention rates, and graduation rates of the student's high school graduating class and for developing policies to improve student success. Data provided to the Board will be used solely for the stated purposes, and under no circumstances will personally identifiable student information be released.

PII includes the student's full name, social security number, and transcript data. This information will be used by LOSFA to provide a TOPS Tracker to allow students and parents to track a student's progress toward TOPS eligibility and to determine a student's eligibility for a TOPS Award and other student financial aid. This information will also be used by postsecondary institutions to determine whether a student is eligible for admission.

The Consent Form (page 4 of this bulletin; it can also be found on our Website at: <http://www.osfa.la.gov/MainSitePDFs/ConsentForm.pdf>). Included in this Bulletin is the Consent Form for use by the parents and guardians of students enrolled in the eighth through the twelfth grades. The parent or guardian must give consent or deny consent to the collection of their child's PII and the distribution of the PII through the Louisiana Department of Education to LOSFA and through the Board of Regents to the postsecondary institutions. It also allows the Board of Regents to use the information to provide aggregate reporting as set forth above.

We have also attached a cover letter (Page 3 of this bulletin; it can also be found on our Website at: <http://www.osfa.la.gov/MainSitePDFs/ConsentLetter.pdf>) to transmit along with the Consent Form to the parents and legal guardians.

A Consent Form for every student is required by the law to ensure that PII is disclosed only for those students whose parent or legal guardian has consented and that the parents who deny consent do so with full knowledge of the effect of denial of consent.

The Consent Form must be signed by the student rather than the parent or legal guardian if the student is 18 or is judicially emancipated or is emancipated by marriage.

For questions about this bulletin or Consent Form questions, please e-mail [Rhonda.bridevaux@la.gov](mailto:Rhonda.bridevaux@la.gov).

**Place on school/LEA letterhead:**  
**School’s name must be included in the header**

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

State law requires that you make an election at the beginning of the year your child enters the eighth grade, or when your child first enters public school after the eighth grade, as to whether you give or deny consent for this school to collect your child’s PII and disclose it to the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) for TOPS and other financial aid or to the state’s colleges and universities (Institutions) for admissions. Once you sign this form, your decision to consent or not to consent to the collection and disclosure of your child’s PII will be valid. Your decision may be changed at any time by completing and returning this form.

Your child’s transcript data will not be provided to LOSFA and the Institutions unless you consent to the disclosure of the information.

Please read the attached Consent Form and fill out and sign the portion of the Form that applies to your decision to grant or deny consent.

**Please note that state law was amended during the 2018 Legislative Session that required changes to the Consent Form. As a result of these changes, you must complete this form and return it to your school even if you have completed it in the past.**

Please return the form to the school. Thank you.

Enclosure

**CONSENT FORM**

**TOPS, COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, AID PROGRAMS, COLLEGE ADMISSIONS,  
REQUIRED REPORTING AND STUDENT SUCCESS POLICIES**

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If you consent, your child’s data will be shared with the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) through the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) and its technology partner, the Office of Technology Services (OTS), the College or University to which your child applies (Institution) and the Board of Regents (BOR), to allow:

- LOSFA to determine **whether your child is eligible for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Scholarship and other college aid using the Louisiana Award System (LAS).**
- LOSFA to **make TOPS and other aid payments.**
- The Institution(s) to process your child’s application(s) for admission.
- BOR staff to provide required aggregate reporting to your child’s school board on remediation needs, retention rates, and graduation rates of your child’s high school graduating class and for developing policies to improve student success. Data will be used solely for the stated purposes, and **under no circumstances will personally identifiable student information be released.**
- You to **track your child’s progress** in taking the courses and earning the grades required to be eligible for a TOPS Scholarship and to **monitor your child’s TOPS eligibility status** by having an account on the LOSFA Student Hub (<https://www.osfa.la.gov/studenthub.html>).

**The data to be collected to determine your child’s eligibility for TOPS, for admission to an Institution, and for required reporting and policy development include:**

- Full name
- Birthdate
- Social Security Number
- Student transcript data (includes but not limited to, courses taken, type of course, the grades for each course, and when and where the courses were taken).

**If you do not consent to the disclosure of your child’s data to LOSFA and to postsecondary Institutions, the evaluation of your child’s eligibility for TOPS and for admission to college will be delayed until the information necessary to make a determination is provided.**

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**I CONSENT** to my child’s school collecting my child’s personal information named above and disclosing that information to the entities checked below. I understand and acknowledge that the consent provided herein shall be valid for my child’s cumulative transcript records as of the date of signature and shall remain valid and in effect until my child graduates from high school or I withdraw consent by completing a new copy of this form and returning it to my child’s school. **I DECLINE CONSENT** for my child’s data to be sent to an entity not checked below.

LOSFA (for TOPS and other aid)                       Institution (for admission)                       BOR (for required reporting)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
My Child’s Full Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Parent/Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date