

SENATE BILL SB-3

Introduced by Senator Steve Padilla (D-18)

An act relating to Lithium Valley Apprenticeship Act.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB-3, Steve Padilla (D-18). Lithium Valley Apprenticeship Act.

Existing law establishes the California Career Technical Education Incentive Grant Program, administered by the State Department of Education. Section 53072 of the Education Code authorizes specified local educational agencies to receive grants and requires successful applicants to involve employers and align career pathways with regional labor demand.

This bill would authorize the department to award a competitive supplemental grant to an Imperial County applicant that partners with a lithium recovery, battery production, or related manufacturing employer and an apprenticeship program approved by the Division of Apprenticeship Standards. Grant funds would reimburse documented training costs and support recruitment of Imperial County residents and employer participation would be voluntary. The bill would appropriate \$5,000,000 from the General Fund to the department for these grants.

Vote: Majority. **Appropriations/fiscal:** yes. **Local program:** yes.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 53072 of the Education Code is amended to read:

53072. (a) A grant recipient under this chapter may, consistent with subdivision (b), consist of one or more, or any combination, of the following:

- (1) School districts.
 - (2) County offices of education.
 - (3) Charter schools.
 - (4) Regional occupational centers or programs operated by joint powers authorities or county offices of education, provided that the application has the written consent of each participating local educational agency.
- (b) Successful applicants shall demonstrate a holistic approach to providing career technical education and career pathways, including by demonstrating involvement of employers, providing wraparound services for pupils, aligning proposed programs and services with current or projected labor market demand within the applicant's region, and providing a clear explanation of how a receipt of a grant will provide programs and services related to career technical education and career pathways.
- (c) This section shall become operative on June 1, 2026.

(d) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this purpose, the department may award a competitive supplemental grant to an applicant described in subdivision (a) that serves pupils in Imperial County and enters into a voluntary written partnership with both an employer engaged in lithium

recovery, battery production, or related manufacturing in Imperial County and an apprenticeship program approved by the Division of Apprenticeship Standards. The partnership shall provide a career pathway from school-based instruction into paid apprenticeship or employment in the applicable industry.

(e) A grant awarded pursuant to subdivision (d) may pay for instruction, safety equipment, recruitment, and documented employer costs of training participants. The department may reimburse an employer for no more than 50 percent of its eligible training costs, up to \$5,000 per participant. An applicant shall describe how it will recruit Imperial County residents for the pathway, including graduates and adult applicants referred by a partner program, but neither the applicant nor an employer is required to hire any person on the basis of county residence. Employer participation is voluntary and does not alter otherwise applicable apprenticeship, wage, or nondiscrimination requirements.

(f) The department shall administer grants under subdivisions (d) and (e), in consultation with the Division of Apprenticeship Standards. A recipient shall report annually to the department the number of Imperial County residents enrolled, completing training, and entering paid apprenticeships or employment, and the amount reimbursed to each employer. The department shall make a summary of those outcomes publicly available.

SEC. 2. The amount of five million dollars is hereby appropriated from the General Fund to the State Department of Education for the purposes of subdivisions (d) to (f), inclusive, of Section 53072 of the Education Code.