

Utah PTA Resolution on School Trust Lands

2004

WHEREAS, As a condition of Statehood, Utah accepted one-ninth of the state of Utah in a trust to support public schools; and

WHEREAS, Utah relinquished the right to tax federal lands that currently include two-thirds of the state held in a tax-free status; and

WHEREAS, The Utah Legislature has created the School and Institutional Trust Land Administration, an independent agency, to manage these school lands for the sole benefit of Utah public schools, with strict adherence to their trust obligations; and

WHEREAS, Utah PTA and its constituent organizations have been involved in educating elected officials in Utah and nationally about school trust lands and their fiduciary responsibility to the trust; and

WHEREAS, Utah PTA and its constituent organizations have advocated for changes in the management and operation of the trust, which has resulted in tremendously increased revenues. They continue to be an important voice in ensuring that the school children of Utah are fairly dealt with in relation to the trust; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, the Utah State Legislature created the School LAND Trust program which provided for parents, teachers, and administrators to prepare a plan that determines their students' greatest academic need. The program is funded from the interest and dividends from the permanent State School Fund;

**Therefore be it**

Resolved, That the Utah PTA encourage the Governor, Legislature, State Treasurer, Attorney General, Board of Trustees and Administration of the School and Institutional Trust Lands, other state and local officials to take all necessary steps to assure that management of the School Trust Lands is in accordance with trust duties and principles, including undivided loyalty to the beneficiaries, a duty to make trust property productive, a duty to keep and render accounts, and a duty to exercise prudence and skill in administering the trust, thereby obtaining much-needed revenue for Utah's schools; and be it further

Resolved, That the Utah PTA work to encourage Federal and State officials to fulfill their responsibilities under the Enabling Act by assisting the State in proper management of School Trust Lands for their intended purpose, to support schools; and in cases where management for trust purposes would conflict with other important purposes, such as protection of archaeological, aesthetic, or other environmental or cultural resources, that the Federal Government or state purchase, or trade the affected lands for other lands of comparable value and be it further

Resolved, That Utah PTA encourage any such trade or purchase be for the full value of the trust lands, with an appropriate additional amount to compensate the school trust for losses incurred due to failure of permit reasonable development of the trust lands in question; and be it further

Resolved, That the Utah PTA encourage the Utah State Legislature to support all interest and dividends from the permanent State School Fund being distributed to each public school to improve student academic performance. And be it further

Resolved, That the Utah PTA and its constituent organizations participate on committees making decisions about the use of the funding and work to ensure funds are used wisely to improve academic excellence in the schools.

5/28/04 Submitted by: Legislative Action Committee