

Utah PTA Trust Lands Advocacy

Information on School Trust Lands

What are School Trust Lands?

At Statehood, Congress granted one-ninth of all the land in Utah to a trust to support public schools. This land was granted in exchange for Utah not taxing the federal lands which make up nearly 2/3 of the land in Utah. Today, schools still have 3.3 million acres scattered around the state. These lands are held by the state as trustee for our public schools, which are the beneficiaries. The lands are managed by the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA). All net revenue is saved in the Permanent State School Fund, which is now over \$2 billion.

Where does Trust Land money come from?

Revenues are generated through leases, sales, minerals and real estate development. Revenues from the land are placed in a permanent savings account know as the Permanent State School Fund, which is not spent. The fund is invested by the School and Institutional Trust Funds Office (SITFO). The interest and dividends at the end of each year are distributed to every public school in the state through the School LAND Trust Program.

How much money are we talking about?

The Permanent State School Fund has a current balance of over \$2 billion dollars. The interest and dividends from the fund are distributed each year. In the 2015-2016 school year the School LAND Trust Program distributed \$45.8 million. An elementary school on average received \$42,120, a middle school/junior high on average received \$59,800, and a high school on average received \$71,700.

How is the money spent?

Every school should have an elected School Community Council in place, made up of parents, staff and the principal. This council is responsible for identifying the school's most pressing academic need and allocating the School LAND Trust Program funds in response to that need. The money comes directly to the school.

What has my school been doing with their money?

Information for your school can be found at: www.schoollandtrust.org/schools/program-plans/

You are also welcome to attend your school's Community Council meetings, which are open to the public. Schools should be posting the time and place of their Community Council's meetings.

How can I learn more?

Visit the Utah PTA website for additional information including a history of PTA's involvement with school trust lands and our online Trust Lands Handbook. www.utahpta.org/trust-lands-board-specialist

Visit the website of the School LAND Trust Section of the State Office of Education:
<http://www.schoollandtrust.org/>