

WELCOME!

We will begin soon...



1925 **Utah**
PTA[®] 2025



**ADVOCACY
CONFERENCE**



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Utah's School and Institutional TRUST SYSTEM

Shared Ground: The Power of
PTA and Trust Lands to Shape
Lasting Change



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From Grassroots to Statewide Impact

PARTNERS IN ADVOCACY

How PTA Has Made the Difference

- In 1989, Utah PTA member Sandra Skouson passed a resolution to review school trust lands and their revenue potential for schools.

Utah PTA and others worked have advocated for:

- School & Institutional Trust Lands Administration (1994)
- School Children's Trust at USBE (1999)
- School & Institutional Trust Funds Office (2014)
- Land Trusts Protection & Advocacy Office (2018)
- Passage of Amendment B (2024)
- PTA Resolution on the Trust (Under review)



Utah's School and Institutional TRUST SYSTEM

Land was placed in Trust for the support of 12 public institutions known as Trust Beneficiaries—primarily public education.

The trust agencies ensure the continued growth and integrity of these trusts for the benefit of Utah's schoolchildren and other institutions.



How Trust Lands Began

Before the United States had a constitution,
Elected officials at the time advocated for a public
education system with equal access for all

The Land Ordinance of 1785
Assured that new states would receive lands “for
the maintenance of public schools”



What are Trust Land Parcels?

ENABLING ACT LAND GRANTS

Utah received sections 2, 16, 32, and 36 in each 6 x 6 square mile township for Utah's public schools & eleven other institutional beneficiaries.

6	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36

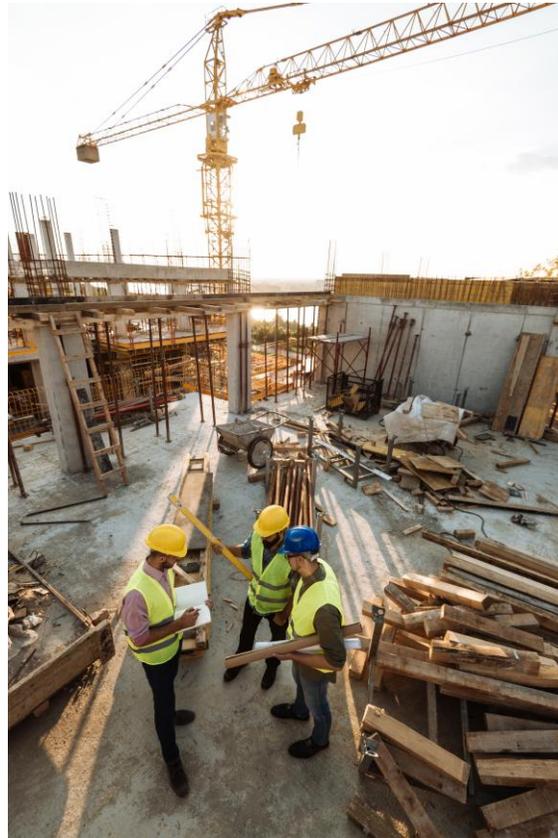
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How Trust Lands Make Money



**SURFACE
USE**



**REAL ESTATE
DEVELOPMENT**

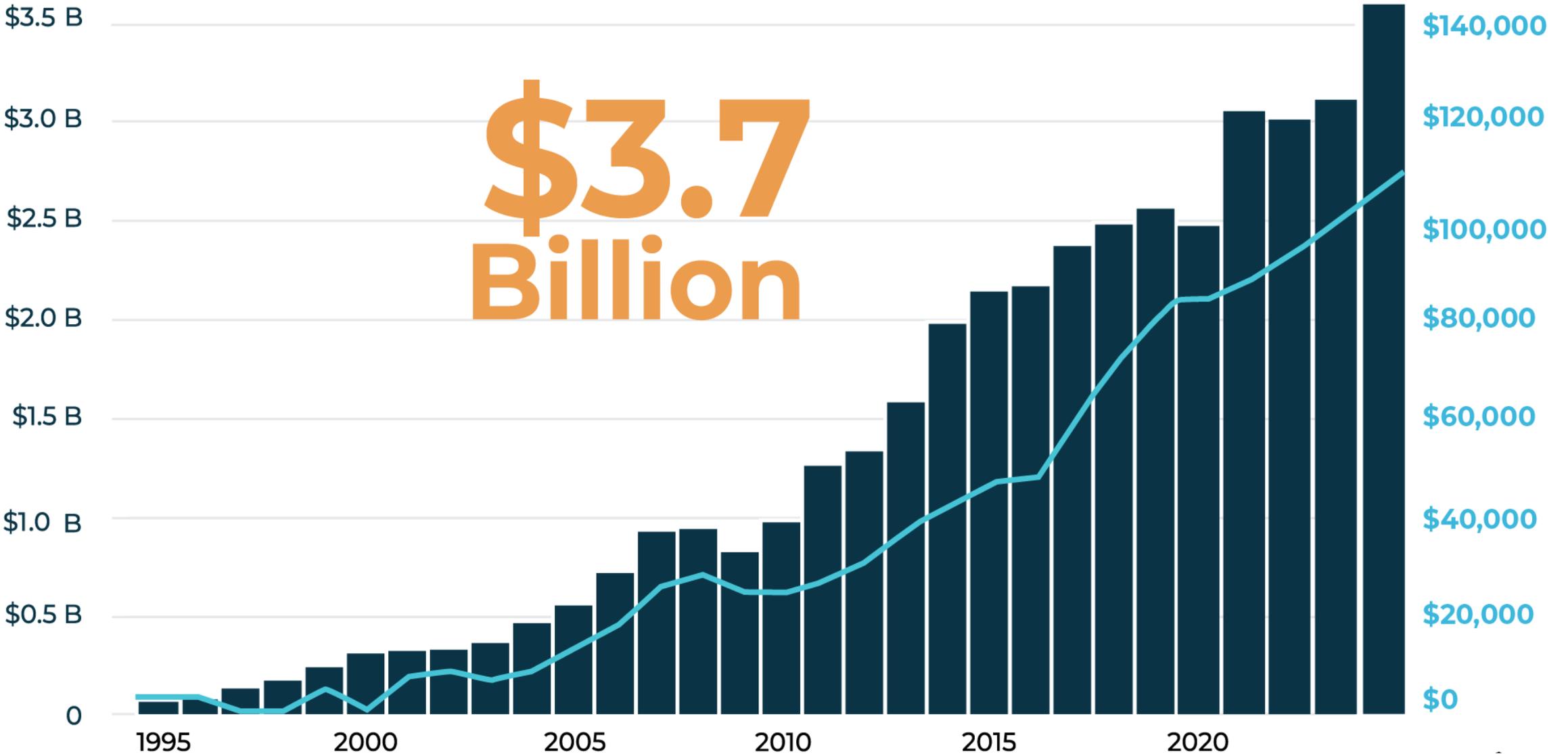


**ENERGY &
MINERALS**

Since 1994 the School Permanent Trust Fund has grown to:

Total Balance (Billions)

Total Distributions (Millions)



LAND TRUST FUNDING through the years

2005 vs 2025

\$13.9M vs \$111.3M

Impact on your school?





What are School Community Councils or Charter Trust Land Councils?

- **Appointed by code and rule** (53G-7-1202, 53G-7-1203, R277-477, and R277-491)
- **Create a School LAND Trust Plan** that supports the academic priorities of the district, the Teacher and Student Success Plan, and the needs of students at the school
- **Advise and make recommendations** to the LEA School Board

Unique Roles in Student Success

Utah PTA

- Advocate for every child's potential.
- Engage families and communities in education.
- Support schools and enrich student experiences.

Councils

- Plan for school improvement in critical academic areas
- Develop goals for innovation and intervention.
- Advise on school policy and use of School LAND Trust funds to support high quality instruction





Working together: PTA and Councils

- Learn about your school's School LAND Trust plan.
- Attend council meetings and give feedback.
- Join your school's council as a voting member.
- Appoint a PTA representative on your school council
- Participate in annual council training
- Recruit and support council membership.
- Bring parent voices and input to planning and decisions.
- Participate on development of school goals.
- Use PTA resources to complement the academic focus of councils.
- Strengthen a collaborative school culture.

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Home / LEAs

All LEAs

District LEA ▾

LEA

Alpine District

Beaver District

Box Elder District

Cache District

Canyons District

Carbon District

Daggett District

Davis District

Duchesne District

Emery District



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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead, American Anthropologist

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The image shows the Utah State Capitol building at dusk. The building is illuminated with warm lights, and the dome is a prominent feature. In the foreground, a stone wall has the words "STATE OF UTAH" carved into it. The sky is a pale blue, and the overall atmosphere is serene.

2026 Utah Legislature General Session

Bills related to the Trust:

- Owens Bill: Advocacy Office
- T. Miller Bill: Community Councils
- Fillmore Bill: Attendance and Charters

Other potential issues:

- Natural Resources & Energy
- Land Use
- Education Funding

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Land Trusts Protection and Advocacy Office Modification Bill

Sponsors: Sen. Derrin Owens & Rep. Jefferson Burton

Land Trusts Protection and Advocacy Office Amendments to Utah Code 53D-2 Sponsors: Sen. Derrin Owens & Rep. Jefferson Burton

- ▶ This bill clarifies the authority, purpose, and duties of the Advocacy Office as the representative of the trust beneficiaries and creates accountability requirements for trust distributions to institutional beneficiaries.
- ▶ The bill is based on outcomes from a legislative study group established one year ago to address the findings and recommendations of a 2024 OLAG audit regarding the Advocacy Office.

Correlation to the 2024 Trust System Audit: A comprehensive legal remedy

Recommendation 1.1 Legislature
Consider creating guidelines on distribution use for institutional beneficiaries. Lines 887-911

Recommendation 1.2 Legislature
Consider requiring spending plans and publicly noticed year end summaries. Lines 897-905

Recommendation 2.1 Legislature
Consider clarifying the Advocacy Office responsibilities and role. Lines 490-493, 540-571

Recommendation 2.2 Legislature
Consider adding institutional beneficiary distribution review to Advocacy Office. Lines 912-922

Recommendation 2.3 Advocacy Office
Develop stronger governance by implementing a strategic plan & demonstrate its effectiveness. Lines 592-598

Recommendation 2.4 Advocacy Office
Develop and implement rules and policies, and document measurable outcomes. Lines 604-610

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE BILL

Re-titles & clarifies the Advocacy Office authority and purpose to represent, advise, advocate, and safeguard current and future trust beneficiaries. Articulates the trust beneficiaries, their authorized liaisons, and rights and interests.

Establishes clear governance responsibilities:

- State Treasurer appoints the director, provides administrative support, submits the budget, and manages certain distributions.
- Advocacy Council is expanded to seven members with a clarified advisory role for strategic planning, budgeting, and rulemaking authority.

Refines the director role with stronger qualifications, oath, removal process, and clarified duties, including: monitoring distributions, dispute resolution, serving as a conduit for notification to beneficiaries from trustees, developing communication protocols and training, accountability, and advocacy.

Creates better accountability for distributions to institutional beneficiaries by requiring spending plans, accounting standards, and reporting expectations.

Strengthens the trust system by clarifying interactions between trustee agencies, beneficiaries, and the Advocacy Office with intentional checks and balances. Also improves the process and composition for the nominating committees of the trustee boards.

 **NO FISCAL NOTE.
NO FTE INCREASE.
NO TAXPAYER COST.**

This bill clarifies the authority, purpose, and duties of the Advocacy Office as the representative of the trust beneficiaries and creates accountability requirements for trust distributions to institutional beneficiaries.



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Why does it matter?

- Continues the history of PTA advocacy and impact on students.
- Catalyzing efforts works: Amendment B
- An independent advocacy office complements PTA volunteer efforts.
- Increased scrutiny and political pressure on the growing fund.
- Beneficiary representation is an essential component of the trust system.



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How can you help during the session?



Direct Communication

- **Call/Text:** State your position clearly as a constituent.
- **Emails:** Include bill number, personal connection, and a clear ask.
- **Meetings:** Schedule in-person or zoom meetings.

Public Engagement

- **Testify:** Speak in a committee hearing if PTA takes a position.
- **Town halls:** Engage directly with your elected officials in local settings.
- **Social media:** Follow the Advocacy Office and amplify our message

Effective Advocacy Tips

- **Be informed:** Follow the lead of PTA leadership.
- **Be personal:** Share real experiences from your school.
- **Be clear:** State exactly what action you want.
- **Be respectful & polite:** Follow up and express thanks.

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Questions & Discussion





**Utah Land Trusts
Protection &
Advocacy Office**

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Utah PTA Mission

To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.



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