The Trust: Utah's trust land endowment for education

At the time of statehood, Congress granted parcels of land to Utah from which revenue could be generated to support specific state institutions, particularly education.

Today, more than three million acres of Utah land are held in trust to generate revenue for and the exclusive benefit of the K-12 public school system.

How it works:
- Revenue from management and development of school trust lands is deposited into the Permanent School Fund.
- The Fund is invested, and annual interest and dividends are distributed to public schools.
- Each School Community Council determines the greatest needs at its school and allocates the funds accordingly.

Learn more about this historic land and education endowment, which is providing a rapidly growing source of discretionary funding for public schools.
The Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) manages the 3.3 million-acre land portfolio for public schools, generating revenues through oil, gas, and mineral leases, rents, and royalties; real estate development and sales; and surface estate sales, leases, and easements.

Revenue generated from school trust lands is transferred into the Permanent School Fund, growing the endowment for public schools.

SITLA is entirely self-funded with no taxpayer or general fund support.

A separate entity, the Utah School and Institutional Trust Funds Office (SITFO), invests the Permanent School Fund, which has a balance of more than $2 billion.

The Permanent School Fund investment portfolio is managed by a board of financial and investment professionals led by the Utah State Treasurer.

The Permanent School Fund is invested in a diversified portfolio intended to protect and grow the endowment for the benefit of Utah’s schoolchildren, today and tomorrow.

The School Children’s Trust Office of the Utah State Office of Education monitors the work of both SITLA and SITFO to ensure they serve the best interests of the public school system.

The School Children’s Trust Office distributes annual interest and dividends, called School LAND Trust Funds, from the Permanent School Fund.

Ten percent of the annual distribution is shared equally among all school districts. The remaining 90 percent is distributed to each district based on a per-pupil formula.

The Office also establishes and implements School LAND Trust Fund spending guidelines and develops training materials for School Community Council members.

Each K-12 school has a School Community Council, and every charter school has a Trust Land Council.

The principal, teachers, and parents comprise each Council, which determines the greatest education needs at its particular school. Following discussion and voting, each Council allocates their School LAND Trust Funds accordingly.

Many schools opt to purchase technology to improve computer labs, while others use School LAND Trust Funds to pay teacher and aide salaries to reduce class sizes. Trust Funds also support language, arts, college preparatory, and other specialized courses.

Find out how individual schools use their School LAND Trust Funds at: schoollandtrust.org