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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Utah State Board of Education

FROM: Martell Menlove, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer

DATE: March 7, 2014

DISCUSSION: *R277-477 Distribution of Funds from the Interest and Dividend Account and Administration of the School LAND Trust Program*

Background: Board Rule *R277-477 Distribution of Funds from the Interest and Dividend Account and Administration of the School LAND Trust Program* outlines with some specificity (R277-477-3-H and I) those items for which those School LAND Trust funds can be used. This rule supports Utah Code 53A-16-101.5 which mandates that school community councils implement a school improvement plan to meet “the school’s identified most critical academic needs.”

Key Points: Previous discussions by the Board and current discussion among legislators includes the appropriate use of these funds. These discussions have included the use of School LAND Trust funds for school-wide behavior plans, school climate activities, and developing leadership skills with students. This discussion at this time is hopefully in lieu of additional legislation on the use of these funds.

One possible solution to the concerns that have been raised would be to have a large percentage of the funds allocated to a school used as currently outlined in R277-477-3-H and I and a smaller percentage used for activities not directly addressing critical academic needs, but addressing activities that the school believes and can report impacts the academic needs.

Anticipated Action: No specific amending language is being offered at this time. Following Committee and/or Board discussion, staff may be directed to draft amendments to the rule and present them at a future Board meeting.

Contact: Martell Menlove
Tim Donaldson

R277. Education, Administration

R277-477. Distribution of Funds from the Interest and Dividend Account and Administration of the School LAND Trust Program.

R277-477-1. Definitions.

A. "Approving Entity" means the school district, University, or other legally authorized entity that approves or rejects plans for a district or charter school.

B. "Board" means the Utah State Board of Education. The Board is the primary beneficiary representative and advocate for beneficiaries of the School Trust corpus and the School LAND Trust Program.

C. "Chartering Entity" means the school district, Board, university, or other entity authorized to charter a charter school.

D. "Charter trust land council" means a council comprised of a two person majority of elected parents or guardians of students attending the charter school and may include other members, as determined by the board of the charter school. The governing board of a charter school may serve as a charter trust land council if the board membership includes at least two more parents or guardians of students currently enrolled at the school than all other members combined consistent with Section 53A-16-101.5. If not, the board of the charter school shall develop a school policy governing the election of a charter trust land council. R277-491 does not apply to charter trust land councils.

E. "Councils" means school community councils and charter trust lands councils.

F. "Fall enrollment report" means the audited census of students registered in Utah public schools as reported in the audited October 1 Fall Enrollment Report from the previous year.

G. "Funds" means interest and dividend income as defined under Section 53A-16-101.5(2).

H. "Interest and Dividends Account" means a restricted account within the Uniform School Fund created under Section 53A-16-101 established to collect interest and dividends from the permanent State School Fund until the end of the fiscal year. The funds are distributed to school districts, charter schools and the USDB through the School LAND Trust Program at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

I. "Local board of education" means the locally-elected board designated in Section 53A-3-101 that makes decisions and directs the actions of local school districts and is directed in Section 53A-16-101.5(5)(b) to approve School LAND Trust plans for schools under the local board's authority.

J. "Most critical academic needs" for purposes of this rule means academic needs identified in an individual school's improvement plan developed consistent with Section 53A-1a-108.5 or identified in the school charter.

K. "School Children's Trust Section" means employees who report to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent) or Superintendent's designee and have responsibilities as outlined in Sections 53A-16-101.5 and 53A-16-101.6.

L. "School community council" means the council organized at each school district public school as established in Section

53A-1a-108 and R277-491. The council includes the principal, school employee members and parent members. There shall be at least a two parent member majority.

M. "State Charter School Board (SCSB)" means the board designated under Section 53A-1a-501.5 that has responsibility for making recommendations regarding the welfare of charter schools to the Board.

N. "State Superintendent of Public Instruction (Superintendent)" means the individual appointed by the Board as provided for in Section 53A-1-301(1) to administer all programs assigned to the Board in accordance with the policies and the standards established by the Board.

O. "Student" means a child in public school grades kindergarten through twelve counted on the audited October 1 Fall Enrollment Report of the school district, charter school, or USDB.

P. "USDB" means the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

Q. "USOE" means the Utah State Office of Education.

R277-477-2. Authority and Purpose.

A. This rule is authorized by Utah Constitution Article X, Section 3 which places general control and supervision of the public school system under the Board, by Section 53A-16-101.5(3)(c) which allows the Board to adopt rules regarding the time and manner in which the student count shall be made for allocation of school trust land funds, and by Section 53A-1-401(3) which allows the Board to adopt rules in accordance with its responsibilities.

B. The purpose of this rule is to:

(1) provide financial resources to public schools to enhance or improve student academic achievement and implement an academic component of the school improvement plan;

(2) involve parents and guardians of a school's students in decision making regarding the expenditure of School LAND Trust Program money allocated to the school;

(3) provide direction in the distribution from the Interest and Dividends Account created in Section 53A-16-101 and funded in Section 53A-16-101.5(2);

(4) provide for appropriate and adequate oversight of the expenditure and use of School LAND Trust monies by designated local boards of education, chartering entities, and the Board;

(5) provide for:

(a) reviewing and monitoring of funds and revenue generated by school trust lands and the permanent State School Fund;

(b) compliance by councils with requirements in statute and Board rule; and

(c) allocation of the monies as provided in Section 53A-16-101.5(3)(c) based on student count.

(6) define the roles, duties, and responsibilities of the School Children's Trust Section within the USOE.

R277-477-3. Distribution of Funds - Local Board or Local Charter Board Approval of School LAND Trust Plans.

A. All public schools receiving School LAND Trust Program funds shall have a council as required by Sections 53A-1a-108 and R277-491, a charter school trust lands council as required in

53A-16-101.5 (7), or have a local board approved exemption under R277-491-3(C). District public schools and charter schools shall submit a Principal Assurance Form, as described in R277-491(5)(a).

B. All charter schools that elect to receive School LAND Trust funds shall have a charter trust lands council, develop an academic plan in accordance with the school charter, and report the date when the charter trust lands council and charter board approved the plan. Plans shall be submitted on the School LAND Trust Program website no later than May 1.

C. Local boards of education or the other approving entity shall consider plans annually and may approve or disapprove a school plan. If a plan is not approved, the approving entity shall provide a written explanation of why the plan was not approved and request a revised plan for reconsideration, consistent with Section 53A-16-101.5.

D. Information on each school's plan to address most critical academic needs shall be completed via the School LAND Trust website maintained through the USOE for accurate and uniform reporting.

E. Plans shall be electronically submitted to the USOE on the School LAND Trust Program website, including a record of the vote by the school community council or charter trust land council when the school plan was approved including the date of the vote, votes for, against, and absent, consistent with Section 53A-16-101.5.

E. To facilitate submission of information by schools, each school board shall establish a school district submission date for the school district schools not later than May 1 of each year. Timelines shall allow for school committee reconsideration and amendment of the school plan following local board of approving entity explanation or plan rejection.

F. Funds shall only be distributed to schools with plans approved by the approving entity.

G. Prior to distribution of funds, the School Children's Trust Section shall ensure that plans include academic goals, specific steps to meet those goals, measurements to assess improvement and specific expenditures focused on student academic improvement. Funds shall not be distributed until schools have an approved plan to use their funds to enhance or improve a school's academic excellence consistent with Section 53A-16-101.5 and R277-477. For charter schools, the School Children's Trust Section shall provide notice to the SCSB of changes required of charter schools for compliance with state law and Board rule.

H. Examples of successful plans using School LAND Trust Program monies include programs focused on:

- (1) credit recovery courses and programs;
- (2) study skills classes;
- (3) college entrance exam preparation classes;
- (4) academic field trips;
- (5) classroom equipment and materials such as flashcards, math manipulatives, calculators, microscopes, maps or books;
- (6) teachers, teacher aides, and student tutors;
- (7) professional development directly tied to school academic goals;
- (8) student focused educational technology, including hardware and software, computer carts and work stations;

(9) books, textbooks, workbooks, library books, bookcases, and audio-visual materials;

(10) student planners; and

(11) nominal student incentives that are academic in nature or of marginal total cost.

I. Examples of plans ineligible for School LAND Trust Program funding include, but are not limited to:

(1) security;

(2) phone, cell phone, electric, and other utility costs;

(3) behavior, character education, bullying prevention;

(4) sports and playground equipment;

(5) athletic or intermural programs;

(6) extra-curricular non-academic expenditures;

(7) audio-visual systems in non-classroom locations;

(8) non-academic field trips;

(9) food and drink for council meetings or parent nights;

(10) printing and mailing costs for notices to parents;

(11) accreditation, administrative, clerical, or secretarial costs;

(12) cash or cash equivalent incentives for students;

(13) other furniture; and

(14) staff bonuses.

J. Schools serving students with disabilities may use funds as needed to directly influence and improve student performance according to the students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

K. The school trust is intended to benefit all of Utah's school children. Councils are encouraged to design and implement plans in a way to benefit all children at each school.

L. School districts and charter schools wishing to submit information to the School LAND Trust website through a comprehensive electronic plan shall meet the parameters for programming and data entry required by the USOE. They shall review School LAND Trust plans on the USOE website prior to local board of education or chartering entity approval to ensure information consistent with the law has been downloaded by individual schools into the electronic plan visible on the School LAND Trust Program website.

M. A form that includes the names of members of the council shall be signed by members of the council to indicate their involvement in implementing the current School LAND Trust plan and developing the school plan for the upcoming year. The form shall be uploaded to the database by the principal, director, or school district employee.

N. When approving school plans on the School LAND Trust Program website, the approving entity shall report the meeting date(s) when the approving entity approved the plans.

R277-477-4. Distribution of Funds - Determination of Proportionate Share.

A. A designated amount appropriated by the Legislature from the Interest and Dividends Account shall be used to fund the School Children's Trust Section, the administration of the program and other duties outlined in this rule and Sections 53A-16-101.5 and 53A-16-101.6. Any unused balance initially allocated for School

LAND Trust Program administration shall be deposited in the Interest and Dividends Account for future distribution to schools in the School LAND Trust Program.

B. Funds shall be distributed to school districts and charter schools as provided under Section 53A-16-101.5(3)(a). The distribution shall be based on the state's total fall enrollment as reflected in the audited October 1 Fall Enrollment Report from the previous school year.

C. Each school district shall distribute funds received under R277-477-3A to each school within each school district on an equal per student basis.

D. Charter schools shall receive funding from the USOE on a per pupil basis, provided that each charter school receives at least 0.4 percent of the total available to charter schools as a group. The remainder of the distribution to charter schools shall be allocated to all charter schools that do not receive the minimum amount, on a per pupil basis.

E. Local boards of education shall adjust distributions, maintaining an equal per student distribution within a school district for school openings and closures and for boundary changes occurring after the audited October 1 Fall Enrollment Report of the prior year.

F. If a school chooses not to apply for School LAND Trust Program funds nor meet the requirements for receiving funds, the funds allocated for that school shall be retained by the USOE and included with the statewide distribution for the following school year.

G. Local boards and school districts shall ensure timely notification to chairs and principals of the availability of the funds to schools with approved plans.

H. Plans submitted by the USDB governing board shall be reviewed and approved by the School Children's Trust Section and reported to the State Superintendent or designee.

R277-477-5. School LAND Trust Program: Implementation of Plans and Required Reporting.

A. Schools shall make full good faith efforts to implement the plan as approved.

B. The school community council or charter school trust land council may amend a current year plan when necessary. The council shall amend the plan by a majority vote of a quorum of the council. A school's website shall show an amended plan.

C. Funds not used in the school approved plan may be carried over by the school to the next school year and added to the School LAND Trust Program funds available for expenditure in that school the following year.

D. Schools shall provide an explanation for any carry over that exceeds one-tenth of the school's allocation in the school plan or report. Districts and schools with consistently large carryover balances over multiple years are not making adequate and appropriate progress on their plans, and shall be subject to compliance review findings and corrective action.

E. District and charter school business officials shall enter prior year audited expenditures by category on the School LAND

Trust website on or before October 15th. The expenditure data shall appear in the final reports submitted online by principals for reporting to parents as required in Section 53A-1a-108.

F. Expenditures made after the close of the fiscal year shall be accounted for as expenditures in the following fiscal year.

G. Final reports shall be submitted by schools on the website by November 15.

R277-477-6. School LAND Trust Program - School Children's Trust to Review Compliance.

A. The financial report in each school final report shall be reviewed by the School Children's Trust Section for consistency with the narrative submitted by that council.

B. Final reports indicating that funds from the School LAND Trust Program were expended inconsistent with the requirements and academic intent of the law, inconsistent with R277-477 or R277-491 and/or inconsistent with the school board/charter board approved plan shall be listed by the School Children's Trust Section and reported to the district contact, district superintendent, and local board or charter board president annually.

C. USOE staff may visit schools receiving funds from the School LAND Trust Program as directed by the Superintendent to discuss the program, receive information and suggestions, provide training, and answer questions.

D. Annual compliance reviews shall be conducted to review expenditure of funds relative to the approved plan and allowable expenses.

E. The School Children's Trust Section shall report annually to the Board Audit Committee on compliance review findings and other compliance issues. The Board Audit Committee shall make determinations regarding questioned costs and corrective action, following review and consideration of compliance and financial reviews conducted by the School Children's Trust Section.

F. The State Board Audit Committee may reduce or eliminate funds if a school has failed to comply with code or Board rule.

KEY: schools, trust lands funds

Date of Enactment or Last Substantive Amendment: November 7, 2013

Notice of Continuation: June 10, 2013

Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: Art X Sec 3; 53A-16-101.5(3)(c); 53A-1-401(3)]