

Common School Fund Benefits Oregon Students



\$76.8 Million Going to State's 197 K-12 Public School Districts in 2025

Since Oregon became a state in 1859, the Common School Fund has provided hundreds of millions of dollars for public schools.

Common School Fund distributions are considered local revenue in the state funding formula, and the dollars are quite significant. In a district such as Corvallis, the 2025 distribution supports the equivalent of 19 teacher salaries – see below for a sampling of distributions and salaries supported.

The 2025 distribution is approximately \$147 per student.

State Land Board Oversees Common School Fund

When Congress admitted Oregon to the Union in 1859 it granted sections 16 and 36 of every township for the use of schools. Nearly 3.4 million acres—roughly the size of Douglas County—came under state ownership.

Our “land-rich, cash-poor” state quickly sold many school lands, as state officials felt private ownership of these lands would yield more for schools through property taxes and other economic benefits. In the late 1800s, land swindlers also cheated Oregon out of thousands of acres. Today, approximately 20 percent of Oregon’s original acreage—about 681,000 acres—remain dedicated to producing revenue for schools.

The State Treasurer and Oregon Investment Council invest the Common School Fund, which achieved a 9.7 percent return in 2024. The fund – both the principal and the interest – is invested in a mix of assets, including stocks, bonds, private equity, and real estate.

The value of the fund fluctuates with changing market conditions. As of February 2025, the value was \$2.38 billion.

Fund distributions are sent to school districts twice a year. The 2025 distribution is 3.5 percent of the fund.

2025 Common School Fund Distributions

A sampling of districts and the impact of their distributions

School District	Distribution	Equal to*
Ashland	\$348,736	5 teacher salaries
Bend-LaPine	\$2,385,703	33
Coos Bay	\$382,092	5
Corvallis	\$1,341,191	19
Hood River	\$493,819	7
Medford	\$1,852,535	26
Ontario	\$299,036	4
Pendleton	\$384,229	5
Portland	\$6,604,823	91
Springfield	\$1,518,300	21

*Based on National Education Association FY23 statewide salary average of \$72,476 per teacher; figures are rounded.





Common School Fund distributions are sent to school districts twice a year. By law, fund distributions cannot benefit current students at the disadvantage of future students, or vice-versa.

On behalf of the State Land Board, the Department of State Lands strategically manages school lands to maximize revenue. Ranchers and farmers, Tribal governments, businesses, and more work with DSL to lease and buy lands, plan for future community needs, and keep lands healthy. “School lands have supported generations of Oregon students,” says DSL Director Vicki L. Walker, who grew up in Reedsport and is the proud mother and grandmother of former and current Eugene students. “The millions those lands made last year directly benefits my grandchildren, just as past millions directly benefited my children and me.”

Goal is to grow the fund significantly over time

Inputs into the fund include revenues from school lands and Oregon-owned waterways, as well as interest earned on unclaimed money the state receives, which is held in the Common School Fund until the rightful owner is located.

As the Common School Fund grows, so do distributions to Oregon school districts. Since 2000, distributions have ranged from a low of \$13 million in 2004 to a high of \$76.8 million in 2025.

“Every dollar helps Oregon schools,” Walker says. “Through balancing revenue growth and resource protection, our goal is to provide sustainable funding for schools forever.”



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