

The table below shows basic information about which states received federal land grants, which lands were granted to these states for use of the public schools, and which federal act granted these lands. The land grants referred to in this table are those made under the "Section 16" provision of the original Land Ordinance of 1785 and subsequent legislation built on that precedent. Land grants made to the schools by other means or other legislation, such as the Morrill Act of 1862, are not included. Rather than tracing the entire history of state lands, the table shows the most recent status of the lands before a state entered the Union.

Table A. State school land grants based on the precedent set by the Land and Northwest Ordinances

In order of their date of entry into Union

State	Date of entry into Union	Prior status	Lands granted for schools according to federal mandate	Federal act granting lands
Delaware	December 7, 1787	Original colony	NA	NA
Pennsylvania	December 12, 1787	Original colony	NA*	NA
New Jersey	December 18, 1787	Original colony	NA*	NA
Georgia	January 2, 1788	Original colony	NA*	NA
Connecticut	January 9, 1788	Original colony	NA*	NA
Massachusetts	February 6, 1788	Original colony	NA*	NA
Maryland	April 28, 1788	Original colony	NA	NA
South Carolina	May 23, 1788	Original colony	NA	NA
New Hampshire	June 21, 1788	Original colony	NA*	NA
Virginia	June 26, 1788	Original colony	NA	NA
New York	July 26, 1788	Original colony	NA*	NA
North Carolina	November 21, 1789	Original colony	NA*	NA
Rhode Island	May 29, 1790	Original colony	NA*	NA
Vermont	March 4, 1791	Land disputed between New York and New Hampshire	NA	NA
Kentucky	June 1, 1792	Formerly Virginia	NA	NA

State	Date of entry into Union	Prior status	Lands granted for schools according to federal mandate	Federal act granting lands
Tennessee	June 1, 1796	Formerly North Carolina, then Southwest Territory	NA	NA
Ohio	March 1, 1803	Northwest Territory	Section 16 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if that section has been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the use of schools	7 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 40, April 30, 1802
Louisiana	April 30, 1812	Territory of Orleans	Section 16 in each township reserved for the support of schools in that township	11 th Congress, Session 3, Chapter 14, February 15, 1811 Later re-ratified in the admission act for the State of Louisiana: 12 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 50, April 8, 1812
Indiana	December 11, 1816	Indiana Territory	Section 16 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if that section has been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the use of schools One entire township (36 sections) reserved for the use of a seminary of learning	14 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 5, April 19, 1816
Mississippi	December 10, 1817	Mississippi Territory	Section 16 in each township for the maintenance of public schools	14 th Congress, Session 2, Chapter 23, March 1, 1817 (Declared that rules of the Northwest Ordinance - and therefore the Lands Ordinance of 1785 - apply to Mississippi)
Illinois	December 3, 1818	Illinois	Section 16 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if that section has been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the use of schools One entire township (36 sections) reserved for the use of a seminary of learning	15 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 67, April 16, 1818
Alabama	December 14, 1819	Mississippi Territory	Section 16 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if that section has been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the use of schools One entire township (36 sections) reserved for the use of a seminary of learning	15 th Congress, Session 2, Chapter 47, March 2, 1819
Maine	March 15, 1820	Formerly Massachusetts	NA	NA
Missouri	August 10, 1821	Missouri Territory	Section 16 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if that section has been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the use of schools One entire township (36 sections) reserved for the use of a seminary of learning	16 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 22, March 6, 1820

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Arkansas	June 15, 1836	Arkansas Territory	Section 16 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if that section has been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the use of schools One entire township (36 sections) reserved for the use of a seminary of learning	24 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 100, June 15, 1836 (Declared that same rules apply as applied to the state of Missouri see above)
Michigan	January 26, 1837	Michigan Territory	Section 16 in each township for the maintenance of public schools	24 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 99, June 15, 1836 (Ratified the act of February 16, 1819, ch. 22, which ratified the act of January 11, 1805, ch. 5, which declared that the rules of the Northwest Ordinance and therefore the Lands Ordinance of 1785 apply)
Florida	March 3, 1845	Florida Territory	Section 16 for the maintenance of public schools	28 th Congress, Session 2, Chapter 48, March 3, 1845 (Declared that Florida and Iowa not interfere with the public lands, allowing the rules of the Land Ordinance of 1785 to stand)
Texas	December 29, 1845	Formerly the Republic of Texas	NA	NA
Iowa	December 28, 1846	Iowa Territory	Section 16 in each township for the maintenance of public schools	28 th Congress, Session 2, Chapter 48, March 3, 1845 (Declared that Florida and Iowa not interfere with the public lands, allowing the rules of the Land Ordinance of 1785 to stand)
Wisconsin	May 29, 1848	Wisconsin Territory	Section 16 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if that section has been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the use of schools Two entire townships (72 sections) reserved for the use of a university	29 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 89, August 6, 1846
California	September 9, 1850	Mexican Cession land; held by the U.S. 1846-1848; annexed as a state through the Compromise of 1850	Sections 16 and 36 granted to the state for the purposes of public schools in each township	32 nd Congress, Session 2, Chapter 145, March 3, 1853

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Minnesota	May 11, 1858	Minnesota Territory	Sections 16 and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the use of schools Two entire townships (72 sections) reserved for the use of a university	34 th Congress, Session 3, Chapter 60, February 26, 1857
Oregon	February 14, 1859	Oregon Territory	Sections 16 and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the use of schools Two entire townships (72 sections) reserved for the use of a university	35 th Congress, Session 2, Chapter 33, February 14, 1859
Kansas	January 29, 1861	Kansas Territory	Sections 16 and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the use of schools Two entire townships (72 sections) reserved for the use of a university	36 th Congress, Session 2, Chapter 20, January 29, 1861
West Virginia	June 20, 1863	Formerly Virginia	NA	NA
Nevada	October 31, 1864	Nevada Territory	Sections 16 and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the support of common schools	38 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 36, March 21, 1864
Nebraska	March 1, 1867	Nebraska Territory	Sections 16 and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the support of common schools Two entire townships (72 sections) reserved for the use of a university	38 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 59, April 19, 1864
Colorado	August 1, 1876	Territory of Colorado	Sections 16 and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the support of common schools Two entire townships (72 sections) reserved for the use of a university	43 rd Congress, Session 2, Chapter 139, March 3, 1875
North Dakota	November 2, 1889	Dakota Territory	Sections 16 and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the support of common schools Two entire townships (72 sections) reserved for the use of a university	50 th Congress, Session 2, Chapter 180, February 22, 1890
South Dakota	November 2, 1889	Dakota Territory	Same as ND	Same as ND
Montana	November 8, 1889	Montana Territory	Same as ND	Same as ND
Washington	November 11, 1889	Washington Territory	Same as NC	Same as ND

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Idaho	July 3, 1890	Idaho Territory	Sections 16 and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the support of common schools Two entire townships (72 sections) reserved for the use of a university	51 st Congress, Session 1, Chapter 656, July 3, 1890
Wyoming	July 10, 1890	Wyoming Territory	Sections 16 and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the support of common schools Two entire townships in each township (72 sections) reserved for the use of a university	51 st Congress, Session 1, Chapter 664, July 10, 1890
Utah	January 4, 1896	Utah Territory	Sections 2, 16, 32, and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the support of common schools Two entire townships (72 sections) reserved for the use of a university	53 rd Congress, Session 2, Chapter 138, July 16, 1894
Oklahoma	November 16, 1907	Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory	Sections 16 and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the use and benefit of common schools One-third of Section 13 in each township reserved for the use of a university	59 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 3335, June 16, 1906
New Mexico	January 6, 1912	New Mexico Territory	Sections 13, 16, 33, and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the support of free public nonsectarian schools 75 sections reserved for the use of a university	59 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 3335, June 16, 1906
Arizona	February 14, 1912	Arizona Territory	Sections 13, 16, 33, and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the support of free public nonsectarian schools 75 sections reserved for the use of a university	59 th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 3335, June 16, 1906
Alaska	January 3, 1959	Alaska Territory	Sections 16 and 36 in each township (or other equivalent lands, if those sections have been sold, granted, or disposed of) for the support of common schools Section 33 of each township in the Tanana Valley reserved for an agricultural college and school of mines	Public Law 85-508, July 7, 1958 (Applied to Alaska State the act of March 4 th , 1915, which mandated the land grants upon the acquisition of Alaska Territory by the U.S. government)
Hawaii	August 21, 1959	Republic of Hawaii	NA [§]	NA

Source: Center on Education Policy, based on data state government websites, the specific laws cited, and Hubbard, 2009.

Note: States in bold type were never federal territories with their lands held in public domain, and so did not follow the same pattern of land grants.

⁷¹Although there were no federal land grants to support education in the original 13 colonies, the nascent state governments of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia established provisions to support public schools, including permanent school funds that were financed by revenue from public land, granted land for specific education institutions, or set aside lands for schools (Souder & Fairfax, 1996).

Although Vermont, Kentucky, Tennessee, Maine, and West Virginia were created out of lands ceded by other colonies or states, they were not subject to the federal land laws since their lands were never held in public domain. Similarly, Texas already existed as an independent republic when admitted to the Union, and therefore its lands were never federally held in public domain. See Culp et al., 2005, and Hubbard, 2009.

When Texas was still an independent republic, it reserved section 16 lands for schools. See Culp et al., 2005.

⁸When Hawaii was annexed, it had already existed as a kingdom and a republic, and therefore already had in place various laws governing its land use. A royal proclamation of 1840 that had set aside land for schools was ratified in the 1959 statehood act (Souder & Fairfax, 1996).