

Board Talking Points

August 2026

Welcome back! This is always an exciting time as we begin a new school year. It has been a busy summer preparing for our district staff and students to return.

A major event for the region occurred on May 11, 2026. In a unanimous 7-0 vote, the Hermiston School District board approved Superintendent Tricia Mooney's recommendation for the district to return to IMESD, effective July 1, 2027. Following ORS 334.019, a district deciding to return to their regional ESD must inform the ESD board of their intent prior to November of the year. Hermiston sent in their opt-in letter early to allow additional time for planning.

Hermiston School district elected to opt-out of IMESD in 2015 with a 5-2 vote. Since then, the district has experienced the same challenges similar to many Oregon schools:

- Declining Enrollment
- Increased student social emotional and behavioral needs in special education and the general population.
- Significant demands in technology infrastructure, security, and training.
- Increased school choice and on-line learning.
- Staffing shortages of hard-to-fill positions
- Increases in personnel costs due to inflation, PERS, and unfunded state mandates.

Hermiston's student enrollment generates approximately \$3 million for IMESD, which will allow the agency budget to build capacity in our Local Service Plan. The 2026-27 year will provide a transition year for district input to determine staffing levels across the region. Since the Local Service Plan has been unanimously approved for over a decade by component districts, we do not anticipate changes to services currently offered.

MISSION

To provide outstanding customer service to our school districts in four areas: special education, technology, school improvement, and administrative services. IMESD strives to ensure the success of every child by providing equitable services to close the opportunity gap.