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## Mist Elementary Project Paves the Way For High-Speed Internet in Oregon's Most Rural Schools

SpaceX's Starlink satellites in low Earth orbit now connect Mist students to video conferencing, virtual education games, video instruction and other high data rate activities that were not previously possible.

[View photos available for media use.](#)



MIST—Elementary students in Mist, Oregon, a remote community located more than an hour northwest of Portland, Oregon, have access to high-speed internet thanks to the installation of SpaceX's latest Starlink technology.

Link Oregon, Cascade Technology Alliance, Northwest Regional Education Service District and the Vernonia School District combined forces to identify funds, personnel and the technological infrastructure that brought high-speed internet to the remote school. Vernonia School District has tried multiple times over the past decade to upgrade the school to fiber-optic internet, but the high costs of running a dedicated fiber line down miles of rural roads always prevented the

project from taking off. Starlink does not require cost-prohibitive construction projects, making it an ideal solution for remote rural communities. The project was made possible through the federal government's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund.

"Before we got the new internet, Ms. Avy's class couldn't be on the internet at the same time, so sometimes we would have to reschedule when we did reading and math," explains McKinley, a fifth grader.

McKinley says that she and her peers commonly use the internet to write stories in Google Docs and interact with Zearn, a math website with video lessons and exercises.

"We are so excited to be able to bring Mist Grade School online with high speed internet," says Vernonia School District Superintendent Aaron Miller. "This was a technology and equity issue for Mist, and we are so happy to have solved it by working with our partners. All our students can now access technology at the same time, enhancing learning and teaching."



Superintendent Aaron Miller in front of Mist Grade School, one of the first schools in Oregon with internet access provided by SpaceX's Starlink.

Cascade Technology Alliance, a cooperative between Multnomah and Northwest Regional education service districts providing educational technology services to 189 school districts, plans to identify more opportunities to expand internet access for schools and students. Link Oregon will continue to be a pivotal partner for identifying both the financial resources and internet providers who are willing to work with schools to improve their internet access. Ongoing efforts include:

- Bringing wireless internet to all families in the rural Jewell School District community through partnerships with Clatsop County and Oregon Coast Wireless and connecting families to local and federal subsidies for internet service;
  - Deploying fiber internet to every school of Portland Public Schools
  - Working with [Link Oregon toward a goal of ensuring all Oregonians have access to affordable broadband internet](#), including expanding the Oregon Coast's fiber network.
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## About the Mentioned Organizations



*Vernonia School District serves a student population of roughly 570 students and encompasses five schools: Mist Elementary, Vernonia Elementary, Vernonia Middle School, Vernonia High School, and Vernonia Family Academy.*



*Cascade Technology Alliance is a cooperative between Multnomah and Northwest Regional education service districts. CTA serves dozens of school districts, public and private charter schools and nonprofit agencies throughout northwest Oregon. CTA provides access to more reliable and higher-quality technology services at a reduced cost. Smaller districts receive and participate in services that were previously out of reach, and larger districts benefit from lower costs and streamlined services.*



*Link Oregon, a federally tax-exempt 501(c)(3) Oregon nonprofit organization, provides high-speed, fiber-optic broadband connectivity to our state's public and nonprofit sectors. Link Oregon provides fast, reliable, cost-effective internet and shared network services to K-12 and higher ed, libraries, Native Tribes, public health care organizations, remote state offices and other public and nonprofit organizations and facilities across Oregon. This high-capacity network will eventually serve more than 600+ locations across the state, making it easier for these entities to collaborate, share information, and deliver services to Oregon residents and visitors.*



**Northwest  
Regional  
Education  
Service  
District**

*Northwest Regional Education Service District is the largest of Oregon's 19 education service districts. It serves 20 school districts in Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook and Washington counties. These school districts serve 98,000 students. Through state funding, contracts, and private and public grants, the agency provides a wide range of special education and specialized services to students, educators and families in the region.*