

WEBVTT

00:00:12.129 --> 00:00:17.129

Well, welcome to the Unpacked Podcast. We're unpacking the reality behind today's public schools.

00:00:17.269 --> 00:00:20.989

I'm Mickey O'Neill. I'm your host, and I have Jason Melma, superintendent of

00:00:20.989 --> 00:00:23.209

the Ingham Intermediate School District, joining me today.

00:00:23.529 --> 00:00:26.189

Introduce yourself, please, Mr. Melma. Hello.

00:00:26.849 --> 00:00:31.269

Thanks so much for joining us. I'm Jason Melma, superintendent here at Ingham ISD.

00:00:31.869 --> 00:00:35.629

Well, thanks for joining us. This is part two in our series talking about what

00:00:35.629 --> 00:00:37.869

it is that intermediate school districts are and what they do.

00:00:38.309 --> 00:00:40.609

And today we're going to talk a little bit about governance.

00:00:40.889 --> 00:00:44.549

Can you talk about the structure of an ISD and how it works?

00:00:45.289 --> 00:00:47.949

Sure. In our first episode, I kind of talked about the continuation,

00:00:48.489 --> 00:00:52.209

or the continuum, I should say, of services that are provided and how ISDs fit in together.

00:00:52.389 --> 00:00:55.889

So we have the Michigan Department of Education, and you have 56 ISDs within

00:00:55.889 --> 00:00:59.689

the state, and then you have local school districts that operate underneath

00:00:59.689 --> 00:01:03.369

those, whether it be charter schools, PSAs, public school academies,

00:01:03.729 --> 00:01:06.229
or our LEAs, local education agencies.

00:01:06.709 --> 00:01:10.749
And so the governance structure kind of works to where ISDs work in the middle

00:01:10.749 --> 00:01:15.009
as an intermediary, thinking about the systems and structures, the reports.

00:01:15.469 --> 00:01:18.389
Auditing could be for pupil accounting, auditing standards, different things

00:01:18.389 --> 00:01:21.529
that we do that provide information that goes up to the state.

00:01:21.729 --> 00:01:25.789
The state provides information back through us that then we filter out to our local districts.

00:01:26.568 --> 00:01:30.248
Okay. Can you talk about how the difference with board of education structure?

00:01:30.468 --> 00:01:33.848
Like what is, how does it work at a local district versus an intermediate school district?

00:01:34.088 --> 00:01:38.028
For sure. So local boards of education are actually elected by the public.

00:01:38.088 --> 00:01:39.588
It's a nonpartisan race.

00:01:39.708 --> 00:01:43.388
It isn't an R or a D thing. It's just somebody who's interested in supporting students.

00:01:43.788 --> 00:01:48.268
And so they go through the clerk, actually file for being a candidate,

00:01:48.268 --> 00:01:49.688
and then they are elected by the public.

00:01:50.128 --> 00:01:53.988
What's unique about intermediate school districts is our boards of

education

00:01:53.988 --> 00:01:58.148

are elected by the boards of education of local districts.

00:01:58.548 --> 00:02:03.608

So going back to statute 1962, it actually defines that on the first Monday

00:02:03.608 --> 00:02:08.068

in June, electors from the local boards of education shall come forward and

00:02:08.068 --> 00:02:09.728

cast their ballot. That's pretty specific.

00:02:09.848 --> 00:02:14.648

That's very specific going back to how long it's been around and how long it's

00:02:14.648 --> 00:02:15.508

been operating like this.

00:02:15.808 --> 00:02:19.688

But just like a local board of education, the candidate has to file to be a

00:02:19.688 --> 00:02:25.348

candidate. So do boards of education, interested board of education members for ISDs.

00:02:25.468 --> 00:02:32.608

Now, one unique thing, we cannot have more than two ISD board members from one local district.

00:02:32.828 --> 00:02:36.688

So, for example, you can't have ever more than two board members out of Mason

00:02:36.688 --> 00:02:40.708

or two board members out of East Lansing or two board members out of Holt.

00:02:41.308 --> 00:02:43.348

It's just the requirements for how the state works.

00:02:44.096 --> 00:02:48.156

So that leads me to a question that some viewers might or listeners might not know about.

00:02:48.496 --> 00:02:53.116

What local school districts are part of Ingham Intermediate School District?

00:02:53.396 --> 00:02:56.816

Sure. So we have 12 traditional schools.

00:02:57.256 --> 00:03:00.956

We have four kind of more rural when we think about Stockbridge,

00:03:01.296 --> 00:03:03.416

Dansville, Leslie and Webberville.

00:03:03.616 --> 00:03:07.036

And we have districts that kind of operate in more of a suburban setting when

00:03:07.036 --> 00:03:14.176

we think about Williamston, Haslett, East Lansing, Okemos, Holt, Waverly, and Mason.

00:03:14.396 --> 00:03:17.696

And then we have a district that operates as an urban district,

00:03:17.916 --> 00:03:20.476

and that would be the Lansing School District. That's our largest school district.

00:03:20.596 --> 00:03:23.276

So 12 traditional, and then we have charter schools here as well.

00:03:23.656 --> 00:03:27.876

How many students does Ingham Intermediate School District serve every year?

00:03:28.336 --> 00:03:34.096

So we are the eighth largest ISD out of 56, and we serve between 41,000 and

00:03:34.096 --> 00:03:37.376

42,000 students currently, which is pretty exciting. That is fantastic.

00:03:38.096 --> 00:03:41.616

What other things that do you think the public might want to know about a structure

00:03:41.616 --> 00:03:47.256

between a local district and an ISD that, you know, local districts don't really

00:03:47.256 --> 00:03:50.936

report to an ISD, but sometimes that can be confusing to the public?

00:03:51.236 --> 00:03:53.636

So I think that's an important topic in and of itself.

00:03:54.076 --> 00:03:59.096

I don't have, or our Board of Education doesn't have a responsibility with respect

00:03:59.096 --> 00:04:03.856

to local superintendents or staff members at a local district.

00:04:04.036 --> 00:04:07.356

I have no control over who the starting quarterback is, who's going to be the

00:04:07.356 --> 00:04:10.516

lead in the play, who's going to sit first chair and band.

00:04:10.936 --> 00:04:15.236

None of those things flow through the ISD. We work in collaboration with local

00:04:15.236 --> 00:04:17.056

districts to provide those services and support.

00:04:17.236 --> 00:04:21.396

So governance, local boards of education hire their local superintendent.

00:04:22.016 --> 00:04:26.816

Our board of education hires the superintendent here. And so those are separate

00:04:26.816 --> 00:04:29.396

as far as how the governance overall works.

00:04:29.536 --> 00:04:32.676

Now, there are some requirements when we think about special education.

00:04:33.116 --> 00:04:39.616

So, ISDs receive funds from our Department of Education, and we are subrecipient

00:04:39.616 --> 00:04:43.656

of IDEA funds, IDEA, Individual Disabilities Education Act.

00:04:44.456 --> 00:04:46.996

We are not allowed to disperse those

00:04:46.996 --> 00:04:51.016

funds past ourselves. We can't have sub-recipients with sub-recipient.

00:04:51.116 --> 00:04:53.616

So we are responsible for those dollars.

00:04:53.856 --> 00:04:58.976

They flow out to local districts in support of students, but that's where compliance factors come in.

00:04:59.096 --> 00:05:02.416

We try to support local districts to make sure that students are receiving FAPE,

00:05:02.556 --> 00:05:03.876

a free and appropriate public education.

00:05:04.416 --> 00:05:08.756

And we work through when there are challenges or disagreements that might be

00:05:08.756 --> 00:05:12.556

in existence and make sure that students are receiving the right services and

00:05:12.556 --> 00:05:17.516

supports. So we do have some statutory things that we do. Pupil accounting was

00:05:17.516 --> 00:05:18.576

something I mentioned earlier.

00:05:18.996 --> 00:05:22.316

With respect to pupil accounting, we actually audit our local districts,

00:05:22.316 --> 00:05:23.756

and then we provide reports that

00:05:23.756 --> 00:05:26.756

go up to the Michigan Department of Education, and then they audit us.

00:05:27.216 --> 00:05:30.496

So we work kind of in the middle sometimes when we think about some of those statutory things.

00:05:30.656 --> 00:05:34.256

But I don't hire anybody within our local districts. There are local boards

00:05:34.256 --> 00:05:35.436
of education who do that, and

00:05:35.436 --> 00:05:38.496
our board hires and approves the superintendent here for the Ingram IC.

00:05:38.496 --> 00:05:44.436
We can touch on funding in a whole other podcast, but can you just give a basic

00:05:44.436 --> 00:05:49.236
understanding of where the funding comes from for ISDs versus a local?

00:05:49.436 --> 00:05:53.276
Sure. Local school districts work, as I mentioned, the people accounting factor

00:05:53.276 --> 00:05:56.876
from what's known as an FDE, a full-time enrollment.

00:05:56.916 --> 00:06:00.656
And that means that the number of students that are there multiplied by what

00:06:00.656 --> 00:06:04.056
the legislator designates as the full-time enrollment equals the amount of dollars

00:06:04.056 --> 00:06:06.696
that are distributed to that local school district.

00:06:07.316 --> 00:06:11.536
At an ISD, we have a millage that supports general education.

00:06:11.536 --> 00:06:13.496
We have a millage that supports special education.

00:06:13.636 --> 00:06:16.336
We have a millage that supports career and technical education.

00:06:16.376 --> 00:06:20.276
So taxpayers see that on their tax bills, right? They actually see those on their tax bills.

00:06:20.496 --> 00:06:23.736
So we are supported by those functions with respect to an ISD.

00:06:23.836 --> 00:06:26.356

And then obviously we have grants and some other things that flow through us

00:06:26.356 --> 00:06:29.796

that continue to support students and families here throughout the area as well.

00:06:30.316 --> 00:06:33.096

Okay. All right. Well, I think that's all we have time for today.

00:06:33.176 --> 00:06:37.696

But let's continue this conversation in the next podcast. and thanks for joining us today.

00:06:37.836 --> 00:06:41.756

Thanks so much. We look forward to helping you unpack it on future episodes. Thanks.