WEBVTT

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Welcome to the Unpacked Podcast. We are unpacking the reality behind
today's public schools.

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I am Mickey O'Neill. I am your host today, and I am joined by Jason
Mellema.

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Jason, will you introduce yourself to our listeners, please?

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Hello, everybody. This is Jason Mellema, superintendent at Ingham
Intermediate School District.

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So glad to have you here as we unpack the realities behind our public
schools.

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Thanks so much for joining us.

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All right. Well, today we are going to talk a little bit about
intermediate

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school districts And what is, tell us a little bit about intermediate
school

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districts and their role and how they support students and families.

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Sure. Intermediate school districts or ISDs in the state of Michigan
are an

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important structure when we think about the continuation of services
and how

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students are supported.

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So here within the state, we have what was codified in 1962,

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a structure that looks at how do we work as an intermediary between the Department

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of Education and local schools of education.

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So LEAs, local education agencies

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per se So we think about what ISDs do ISDs provide systems of support We think

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about kind of three broad areas We think about general education We think about

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special education And we think about CTE And when we're doing it well We're

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working in collaboration with our local districts To make sure that students

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and their families are being supported.

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Wonderful. Can you talk a little bit about early childhood and how that plays

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a role in it as well, how those connect?

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Absolutely. So we have a couple of areas that intersect, and early childhood

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is a great example of that.

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We have early childhood services when we think about special education,

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early on services, recognizing the importance of getting interventions early,

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what it does and how it provides better supports for students and
being able

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to work through the challenges they might have, hitting their
milestones for learning.

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We also have supports that we provide in the areas of free pre-K for
all.

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It's been known as GSRP, the Grade Start Readiness Program.

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And so making sure that students are prepared when they make it to
school.

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And so GSRP, that area kind of exists within our general education.

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Obviously, as I mentioned, the early on services, it's an important
part of

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our childhood, but that supports our special education. That's just an
example

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of a department that works within kind of those three different
buckets.

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We also think about some of our general education collaborative
services that we provide.

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It might be payroll or business services or IT services.

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Sure, they're within our general education bucket, but they provide
systems

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of support for all of those buckets that are there for students in
CTE,

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special ed, general ed, things like early childhood.

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Wonderful. Can you tell us or

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tell the listeners, what is the age range in which ISD supports
learning?

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Can you share about that? Yeah. So it's interesting. We work from
birth all the way up to 26.

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That's a long time. And yes, yes, it is.

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If we're doing it well, we're providing supports for families,

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even prenatal, and thinking about how do we make sure that babies are
born healthy.

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So we have early learning playgroups. We have a better setup
throughout the

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ISD for families to be able to come in and just interact with other
families,

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think about healthy ways to provide supports.

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We provide in-home services for some of our youngest learners.

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We have staff members that literally come into the house and are down
on their

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hands and needs and are playing with kids and working through things.

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And then we have students that are over the age of 18 that need
supports for

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transition-based services.

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So we're working on providing real hands-on experiences with local
employers

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and businesses to make sure that they have skills and they can
continue to work into a job.

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And then we have students that will age out at 26 for some of our
programs as well.

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So a wide variety within that spectrum that we provide to support
families. That's fantastic.

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Well, that's all we have time for today. We'll regain this, re-
continue this conversation later.

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But thank you for sharing the information that you did today about
ISDs as a

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whole, and we'll see you next time. Thanks so much for letting us
unpack.