

## **Ingham Impact Episode 20 – Transportation, Pupil Accounting & Attendance**

Tracey Moore: I am the Transportation Director at Ingham Intermediate School District. I've been here for almost five years; I've been in the transportation world for almost 25 years. I started out as a bus driver and then worked my way up and now I'm the director here at Ingham ISD. Since I've kind of moved up along the way, it was good that I kind of went through the ranks of a bus driver first, because I need to understand what they do and how they do it, and I get that. So, it makes my position, actually, easier, and it makes me be able to do things better for them because I've been there. Marijane Nance: I'm part of the Pupil Accounting Office, and that's Leah Cameron, she's a pupil accounting specialist, and myself. The state has two count dates, and everybody's heard of count day, and all the kids have to go to school on count day! Because there are certain requirements that have to be met, according to the state of Michigan. Anybody in our service area has to report pupil membership and, according to the pupil counts and the pupil membership they report, depends on how much state aid they get. And, we have to make sure, as a Pupil Accounting Office, that the information they reported is in accordance with laws and rules, in order to obtain that funding, and that the numbers are also correct. Tracey Moore: Every day is different in Transportation; I mean, you have to think outside the box and be creative and try to figure out, how can I route this new student onto this bus, and still be within my time constraints, and not make an adjustment that's then going to impact everybody else on the bus that parents are already used to that schedule, and used to dropping their child off at the bus stop and away they go to work, and now we're going to get there ten minutes later, or earlier... it's just kind of a domino effect of how that works. Sometimes we really even have to talk to the parent and say "Is it okay that they get on the bus ten minutes earlier or ten minutes later?" Because, truly, this is going to impact how things work for them on that day. We have three people: two routing specialists; their main role is, basically, to route kids to buses, but we do have four districts that are in this consortium with us, and they all have different policies, all have different protocols, in determining when a child is eligible for the bus or not eligible for the bus. We have a lot of interaction with the Pupil Accounting Department, because, often times we have questions about a specific student, and which school they're residing at. Marijane Nance: There are so many areas and so many requirements, and so many laws and rules; from nutrition to transportation, to pupil accounting, that a lot of times these overlap, and especially as it pertains to special education. One thing I don't like to hear is "That's not my job." Because, I think, in a way, everything--when you're in education-- everything is your job or finding out that information to be able to pass it along with your districts. I get referrals from counselors or principals, and a lot of times, these are facilitated through attendance secretaries, and I receive the attendance referrals; a lot of times, the parents just want help getting their children to school, because, their child is suddenly not wanting to go to school, or they're having problems at the school. And, what I always encourage those personnel to do is to just refer the parent to me directly because I will explain that court services, and intervention services, and the programs that they have at the Ingham Circuit Court are not punitive; they aim to help and assist these families who may face economic barriers, unemployment, homelessness; I've never seen the judge be punitive to these families, he really encourages the students to find out what it is they want to do, and use that as a target, and use that to help them get on track to being in school. It's all about giving them the education that they need and deserve, that fits that individual child. Tracey Moore: The safety aspect of being a school bus driver, and the responsibility that goes with that; there's laws that we have to abide by as it relates to: how close a bus stop can be to the next bus stop; we need to give traffic a certain length of time to be able to notify them that we're stopping the bus. But, really, it's been proven over and over that, a school bus is the safest transportation, and safest way to get to school.

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