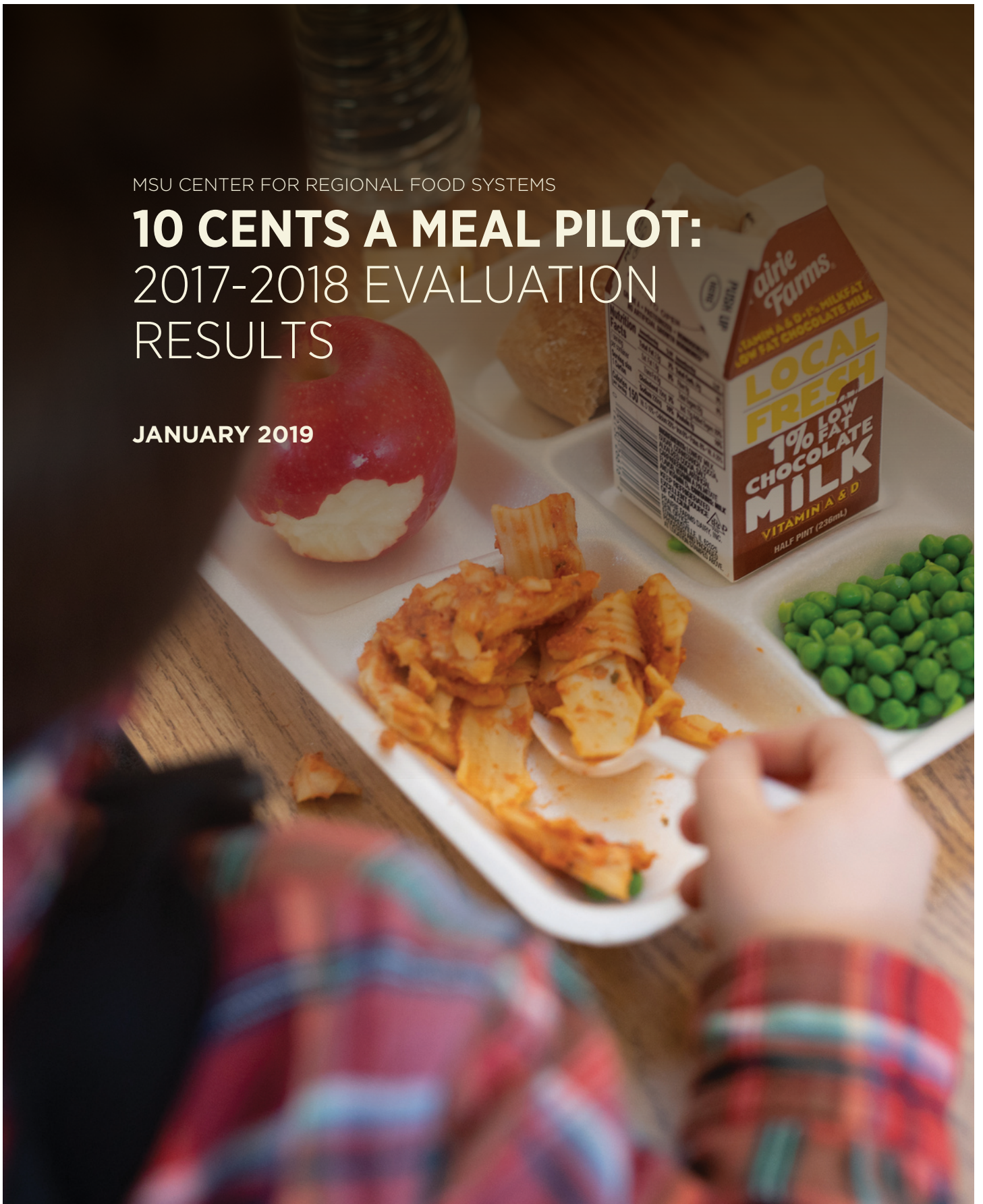


MSU CENTER FOR REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS

10 CENTS A MEAL PILOT: 2017-2018 EVALUATION RESULTS

JANUARY 2019





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10 CENTS A MEAL PILOT: 2017–2018 EVALUATION RESULTS

Authors

Drew Kuhlman,
Farm to Institution Data Manager
Center for Regional Food Systems,
Michigan State University

Colleen Matts,
Farm to Institution Specialist
Center for Regional Food Systems,
Michigan State University

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For more information about the 10 Cents a Meal pilot, visit tencentsmichigan.org.

For more information about farm to institution in Michigan, visit foodsystems.msu.edu or contact Colleen Matts, Farm to Institution Specialist, at matts@msu.edu.

10 CENTS A MEAL PILOT: 2017–2018 EVALUATION RESULTS

In its second year as a state-funded pilot program, 10 Cents a Meal for School Kids and Farms (10 Cents) provided \$315,000 in match funding incentives to 32 school districts in 18 counties and three Prosperity Regions.

The aims of the program are to improve children’s daily nutrition and eating habits through the school setting and to invest in Michigan agriculture and the related local food business economy.

The aims of the program are to improve children’s daily nutrition and eating habits through the school setting and to invest in Michigan agriculture and the related local food business economy.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) administers the pilot program, and additional support is provided by a project team consisting of staff from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (MSU CRFS), Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, Northwest Prosperity Region 2, West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (Prosperity Region 4), and Greater Ann Arbor Region’s Prosperity Initiative (Prosperity Region 9).

School districts located in Michigan Prosperity Regions 2, 4, and 9 were eligible for the 2017–2018 10 Cents pilot. Participating school districts were selected through a competitive grant application

and review process. The grant award process favored school districts that had the best capacity to purchase, market, and serve a variety of local foods in school meal programs. Preference was also given to school districts that could provide local food-related educational and promotional activities.

Participating school districts received program funding through a reimbursement process that matched food service spending on Michigan-grown vegetables, fruits, and legumes and provided a “fair share.” A “fair share” amount means that funding was granted generally in proportion to the number of claimed meals in each district from the previous school year, although some discretion was used for each district’s award based on actual requested amounts. MDE streamlined the tracking and reimbursement processes for 2017–2018 by utilizing its Michigan Nutrition Data system and contracting with FarmLogix to manage an online platform for tracking invoices of Michigan-grown foods purchased through the pilot.

Regional Participation

For the second year of the pilot program, MDE awarded:

- \$80,000 to 14 school districts in Prosperity Region 2,
- \$116,500 to 11 districts in Prosperity Region 4, and
- \$118,500 to 7 districts in Prosperity Region 9.

Tables 1–3 list grantee school districts, counties with participating districts, student enrollment, lunch counts from the previous school year, and grant awards by Prosperity Region.

**Table 1
Prosperity Region 2 Grantees, 2017–2018**

School districts	14: Alanson Public Schools, Bear Lake Schools, Benzie County Central Schools, Boyne Falls Public School District, East Jordan Public Schools, Frankfort-Elberta Area Schools, Glen Lake Community Schools, Harbor Springs School District, Kaleva Norman Dickson School District, Manton Consolidated Schools, Onekama Consolidated Schools, Pellston Public Schools, Public Schools of Petoskey, Traverse City Area Public Schools
Counties	Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Manistee, Wexford
Total student enrollment	22,567
Lunch count	1,668,357
Grant award	\$80,000

**Table 2
Prosperity Region 4 Grantees, 2017–2018**

School districts	11: Belding Area School District, Coopersville Area Public School District, Grand Haven Area Public Schools, Hart Public School District, Holland City School District, Lowell Area Schools, Montague Area Public Schools, Saugatuck Public Schools, Shelby Public Schools, Thornapple Kellogg School District, Whitehall District Schools
Counties	Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Muskegon, Oceana, Ottawa
Total student enrollment	28,956
Lunch count	2,419,297
Grant award	\$116,500

**Table 3
Prosperity Region 9 Grantees, 2017–2018**

School districts	7: Ann Arbor Public Schools, Bedford Public Schools, Dexter Community School District, Hillsdale Community Schools, Jackson Public Schools, Monroe Public Schools, Ypsilanti Community Schools
Counties	Hillsdale, Jackson, Monroe, Washtenaw
Total student enrollment	43,370
Lunch count	3,184,252
Grant award	\$118,500

*Note: Data sourced from the Michigan Department of Education October 19, 2017 press release titled "Thirty-two Michigan Districts Receive Grants to Bring More Local Produce to Schools."

Table 4 breaks down the student enrollment of participating school districts by Prosperity Region. To give a sense of the population of students served through the 10 Cents Pilot, the table displays the total number and percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals and the percentage of aggregate enrollment by race/ethnicity for each region. Please note that total enrollment numbers differ between Table 4

and Tables 1-3 because they were pulled from different sources at different times. Enrollment numbers in Tables 1-3 come from the Michigan Electronic Grant System Plus (MEGS+) applications and claims while enrollment numbers in Table 4 come from MI School Data which uses data from a single “count day” that occurs in schools across Michigan in fall of each school year.

Table 4
Aggregate Student Enrollment of Participating Districts by Race/Ethnicity and Prosperity Region*

	PROSPERITY REGION 2	PROSPERITY REGION 4	PROSPERITY REGION 9
Total enrollment	19,741	28,341	41,406
% free & reduced-price meal eligibility	25.1	45.6	41.0
% American Indian/Alaska Native	2.2	0.3	0.2
% Asian	1.1	1.1	7.1
% African American	0.8	2.3	17.4
% Hispanic/Latino	3.6	14.4	7.1
% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander in school meals.	0.2	0.1	0.1
% White	88.3	78.9	60.6
% two or more races	3.8	2.8	7.4

*Note: Student enrollment numbers and race/ethnicity categories are given as provided by MI School Data.



Evaluation Surveys and Distribution

As part of evaluation efforts for the pilot, CRFS set up monthly electronic evaluation surveys that were distributed through regular email communications by MDE staff to school food service directors at all 32 participating school districts. The 2017–2018 10 Cents participants were asked to submit monthly surveys, including special baseline, mid-year, and year-end surveys. Baseline, mid-year, and year-end surveys asked about budgets and spending, motivators, barriers, logistics, impacts, and outcomes and for open-ended feedback. Monthly surveys inquired about Michigan-grown produce that was served for the first time, the occurrence of promotional and educational activities, and the number of new adults in the community (teachers, parents, and farmers) involved in these activities.

The 2017–2018 surveys and survey questions were similar to those distributed and evaluated in the 2016–2017 pilot year to allow for some comparison. However, the 2016–2017 year-end survey was not conducted due to coordination and timing issues. For the 2017–2018 school year, eight regular monthly surveys (including the mid-year and year-end questions) plus one baseline survey were distributed to all 32 participating school districts for a total of 288 distributed surveys. All surveys were submitted by the end of the 2017–2018 program year, although some submitted surveys contained incomplete responses and/or unanswered questions. Where applicable, tables throughout this report will indicate the surveyed population being evaluated (such as $N = 32$ or $n = 20$).

Eight regular monthly surveys plus one baseline survey were distributed to all 32 participating school districts for a total of 288 distributed surveys.

Eight regular monthly surveys plus one baseline survey were distributed to all 32 participating school districts for a total of 288 distributed surveys.

Missing or incomplete survey responses are one limitation of these survey results. Additionally, the reliability of budget and spending responses is unclear. Although food service directors (FSDs) were asked to record budget information and spending on Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and legumes for this pilot, feedback from FSDs indicated that they did not typically have these recording systems in place already. Additionally, food vendors and distributors track local foods differently and can provide varying levels of local spending information in purchase reports, making it challenging and time-consuming for FSDs to compile this information. These data were not compared against invoice data collected separately by MDE and FarmLogix to track participating district's spending for the pilot. Finally, FSDs' responses to a particular survey question, one asking which local foods served each month were new to the food service program, posed a challenge for accurately reporting and interpreting results.

In this report, we present the results of the 10 Cents program evaluation surveys for the 2017–2018 school year, contextualize sections of the survey, discuss data ambiguity and treatment, and provide some simple comparisons to the 2016–2017 survey evaluation results.

RESULTS

Budget and Purchasing Information

The baseline survey, conducted at the start of the pilot year, asked FSDs from all participating school districts to report several pieces of budgetary information from the previous school year (2016–2017). The year-end survey asked for the same pieces of budgetary information for the current school year (2017–2018). However, the reliability of the self-reported budget and spending figures is unclear. Different accounting and tracking systems exist among school districts for both budget and spending information. Although the 10 Cents program required submittal of vendor invoices to receive matching grant funds, which were tracked separately through

the FarmLogix platform, feedback from participating FSDs indicated that their ongoing tracking of spending and budgets was not necessarily as detailed as 10 Cents surveys require. Nonetheless, reported budget and spending information was summed by Prosperity Region. Participating FSDs' reported food budgets (for all foods from all sources) at the outset of the 2017–2018 school year totaled over \$15 million, which represents significant opportunity for local food purchasing. Table 5 displays 2017–2018 reported total spending on Michigan-grown foods and all foods according to the following categories: fruit, vegetables, legumes, and other. Participating school districts together spent \$773,830 on Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and legumes.

Table 5
Total 2017–2018 Reported Spending in Dollars by Food Category and Prosperity Region

	PROSPERITY REGION 2	PROSPERITY REGION 4	PROSPERITY REGION 9	TOTAL
MI-grown fruits (n = 31)	\$149,251	\$174,791	\$185,034	\$509,076
All fruits (n = 30)	\$253,595	\$356,558	\$511,372	\$1,121,525
MI-grown vegetables (n = 31)	\$79,833	\$109,384	\$65,889	\$255,106
All vegetables (n = 30)	\$204,076	\$312,123	\$350,213	\$866,412
MI-grown legumes (n = 25)	\$4,297	\$3,350	\$2,000	\$9,647
All legumes (n = 29)	\$14,135	\$27,444	\$55,048	\$96,627
MI-grown other food (n = 27) in school meals.	\$401,658	\$533,585	\$427,247	\$1,362,490
All other food (n = 30)	\$2,948,022	\$3,227,725	\$2,880,022	\$9,055,769
MI-grown food total (n = 30)	\$635,039	\$821,110	\$680,170	\$2,136,319
All food total	\$3,419,828	\$3,923,850	\$3,796,655	\$11,140,333
MI-grown food as a percentage of total food	18.6%	20.9%	17.9%	19.2%

Motivators, Barriers, and Logistics

In addition to asking about budget information, the baseline survey asked FSDs the following questions about their motivators, barriers, and logistical challenges in purchasing and serving local foods:

- What motivates you to purchase and serve local foods in your school food service program?
- What barriers do you face in purchasing local foods for your food service program?
- What logistical challenges do you face in serving local foods in your food service program?

For each question, FSDs were asked to select the top three factors from a list of response options, including an open-ended “other” response option.

Tables 6–8 show tallied responses to these questions, listed from most to least frequently selected.

- The top three selected motivators for purchasing and serving local foods were “Help Michigan farms and businesses,” “Increase student consumption of fruits and vegetables,” and “Support the local economy.”
- The top three selected barriers were “Lack of products available at certain times of the year,” “Budget constraints,” and “Federal procurement regulations.”
- The top three selected logistical challenges were “Lack of staff labor to prepare local foods,” “Lack of a distribution method to get local foods to service sites,” and “Lack of storage.”

Table 6
Motivators for Purchasing and Serving Local Foods

What motivates you to purchase and serve local foods in your school food service program?	N = 32
Help Michigan farms and businesses	18
Increase student consumption of fruits and vegetables	15
Support the local economy	14
Higher quality food	12
Access to fresher food	10
Knowing food sources	10
Good public relations	7
Ability to purchase special varieties or types of produce and legumes	5
Parent demand for local foods	2
Lower transportation costs	2
Ability to purchase special quantities	1
Less use of pesticides	0
Student demand for local foods	0
Other (please describe)	0

Table 7
Barriers to Purchasing and Serving Local Foods

What barriers do you face in purchasing local foods for your food service program?	N = 32
Lack of products available at certain times of the year	20
Budget constraints	17
Federal procurement regulations	11
Food safety concerns	6
Lack of demand from student customers	6
Inconvenience	6
Other (please describe)	6
Liability concerns	5
Lack of growers/producers in the area from whom to purchase	5
District procurement regulations/policies	3
Lack of information about how to source local foods	2
Lack of support from school district	0

Table 8
Logistical Challenges in Purchasing and Serving Local Foods

What logistical challenges do you face in purchasing local foods in your food service program?	N = 32
Lack of staff labor to prepare local foods	19
Lack of a distribution method to get local foods to my building(s)	14
Lack of storage	9
Lack of equipment to prepare local foods	7
Lack of facilities to handle fresh, whole foods	6
Other (please describe)	6
Lack of staff training to prepare local foods	4
Lack of equipment to serve local foods	4

FSDs were asked to describe “other” reasons behind motivators, barriers, and logistical challenges. No FSDs indicated that there were other motivators, but FSDs did respond with other barriers and logistical challenges. They listed the following barriers:

- Growers who can meet supply demand
- [Our contracted food service provider’s] accounts have strictly managed order guides and vendors; sometimes we are restricted as to who to buy from.
- When purchasing from mainline supplier and produce provider, it is difficult to know what is a Michigan product and what is not.
- Purchasing limitations set by my contract management company
- Delivery to school
- Gap in staff knowledge of scratch cooking/payroll budget

FSDs listed the following logistical challenges:

- Delivery days are limited to one day a week. Due to lack of storage, we need at least two days a week for deliveries.
- Lack of approved distributor willing to deliver to my district
- Delivery days from our primary vendor
- Low availability of local produce throughout the year

School District Activities

Michigan-Grown Produce Served for the First Time

Monthly surveys helped track school-based activities that support 10 Cents, including Michigan-grown produce and legumes served for the first time, promotional and educational activities, and new adults involved in promotional and educational activities.

Each month from October to May, participating FSDs were asked to report Michigan-grown food products that their programs purchased and served for the first time. This survey question intended to collect the number and type of food products that were sourced specifically from Michigan for the first time. However, there is some ambiguity around the

responses to this question. Although the instructions asked FSDs to record each food product as being new only once, FSDs frequently recorded the same food product as new multiple times over the course of the eight monthly surveys. For example, one school district reported that Michigan-grown apples were purchased and served for the first time in six different months. It could be that a new variety or a new local source was used each month so that Michigan-grown apples were purchased and served six new times. In some cases, the FSD noted in the open-ended response field accompanying this question that the produce was a new variety. However, it was not possible to determine this information in each instance where food products were recorded multiple times as new. So, in all cases where multiple recordings occurred for a single food product, only one count per school district per food category was tallied for the survey results. In particular, three FSDs from participating school districts indicated they had been sourcing Michigan-grown products prior to 10 Cents participation, and they noted specifically that none of the Michigan-grown products listed were new to them.

Figures 1–3 show the number of school district food service programs that purchased and used Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, or legumes for the first time in the 2017–2018 program year. As reported by participating FSDs, **the Michigan-grown fruits most frequently used for the first time were peaches, blueberries, apples, sweet cherries, and strawberries.** Other new Michigan-grown fruits most frequently reported were plums, cranberries, and different varieties of the listed fruits. **Michigan-grown vegetables most frequently purchased and served for the first time were asparagus, carrots, winter squash, beets, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage.** Corn, broccoli, lettuce, salad greens, radishes, kale, potatoes, and grape tomatoes were also frequently reported as used for the first time by participating FSDs. Other new Michigan-grown vegetables were tomatillos, Jerusalem artichokes, arugula, and different varieties of the listed vegetables. Michigan-grown legumes were not used as often by participating school districts, and one FSD noted that legumes were difficult to prepare or incorporate into food service programs. Some Michigan-grown legumes were not used or served for the first time by any district. However, the Michigan-grown legumes most frequently used for the first time were black beans, pinto beans, cranberry beans, and red kidney beans.



Figure 1. Cumulative Reported First-Time Use of Michigan-Grown Fruit, 2017-2018 (N = 32)

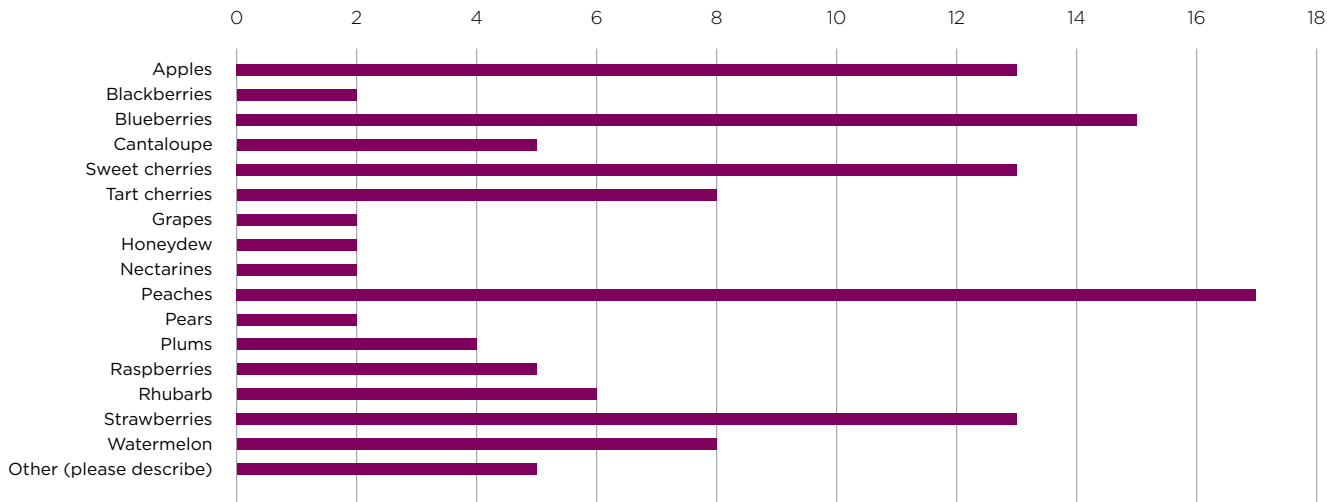


Figure 2. Cumulative Reported First-Time Use of Michigan-Grown Vegetables, 2017-2018 (N = 32)

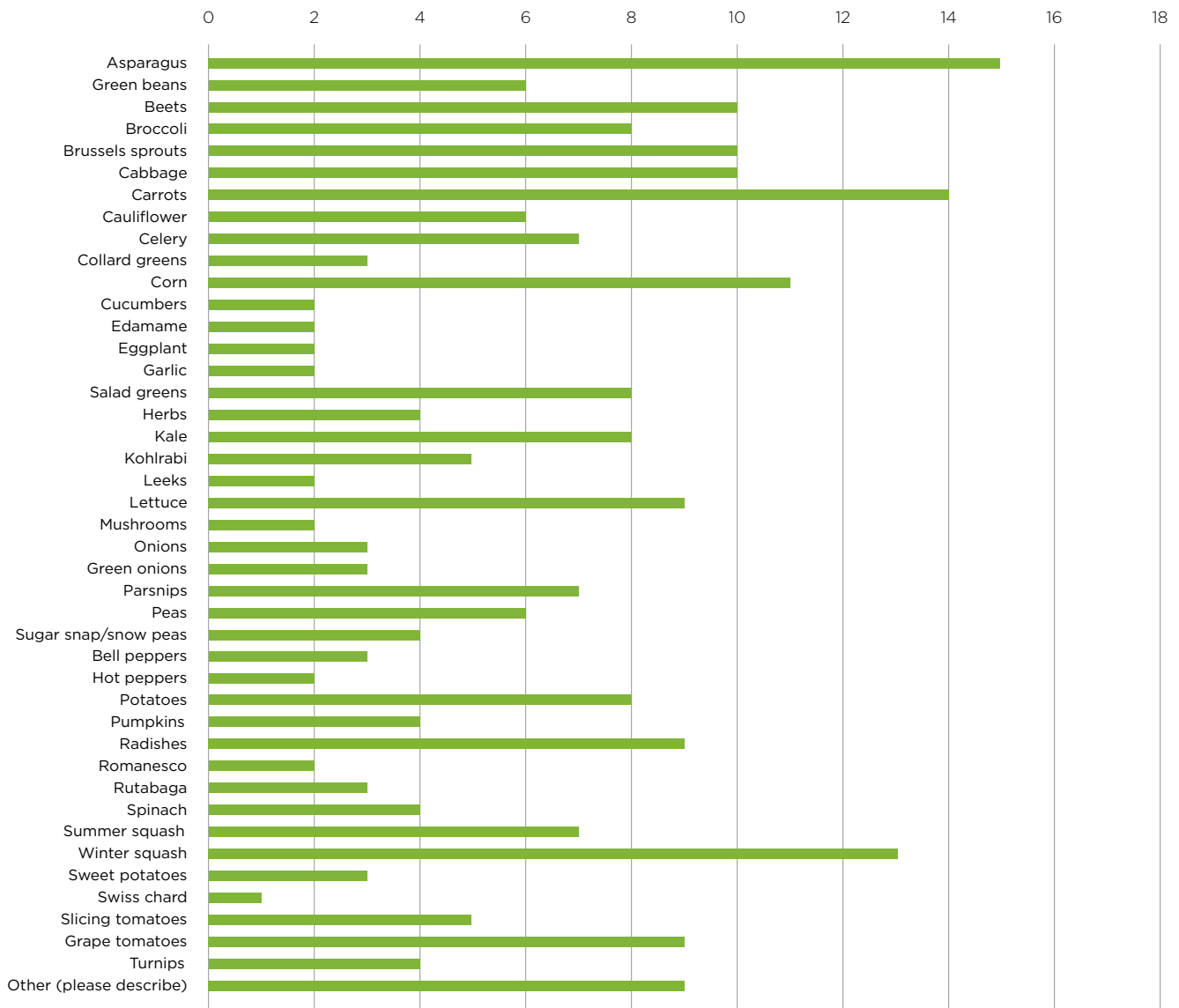
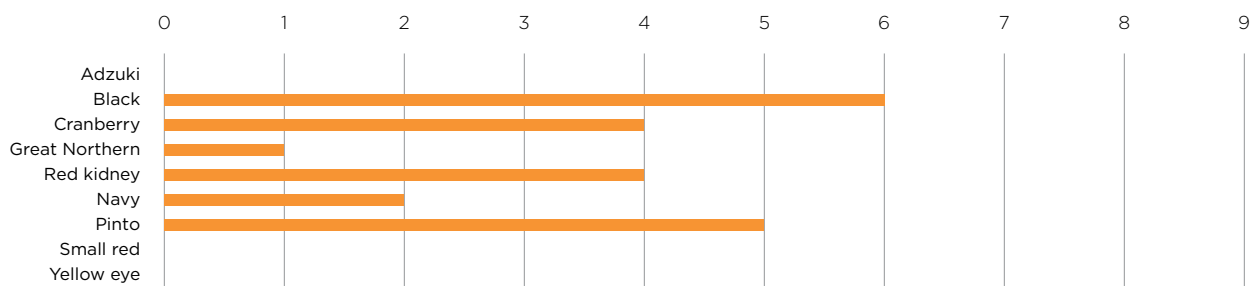


Figure 3. Cumulative Reported First-Time Use of Michigan-Grown Legumes, 2017-2018 (N = 32)



School District Activities: Promotion and Education

Monthly evaluation surveys also asked FSDs to report, to the best of their knowledge, promotional and educational activities that took place within the school district that supported student knowledge and consumption of local food products served through the 10 Cents program.

Many more promotional activities than educational activities occurred during the 2017–2018 school year; 668 promotional activities and 298 educational activities were reported. Table 9 shows the total number of each type of promotional activity that took place in each month across all school districts. The number of districts that reported promotional activities each month is shown in the first row of Table 9. Some districts reported several activities each month, and other districts reported one or two activities each month or every couple of months. One district did not report any promotional activities in 2017–2018, and one district each reported only one, two, and three activities, respectively. Common promotional activities were tasting activities, Cultivate Michigan poster displays, Harvest of the Month menu features, using materials featuring Michigan farmers, and displaying promotional posters. FSDs also recorded other promotional activities that took place:

- Entirely Michigan-made Thanksgiving meal and Michigan-grown meal days
- [State senator] serving lunch to students
- Students competing in a local cherry pie contest
- Garden and strawberry social
- Social media and email blasts
- Pop-up farmers markets

Table 10 shows the total number of each type of educational activity that took place in each month across all school districts. It also shows in the first row the number of districts that reported educational activities each month. About one-third as many educational activities were reported in comparison

to promotional activities. Again, some districts reported several each month, while others reported one or two activities each month or every couple of months. Two districts did not report any activities in 2017–2018, three districts reported one activity, and two districts reported two activities. Common educational activities were tasting activities, nutrition education in the cafeteria, and nutrition education in the classroom.

FSDs also recorded other educational activities that took place over the year:

- Attending a farmers market
- Zero waste in the lunchroom activity
- [Service members] in the classrooms
- Chef in the classroom
- Recipe sharing with classrooms
- National Apple Crunch Day (five districts reported participating)
- Student participation in cooking and meal preparation (two districts reported)

Tasting activities are listed in both promotional and educational categories. The categorization of any given tasting activity was left up to FSDs. This means that the count of tasting activities for each category is somewhat difficult to contextualize. There is also the possibility that some double-counting occurred. Despite these ambiguities, tasting activities were the most frequently reported activity for both promotion and education. Even if the total tasting activity count is cut in half, tastings are still the most frequently reported activity. Also, tasting activities were selected most frequently as the most successful activity for both promotion and education. Each month, FSDs were asked to report the most successful promotional and educational activities (one activity per month for promotion and education). Figures 4 and 5 show the sum of selections made over the course of the 2017–2018 program year. The contrast between tasting activities and other activities in these two figures is easy to see.

Table 9
Local Food Promotional Activities Implemented During 2017–2018 School Year,
All Districts

	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	TOTAL
Number of districts reporting activities (N = 32)	27	25	20	24	24	26	25	22	-
Tasting/taste-testing activities	19	12	14	16	15	17	13	16	122
Cultivate Michigan posters	13	14	10	13	9	8	5	8	80
Cultivate Michigan window clings	6	7	2	8	5	6	4	3	41
Harvest of the Month menu feature	10	11	14	9	8	6	10	10	78
Promotional posters	11	7	8	8	11	9	13	8	75
Cultivate Michigan seasonal menu feature	4	8	6	10	10	8	6	5	57
Creative menu names for dishes featuring local foods	5	6	6	8	6	10	4	6	51
Message boards/electronic signage	4	3	6	4	3	1	1	0	22
Decorations	9	5	1	2	2	4	2	2	27
Window clings	1	3	0	1	3	2	1	1	12
Materials featuring Michigan farmers	15	10	9	10	9	7	8	8	76
Other	7	5	1	5	3	2	2	2	27

Table 10
Local Food Educational Activities Implemented During 2017–2018 School Year,
All Districts

	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	TOTAL
Number of districts reporting activities (N = 32)	23	17	16	17	18	19	19	21	-
Tasting/taste-testing activities	18	14	10	12	16	15	14	13	112
Nutrition education in the classroom	7	6	7	7	6	9	9	10	61
Nutrition education in the cafeteria	12	8	10	9	8	7	9	8	71
School garden activities	6	3	3	3	4	1	4	7	31
Other classroom activities	0	2	0	2	1	0	0	2	7
Other cafeteria activities	7	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	11
Other district activities	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	5

Figure 4. Sum of Reported Most Successful Promotional Activities in 2017–2018, All Districts

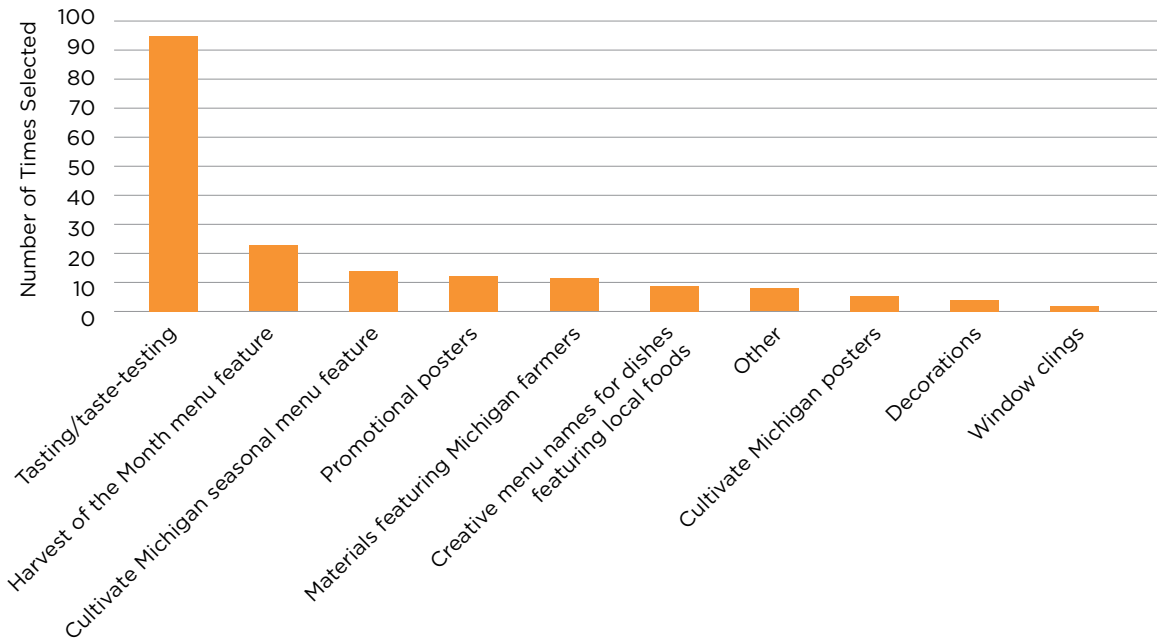
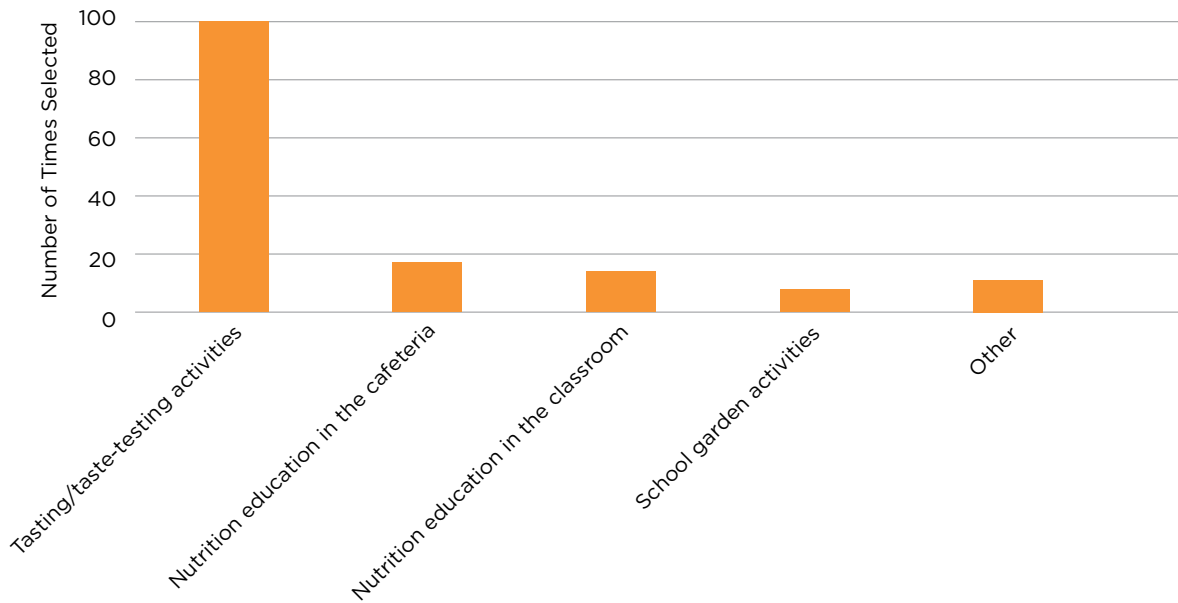


Figure 5. Sum of Reported Most Successful Educational Activities in 2017–2018, All Districts



This report does not display the selection of least successful activities, which was asked for and recorded. Seven FSDs noted that “least successful” did not apply to any of their activities or that all activities were successful in some way. Still, of the promotional activities, Cultivate Michigan posters and promotional posters were most frequently selected as the least successful. Of the educational activities, nutrition education in the cafeteria and school garden activities were most frequently selected as the least successful.

Monthly surveys also tried to capture new community involvement that occurred through the promotional and educational activities. FSDs were asked to report the number of new parents, farmers, teachers, and other adults who were involved with the district’s promotional and educational activities each month. The totals of reported counts are presented in Table 11. FSDs wrote in the following responses for other adults: principals and assistant principals, a superintendent, secretaries, paraprofessionals, dieticians, interns, volunteers from a local food business, and a local Rotary Club.

Table 11
Count of New Adults (Parents, Farmers, and Teachers) Involved With 2017–2018 Promotional and Educational Activities, All Districts (N = 288)

	PARENTS	FARMERS	TEACHERS	TOTAL
New adults involved with promotional activities	2,454	154	713	3,321
New adults involved with educational activities	253	72	354	679

Table 12
10 Cents Impact Statements, Total Responses, and Averages, 2017-2018

IMPACT STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE (2)	SOMEWHAT AGREE (1)	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE (0)	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE (-1)	STRONGLY DISAGREE (-2)	AVERAGE RESPONSE
We offered more local fruits in our school meals. (n = 31)	22	7	2	0	0	1.65
I have identified new Michigan-grown fruit, vegetables, and legumes that are eaten by our student customers. (n = 30)	19	10	1	0	0	1.6
We offered more local vegetables in our school meals. (n = 29)	18	10	1	0	0	1.59
We offered higher quality local produce and legumes. (n = 30)	16	10	3	1	0	1.37
Our students are eating more fruits. (n = 29)	15	10	3	1	0	1.34
Our students are eating more vegetables. (n = 30)	14	11	4	1	0	1.27
We added more legumes (dry beans in any form) to our lunch menus. (n = 30)	6	11	6	6	1	0.5
Our students are eating more legumes. (n = 30)	2	11	13	3	1	0.33

Impacts and Outcomes

The year-end survey gathered information about specific impacts and outcomes from participating districts. The survey presented specific impact statements concerning changes in food service, food quality, and student consumption of fruits, vegetables, and legumes that took place since starting 10 Cents, and FSDs were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each impact statement. Table 12 displays the impact statements and FSDs' levels of agreement, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." A Likert scale was used to evaluate the aggregate of responses, and these levels were equated to 2, 1, 0, -1, and -2. Average responses that are closer to 2 indicate higher levels of agreement among FSDs.

Impact statements in Table 12 are ordered by average level of agreement, from highest to lowest. There was a positive average level of agreement for each impact statement. **FSDs agreed most with statements on identifying new Michigan-grown**

fruits, vegetables, and legumes that are eaten by students and offering more local fruits and more local vegetables in school meals as impacts of the 10 Cents pilot. The lowest level of agreement was with statements on serving more legumes and students eating more legumes. Statements on students eating more fruits and vegetables and higher quality produce were in the middle.

The year-end survey also presented FSDs with a set of potential outcomes and asked them to select the top three that 10 Cents helped them achieve. **The three most frequently selected outcomes of their participation in the 10 Cents Pilot were "Our produce variety has increased," "It helps us meet our healthy school meal requirements," and "We have better support from our farm and food vendors/partners."** The three least frequently selected outcomes were "Purchasing obstacles are reduced," "Our food service budget stability is improved," and "Participation in our school meals program has increased." The tallies of responses to this question are displayed in Table 13.

Table 13
Outcomes Achieved Through 10 Cents, 2017–2018

Related to your food service operation, which of the following outcomes has the 10 Cents Pilot helped you achieve? (N = 32)	FREQUENCY SELECTED
Our produce variety has increased.	27
It helps us meet our healthy school meal requirements.	11
We have better support from our farm and food vendors/partners.	11
Food waste has decreased.	9
Our food purchasing budget is improved.	8
We have better support for school meals from the community.	8
Our buying power is enhanced.	4
We can plan our produce purchasing with greater certainty.	4
Our staff cooking skills have improved.	4
It has been easier to market our menus.	4
Participation in our school meals program has increased.	3
Our food service budget stability is improved.	2
Purchasing obstacles are reduced.	1

Comparisons with 2016–2017 Evaluation Survey Results

The 2017–2018 surveys collected much of the same information as the 2016–2017 surveys. In 2017–2018, the number of participating school districts doubled from the previous year; 32 school districts participated in the program, compared with 16 districts in the 2016–2017 pilot. The monthly surveys asked for the same information in both years. As noted earlier, the 2016–2017 year-end survey was not distributed in time to gather feedback, so no year-end data from the previous school year is available to compare with the year-end survey in 2017–2018, which was submitted by all 32 participating school districts.

Survey results from school districts for the 2017–2018 program show many similarities with results from 2016–2017. FSDs in both years selected top motivators, barriers, and logistics with similar distribution. The three most selected barriers and logistics were the same in both years, and two of the three most selected motivators were the same as well.

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The level of agreement with the surveyed impact statements was similar as well. In both years, FSDs agreed most with statements that they identified and offered more local fruits and vegetables that are eaten by students, that they improved food quality, and that students were eating more fruits and vegetables. In both years, FSDs agreed least with statements that they offered more legumes and that students were eating more legumes. FSDs in

2016–2017 agreed most with the statement that they offered more local vegetables in school meals, but in 2017–2018, FSDs agreed most with the statement that they offered more local fruits in school meals.

The kinds of new foods served were similar between 2016–2017 and 2017–2018. In 2016–2017, asparagus, blueberries, winter squash, carrots, peaches, tart cherries, and sweet cherries were the most common new Michigan-grown food items served, in order of highest frequency. In 2017–2018, the top five most common new foods served, in order of highest frequency, were peaches, asparagus, blueberries, carrots, and winter squash.

Double the number of school districts participated in the second year of the pilot than the first, so it follows that more promotional and educational activities occurred in the 2017–2018 pilot year. On average, 20 promotional activities and 9 educational activities occurred per district in 2017–2018, while 12 promotional activities and 7 educational activities occurred per district in 2016–2017. In both years, tasting activities were overwhelmingly selected as the most successful activity. **In both years, “The variety of produce in school meals has increased” was the most frequently selected outcome.** The other two most frequently selected outcomes in 2016–2017 were “We can plan local produce and legume purchasing with greater certainty” and “Our purchasing power is enhanced”; the other two top outcomes in 2017–2018 were “It helps us meet our healthy school meal requirements” and “We have better support from our farm and food vendors/partners.”

Program Feedback

Open-ended feedback was requested from FSDs through the 2017–2018 year-end survey. The feedback received covered student consumption of local foods, student feedback, impact on elements of the Michigan food supply chain, vendor feedback, district and food service staff feedback, and additional feedback.

FSDs were first asked whether students were eating foods provided through 10 Cents and how they knew this to be true. FSDs in two districts reported that they were unsure, but FSDs in the other 30 districts reported that students ate the Michigan-grown foods provided through the program.

As evidence, **FSDs reported positive student comments and attitudes, including excitement, requests for local foods and menu items, and pride in local food items.** Four districts tracked food waste, which was lower when Michigan-grown food items were served, and four additional FSDs stated that they observed less food waste. Six other FSDs stated that their visual or observational evidence indicated that students were eating more of the food items procured through 10 Cents.

FSDs were asked to report specific student feedback. Two FSDs said there was mixed student feedback about 10 Cents but did not provide specific statements. FSDs from the remaining 30 districts responded with positive feedback from students. Respondents stated that students were asking for more fruits and vegetables. One FSD reported, “The fruit is 100 times better.” **The students commented on the improvement in freshness, appearance, and flavor. Students also enjoyed the variety of foods served.** One district noted that there was “a sense of pride knowing they [students] are helping the community farmers.” Five other districts noted that students appreciate the farmers and want to know more about them. Students from three districts asked for recipes to make at home.

The year-end survey also asked FSDs to report any feedback that had been received from farmers and food producers, processors, and distributors about 10 Cents. Overwhelmingly, the gathered feedback was positive, including the following reports:

- Farmers love the increased business, and they enjoy providing hometown students fresh produce.
- **Farmers are excited for the future and “happy about the relationship-building potential that 10 Cents provides.”**
- Two farmers would like to host farm and facility tours for educational purposes.

Eight districts provided comments about Cherry Capital Foods, a distributor of Michigan foods. Cherry Capital Foods and its staff were described as helpful, enthusiastic, responsive, innovative, and pleasant.

One comment for improvement was the ability to use 10 Cents funding for summer programs, when the most Michigan-grown items are available and

in season. It should be noted that 10 Cents legislation does not prevent summer program spending, but funding is typically depleted before the districts begin planning the summer.

When asked to describe the influence that 10 Cents has had on farms, distributors, processors, and other food businesses and service providers, the response again was very positive. Creative partnerships occurred and mutually beneficial opportunities were found. One FSD said,

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Another FSD indicated that crop/service planning improved, and yet another said, “A steady economic market is developing.” One FSD noted that larger distributors are identifying more local products. Cherry Capital Foods was mentioned nine times, including reports that they were “extremely helpful” and “very accommodating.” One FSD stated, **“There is still much work to be done but many improvements are occurring.”** Many FSDs commented that the 10 Cents program is great for students, local neighbors, and the state.

FSDs were also asked to comment on how food service and district staff have responded to 10 Cents. Responses indicated that food service staff from these districts were very supportive of the program. Ten FSDs stated that staff were excited by the higher quality and greater variety of the local produce. Two FSDs said that there was a new sense of pride that comes with serving better food, and four noted how much they valued the student excitement that comes from serving better food. There were some

notes about the costs that come with serving local produce. Eight FSDs noted that local produce did require more work on the part of their staff, and five FSDs commented that the new produce brought new learning curves. Comments indicated that more creativity was required to process, prepare, and store new items and items of larger variety. **The greatest difficulty for food service staff seems to be the additional labor that is required to prepare and serve Michigan-grown foods through 10 Cents.** However, one FSD stated that “a little longer prep is no bother when they see the student enjoyment.”

Reports on school district staff response to 10 Cents were very positive as well. Teachers and administrators from one district “praise” the local vegetables and fruits. There is “outstanding enthusiasm” for farm to school products in one district, and the local foods are “extremely well received” in another. Five FSDs wrote that district staff “love” the local food items. District staff from seven districts also like that dollars are supporting local businesses and the state. Staff from one district like the benefit that the program has for students. Three FSDs did not provide any feedback, and three districts said feedback was neutral or they did not receive feedback to report.

Finally, respondents were asked to provide any additional feedback that they wanted to share. Three FSDs gave thanks. Four FSDs said that 10 Cents is a “great” program. Seven FSDs stated that they would like to see it continued or expanded. Five FSDs noted that the financial support really helped support their local food service. In general, FSDs reported that Michigan farmers enjoyed the program because they received expanded business and great certainty for planning as a result of the grant funding and pilot program.

Conclusion

The 2017–2018 state-funded 10 Cents a Meal Pilot Program provided match incentive funding to 32 school districts for the purposes of improving children’s nutrition and eating habits in the school setting and investing in Michigan’s agriculture and local food economy. The 2017–2018 evaluation survey results show that participating school districts are serving new Michigan-grown food items. FSDs indicated that they are identifying and offering more Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables and that

there is higher student consumption of fruits and vegetables than prior to participating in the pilot. Promotional and educational activities to support 10 Cents are occurring regularly, and community members are supporting the pilot with more or less effectiveness, as indicated by FSDs. Proportionally and nominally, more activities of both types occurred in 2017–2018 than in 2016–2017. Tastings are the most frequently occurring activity and the activity most frequently reported as “most successful.”

Reported spending data from the year-end survey showed that participating school districts spent more than \$770,000 on Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and legumes.

This includes spending for the pilot. Along with FarmLogix, MDE tracked 10 Cents spending more precisely through a separate online platform, but additional years of this data and more reliable tracking and reporting of other budget and spending figures through the monthly evaluation surveys are needed to compare and contextualize school districts’ overall Michigan-grown spending. Going forward, survey administrators and evaluators will support improvements in question design, tracking, and reporting so that better evaluation data can be provided regarding the economic and child health impacts of the 10 Cents pilot.

According to written feedback from FSDs, the effects of 10 Cents included reduced food waste and increased cafeteria traffic, enthusiasm, compliments, and demands for local food menu items. Students, teachers, administrators, and food service staff noticed differences in flavor, color, and texture between standard produce and Michigan-grown produce, and they took pride in knowing that the food they ate came from and supported local communities and economies.

FSDs also indicated that the financial support of 10 Cents lowered the financial strain of serving new local food products. Funding helped establish a more reliable market for local farmers and food vendors who must plan and/or grow weeks and months in advance to supply and serve local produce accurately and consistently. The reliability of school district demand encouraged collaboration and relationship building between local farmers and school districts and around distributors and other supply chain nodes as well.

Still, the incorporation of new Michigan-grown food items poses some challenges to food service programs, including methods of delivery, storage, preparation, inclusion in recipes, and service. FSDs noted that these changes also brought additional labor costs. Although some FSDs reported that they or their staff members were happy to adapt to these changes to reap the benefits of the program, others reported that food service staff did not enjoy the extra work. Serving Michigan-grown legumes also seems challenging given the small number of FSDs who reported trying Michigan-grown beans for the first time relative to other foods. Spending on Michigan-grown legumes is far lower than spending on Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables as well. Fifteen school districts did not report any spending on legumes, and one FSD noted that legumes are difficult to prepare and incorporate into service.

Overall, however, FSDs reported positive outcomes of participating in 10 Cents. In order of highest frequency, the top five selected outcomes for the 2017–2018 program year were “Our produce variety has increased,” “It helps us meet our healthy school meal requirements,” “We have better support from our farm and food vendors/partners,” “Our food purchasing budget is improved,” and “Food waste has decreased.” This selection of outcomes and the findings of this report provide evidence that 10 Cents is helping improve the nutrition and eating habits of students in the school setting and that it is investing in Michigan’s agricultural economy.

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As 10 Cents program efforts grow into their third year, evaluation efforts are increasing as well. Although the 2018–2019 monthly evaluation surveys will seek much of the same information as previous years for comparison, we also plan to conduct cafeteria and classroom surveys of students in some participating districts to ask whether they selected, tried, and liked Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and/or legumes served in school meals. Program administrators and evaluators will continue to work toward completeness of survey distribution, responses, and submissions so that the strength of data continues to improve.

10 Cents fits into a broader picture of farm to institution and good food work in the state as an original priority of the Michigan Good Food Charter, a policy initiative first released in 2010 that envisions a thriving economy, equity, and sustainability for all of Michigan and its people through a food system rooted in local communities and centered on good food. Among its goals, the Charter challenged Michigan institutions to source 20% of their food products from Michigan growers, producers, and processors by 2020. Additional goals included Michigan farmers profitably supplying 20% of all Michigan institutional, retailer, and consumer food purchases and being able to pay fair wages to their workers and Michigan schools incorporating food and agriculture into the pre-K–12 curriculum for all students. In its second year, it is clear that the 10 Cents program is helping Michigan school districts source and serve more Michigan-grown foods and provide more food education activities in schools while supporting Michigan farmers and food businesses.

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Center for Regional Food Systems
Michigan State University

480 Wilson Road
Natural Resources Building
East Lansing, MI, 48824

For general inquiries:

EXPLORE: foodsystems.msu.edu

EMAIL: CRFS@msu.edu

CALL: 517-353-3535

FOLLOW: @MSUCRFS

Email addresses and phone numbers for individual staff members can be found on the [people page](#) of our website.

