



10 Cents a Meal

FOR SCHOOL KIDS & FARMS



LEGISLATIVE REPORT

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (MDE)

March 22, 2017

I am pleased to provide the Legislature with this mid-year report on the 10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms incentive procurement pilot program. This popular program is providing schools with up to 10 cents per meal in match funding to purchase and serve Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and legumes to an estimated 48,000 students in 16 grant-winning school districts. The funding is actually somewhat less than 10 cents per meal because we pro-rated the amounts we provided in order to assure as many districts and students could be served as possible.

These schools were selected from 52 districts that applied from Prosperity Region 2 and Prosperity Region 4 — areas rich in agriculture, farm-to-school activity, distributors, and food hubs. The number of districts that applied exceeded MDE's expectations. Unfortunately, we had funding enough for only 16.

We believe the timing was right for this pilot, and for potential expansion next year, because schools are serving a greater variety of fruits and vegetables and that is exactly what Michigan farmers grow. Michigan is the second most agriculturally diverse state in the nation. Additionally, surveys show that school food service directors want to purchase more local produce, and Michigan farmers are interested in selling it to schools.

Receipts required of participating school districts show the schools, with the incentive program, provided sales for 86 farms in 28 counties so far, as well as 16 additional Michigan businesses, including processors and distributors. The pilot includes \$210,000 in match incentive reimbursements to the schools, which ultimately will mean at least \$420,000 injected into the state's economy, doubling the state investment.

In addition to economic impacts, the Legislature directed MDE to report on impacts in school food for children. We find that students overall were exposed to 49 different fruits and vegetables grown in Michigan, and that many children are being introduced to, and like, new fruits and vegetables as a result of this funding. Some foods are as seemingly common as peaches; others are more unusual vegetables such as beets, multicolored carrots, and healthy greens.

You will find many more details and stories in this report.

We would like to thank our state partners in this pilot project: Networks Northwest, the Prosperity Region office in Region 2, which inputted and analyzed invoice data with the collaboration of the Grand Valley Metro Council in Prosperity Region 4; the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems, which administered monthly food service director surveys and provided trainings; Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities, which conducted key stakeholder interviews; and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, which assisted in food service director trainings and resources.

Brian J. Whiston, State Superintendent



10 CENTS A MEAL FOR SCHOOL KIDS & FARMS:

STATE PILOT PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Description and Goals: *10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms* (10 Cents) is a pilot project to:

- Provide schools with an incentive match up to 10 cents per meal to purchase Michigan fruits and vegetables.
- Improve daily nutrition and eating habits for children through the school setting.
- Invest in Michigan agriculture and related local food business economy.
- Implement a \$250,000 pilot program with \$210,000 for school food reimbursements.

Pilot Locations: Competitive grants made available to districts in Prosperity Region 2 and Region 4

- 52 districts applied, which would have required \$882,110 for full funding.
- 16 districts funded, seven in Region 2 and nine in Region 4.
- Scored based on capacity to purchase, market and serve, and provide related education activities.
- Region 2 districts: Boyne Falls, Frankfort-Elberta, Glen Lake, Leland, Manistee, Northport, Traverse City.
- Region 4 districts: Coopersville, Forest Hills, Grand Haven, Montague, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Oakridge, Ravenna, Whitehall.

Number of Students Impacted: 48,000

Preliminary Outcomes and Related Measurements: Outcomes were planned in two key areas.

1. Agricultural Economic Development

- As of December 2016, 86 different Michigan farms received business from the pilot.
 - Those 86 farms are located in 28 Michigan counties: Allegan, Antrim, Barry, Benzie, Berrien, Cass, Charlevoix, Grand Traverse, Gratiot, Ionia, Isabella, Kalamazoo, Kalkaska, Kent, Lapeer, Leelanau, Lenawee, Manistee, Mason, Monroe, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Otsego, Ottawa, Van Buren, Wexford.
 - In addition, 16 other Michigan food businesses were impacted, including distributors and processors.
 - The districts spent \$113,976.49 so far, with \$56,569.32 from the reimbursement funds. Not all data is yet complete.
- Preliminary data, Networks Northwest Prosperity Region Office

Farmer Feedback: “The 10 cents a meal program has greatly increased our fresh produce business to area schools. The students are getting healthy, tasty local fruits and vegetables, which school food service directors tell us the students like and eat. The local farmers get to sell more produce, which helps the growers’ economics. Basically, great benefits for all involved.”

—Jim Bardenhagen, Leelanau County farmer and MSU Extension Director Emeritus

—Stakeholder interviews, Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities

2. Children’s Nutrition

- Children were served 49 different types of Michigan-grown produce as of September through December 2016.
 - Apples, pears, carrots, plums, and nectarines were most popular, purchased by nearly all schools.
 - Bell peppers, winter squash, tomatoes, cucumbers, green beans also widely purchased.
- Preliminary data, Networks Northwest Prosperity Region Office

Food Service Feedback:

- “Students appreciate that food is coming from their area and supporting local farmers. We started a Farm to School Friday once a month where all menu items are local, and they really are embracing the menus.”
- “‘Local’ has become a cool buzzword with the little guys (K-5).”
- “Have been able to purchase different fruits and vegetables. Kids look forward to new ones.”
- “Program helps keep participation numbers up.”

Top Three Outcomes Achieved for Food Service

- The variety of produce served in school meals increased.
- Purchasing can be planned with greater certainty.
- Purchasing power is enhanced.

Ability to Try New Things

Food service directors named 30 foods that they tried in meals. New foods tried by the largest number of districts were cherries, multicolored carrots, peaches, blueberries, strawberries, asparagus, squash, navy beans, and Romanesco.

—Preliminary Evaluation Surveys, MSU Center for Regional Food Systems

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MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Legislative summary: Pursuant to the 2017-2018 School Aid Budget, Section 31j:

Purpose of the funds: Districts within Prosperity Region 2 or Prosperity Region 4 that receive a grant for reimbursement shall use the funds to purchase whole or minimally processed fruits, vegetables, and legumes that are grown in this state and, if minimally processed, are also processed in this state. The districts must serve these foods in meals that are part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs that include school breakfast, lunch, afterschool snacks, and suppers.

Awarding of the funds: The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) developed scoring criteria that assessed an applicant's ability to procure, menu, promote, and market Michigan-grown products, and plans for educational activities that promote the goals of the program. Those educational activities were to meet one or more of the following: promote healthy food activities; have clear educational objectives; involve parents or the community; and connect to a school's farm-to-school procurement activities. MDE was also to consider the percentage of children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals; the variety of school sizes and geographic locations within the identified prosperity regions; and existing or future collaboration opportunities.

Grantees: Seven districts ranging in enrollment size from 175 students to 11,584 students were selected in Region 2 and nine ranging in size from 1,134 students to 10,238 students were selected in Region 4. They are located in rural and urban areas. They include nine districts with 49 percent or more free and reduced-price lunch rates.

There also were collaborative opportunities. For example, six districts are from Muskegon County and a cluster of districts are in the Grand Traverse region.

MDE projected there would be 37 applicants out of 167 potential school districts that could apply from the two Prosperity Regions. There were 52 applicants, or 31 percent of all possible, exceeding expectations. There was only enough funding for 16 districts. MDE provided somewhat less than 10 cents per meal, on a pro-rated basis, in order to assure as many districts and students could be served as possible.

Timeframe: Funding is from September 1, 2016, to September 30, 2017. MDE solicited grant applications the afternoon of August 9, immediately after approval of the application by the state Board of Education. Winning grantees were notified September 15, immediately following that day's Board meeting.

Report elements: The Legislature requested the following information in a report by April 1, 2017, on expected outcomes and related measurements based on progress so far:

- (a) The extent to which farmers and related businesses, including distributors and processors, see an increase in market opportunities and income generation through sales of Michigan or local products to districts (gleaned from invoice data and surveys of food service directors.)
- (b) The ability to which pupils can access a variety of healthy Michigan-grown foods through schools and increase their consumption of those foods (gleaned through invoice and meals data and surveys of food service directors.)

FOOD SERVICE DIRECTORS ARE TALKING ABOUT 10 CENTS A MEAL

- *"We are really enjoying the Michigan grown produce. There is such a huge difference in produce taste when it is local."*
- *"The kids are now asking, 'Any new fruits or veggies to try?' They keep me on my toes."*
- *"'Local' has become a cool buzz word among the little guys (K-5)"*
- *"Students appreciate that food is coming from their area and supporting local farmers."*

Preliminary Food Service Survey data as of February 2016, courtesy MSU Center for Regional Food Systems.

10 CENTS A MEAL

ECONOMIC DASHBOARD

★ = school awarded

10 Cents a Meal grant

86 + 16
FARMS MORE BUSINESSES
RECEIVED BUSINESS

THE FARMS
WERE IN

28 COUNTIES

Allegan • Antrim • Barry • Benzie • Berrien
Cass • Charlevoix • Grand Traverse • Gratiot
Ionia • Isabella • Kalamazoo • Kalkaska • Kent
Lapeer • Leelanau • Lenawee • Manistee • Mason
Monroe • Montcalm • Muskegon • Newaygo
Oceana • Otsego • Ottawa • Van Buren • Wexford

\$113,976.49 SPENT ON LOCAL FRUIT,
VEGETABLES, LEGUMES
2016-17 YTD

\$420,000

INTO MICHIGAN'S
ECONOMY

\$210,000

FROM STATE INCENTIVE
WENT TO 16 DISTRICTS

2016-2017

\$1,760,000

INTO MICHIGAN'S
ECONOMY

\$880,000

FROM STATE INCENTIVE
NEEDED TO FULLY FUND
ALL 52 APPLICANTS

DOUBLE THE STATE'S INVESTMENT

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

10 Cents has provided \$113,976.49 so far in sales for 86 farms that range in size from a 20-acre farm targeting local markets to a nearly 2,000-acre farm that has the capacity to supply the largest of our state's school districts, such as Detroit Public Schools. It is also helping to build or strengthen transparent business supply chains that make it easier for schools to choose Michigan-grown products.

Nearly a third of the way into the grant, the schools have spent 28 percent of their funds. In future years, MDE anticipates that an even greater percent would be spent in the fall. The number was less this fall because the mid-September timing of grant awards meant that districts had already completed their purchases and menus for early fall, according to Erik Neering, Regional Director for Chartwells, the food service management company which manages meals for seven of the 10 Cents districts. Summer purchases are planned. Here are some of the stakeholder stories that illustrate the economic outcomes and potential for 10 Cents:

YOUNG, SMALL-SCALE, LOCAL MARKETS

Ryan and Andrea Romeyn are part of a growing trend in some parts of the country of new, younger farmers choosing to work on smaller-scale farms and cultivate local markets. In business for 15 years, the Romeyns farm 20 acres of diverse vegetables in Antrim County north of Traverse City and employ 30 people, mostly part-time and seasonally. Last year, they sold 210,000 pounds of produce at farmers markets and to 355 families that "subscribe" to a full season of weekly boxes of fresh produce. They also sold to wholesale markets including local grocery stores, distributor Cherry Capital Foods, and schools.

"We've had a David and Goliath battle to form a viable business as a small produce farm in a place where food is shipped from all over the world at a fraction of the price it costs to produce it in northern Michigan," Andrea Romeyn said. "We've been especially keen on creating wholesale markets that reach more people. The 10 Cents a Meal program has added reassurance to grow our business through loans for the building of a new barn and purchasing of more efficient equipment. We have hope for expansion and longevity."

The school programs also have increased sales for home use, she said.

"I've had more and more kids drag their parents over to my farmers market booth and request items like parsnips because they tried them in school," she said.

FOURTH-GENERATION, LARGE-SCALE

Nick Oomen of Hart, in Oceana County, is 27 years old. He is a fourth-generation farmer, and the family business, Oomen Brothers Inc., grows diverse vegetables and some fruit on approximately 1,800 acres. He serves on his county Farm Bureau board, is part of a Farm Bureau leadership training program, and serves on the Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board and Michigan Asparagus Research Committee.

This year, Oomen Brothers plans to plant at least 5 acres of broccoli specifically for a new business called Farm to Freezer. Demand has grown so much for broccoli in schools that Farm to Freezer's current farm suppliers could not supply the growth. Oomen anticipates expanding the acreage.

"If I can do 50 acres, then I have a considerable field and I can justify hiring a few more people at harvest," he said. "I think 10 Cents is a good program. I think it is beneficial to get better, more sustainably produced food into the school systems at an affordable, fair price. And it is helping drive Michigan's economy instead of supporting foreign interests or even California's economy."



"The 10 Cents a Meal program has added reassurance to grow our business..."
—Andrea Romeyn, Providence Farm



"It is helping drive Michigan's economy..."
—Nick Oomen, Oomen Brothers



Pictured above: Brandon Seng and Mark Coe of Farm to Freezer freeze and package Michigan-grown produce into a healthy brand name product while training workers in new job skills. Farm to Freezer now reaches more than 50 schools.



Pictured above: Heather Ratliff of Cherry Capital Foods saw a 49 percent increase in sales to the 10 Cents schools this year.

SUPPLY CHAIN GROWTH: PROCESSING

Mark Coe, a former farm manager in Manistee County, concluded that farms would benefit if sales of their products could be extended into the winter months. In late 2013, he teamed up with Brandon Seng, director of food programs at Goodwill Industries Northern Michigan, to develop Farm to Freezer in Traverse City, which freezes Michigan-grown produce into a branded product while training workers in job skills.

The program is now spinning off as an independent business with a second location in southeast Michigan. They plan to grow from six employees to 30 in those two locations in five years.

Farm to Freezer hired two part-time employees just to keep up with institutional packing needs this fall and is working with about 30 farmers now. "Today alone I had two farmers call me to see what kinds of needs we had that they could grow for us," Coe said. "We are creating opportunity for growers."

"The school sales have been on a steady incline and then they really spiked this year. Institutional school sales increased 30 percent because of 10 Cents a Meal."
—Mark Coe, Farm to Freezer

SUPPLY CHAIN GROWTH: DISTRIBUTION

Heather Ratliff develops a different side of the supply chain—school customers. Ratliff works at Cherry Capital Foods, a Michigan-food distribution company with 50 employees located in Traverse City and Okemos which routes a fleet of 10 trucks throughout much of the state. It started in 2007, serving just northwest lower Michigan.

Ratliff saw a 49 percent increase in sales to the 10 Cents schools this year. One district in west Michigan was one of Cherry Capital's top 20 customers—including restaurants and stores—in February. A district in Ottawa County that had only purchased \$52 worth of apples the previous year—for the Michigan Apple Crunch event—purchased \$9,000 of various products this year, and another in Muskegon County that already had a robust farm to school program increased purchases by 50 percent.

The 10 Cents Program is opening doors for more markets.

"That is my greatest joy. These schools really wanted to do farm to school and these dollars have allowed them to increase what they are doing."
—Heather Ratliff, Cherry Capital Foods

SUPPLY CHAIN GROWTH: COMMUNITY

In Muskegon, a city-owned, all-season farmers market building is about to also become a food hub—a place where farmers can bring or combine their products for wholesale customers. Project manager Marty Gerencer said 10 Cents a Meal was a catalyst in helping to launch it this spring.

A coalition of groups that include the city, community foundation, and schools had secured various grants to support the growth of farm to school activities and to conduct feasibility studies for a food hub. When six school districts in Muskegon County won 10 Cents a Meal grants, she said it made people realize it was time to stop talking and act.

“Once state funding came in the door, it was like, ok, there is money to buy fresh product,” she said. “It was like the light went on.”

Dan Gorman, Food Service Director for Montague Area Public Schools and Whitehall District Schools, is organizing orders from as many of the 16 districts in Muskegon that want to participate in purchasing from the hub. They will start small, likely with two products they know farmers will have this spring and then expand in the summer and fall. Cherry Capital Foods, the local foods distributor from Traverse City, is also involved for deliveries.

“If every school in Muskegon County could be in the 10 Cents Program, the goal with the food hub is that every January we could do a request for produce from our local growers for the following school year. We could say what type of produce is needed and what volume we would use per month, and see what kind of price that would bring. This would give us a consistent supply of great local products and give farmers a stable market,” Gorman said.

The state’s support also re-affirmed for Muskegon officials the merits of agriculture for community economic development, Gerencer said.

**“The state believes in farmers, and the state believes in kids. That is the message it is sending.”
—Marty Gerencer, Muskegon Food Hub**

SUPPLY CHAIN GROWTH: LARGE-SCALE

When David Pearson started his Grand Rapids-based food company, Pearson Foods, in the 1970s, it was a two-person team growing bean sprouts and delivering to local accounts in a station wagon. Now the company has 200 employees and supplies customers across the Great Lakes states.

The company is large enough that Michigan-based Gordon Food Service (GFS)—which distributes to restaurants and food service operations in most of the United States and Canada—partnered with Pearson to supply it with a Michigan-grown produce line. This allowed GFS to respond to the increasing interest among its Michigan customers to buy locally grown food.

Kim VanAlstine, a Pearson Sales Manager, met with the seven Chartwells-operated 10 Cents schools recently to explain products it has available yet this winter, and what was available in the fall. Farm to Freezer also attended and shared information.

Products Pearson provides include green beans, beets, carrot coins, broccoli, turnips, bok choy, shredded cabbage, winter squash, parsnips, kale, cucumber, peppers, and more. Pearson processes and packs fruits and vegetables from 31 different farms, typically 2,000 acres each, in Kent, Montcalm, Berrien, Barry, Newaygo, Lenawee, Oceana, Allegan, Van Buren, Ionia, Ottawa, Lapeer, and St. Joseph counties.

“We didn’t know that half this stuff was available,” said Colleen Johnson, Chartwells Food Service Director for Muskegon Public Schools and Muskegon Heights Public Schools, who plans to spend some of her funds for a large summer program.



**“If we still have funding, I will plan earlier next year. I will hit the ground running.”
—Colleen Johnson, Muskegon Public Schools and Muskegon Heights Public Schools**

Pictured left: Dan Gorman, Food Service Director, Montague Area Public Schools, Whitehall District Schools. Pictured right: Colleen Johnson, Food Service Director, Muskegon Public Schools and Muskegon Heights Public Schools.

ACCESS TO LOCAL FOOD

Food service directors in the 10 Cents a Meal districts served 49 different Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables to 48,000 students in breakfasts, lunches, and snacks. Schools typically have only about \$1 to \$1.20 a meal to spend on food, and of that about 30 cents is for fruits and vegetables. So a matching 10 cents, food service directors say, help them serve more fresh produce instead of canned. It also provides them with the flexibility to try new things to see what their students like.

Here are some of their stories:

MUSKEGON

Colleen Johnson, Food Service Director for Muskegon Public Schools and Muskegon Heights Public Schools, grew up in a rural part of Michigan, near Blue Lake. Her city students, however, haven't had the same experiences she had eating fresh fruits and vegetables grown by area farms.

"We need to promote our state and its bounty," she said. "When we used Michigan apples rather than Washington apples our consumption went up sixty percent. They like them because they taste good. It is the same thing when we have peaches. When we had peaches, we had them on our fruit and vegetable bars for all of our buildings. At the elementary level, they picked it up and said, 'What is this?' 'Well, it is a peach.' Then they bite it and smell it and their faces light up. It was so much fun watching them."

**"We need to promote our state and its bounty."
—Colleen Johnson, Muskegon Public Schools
and Muskegon Heights Public Schools**



Pictured above: Children at Muskegon Public Schools. The lettuce and broccoli in the salad bar that day were Michigan-grown.



Pictured right: Tom Freitas, Food Service Director, Traverse City Area Public Schools pictured with FoodCorps Service Member Julia Paige.

TRAVERSE CITY

Tom Freitas, Food Service Director for Traverse City Area Public Schools, said that with the extra 10 cents a meal he's been able to try new things like kale, multicolored carrots, and Romanesco, a lime green cauliflower that kids call "spaceships" or "Christmas trees."

Instead of taking just the required half-cup of vegetables in the salad bar, Freitas said, students in his highest free and reduced-price lunch school are taking three times that.

"And they eat it all," he said. "I am so proud of these kids."

One of the big benefits of the extra 10 cents is that it reinforces for farmers and distributors that the school market for Michigan produce is a serious market that isn't going to go away, he said. As a result, they are planning for, growing, processing, and sourcing products that schools can use.

"You can imagine how much produce is going to be purchased in Michigan by all those schools when we get 10 cents across the board for all schools," he said.

**"It is nice to have a government program that ensures that a school has to double the investment in Michigan produce in order to receive their reimbursement. Not many grants pay back the state like that."
—Tom Freitas, Traverse City Area Public Schools**

MANISTEE

Manistee Area Public Schools Food Service Director Keri Carlson loves the responses of children to the flavors and connection to Michigan that 10 Cents has provided.

“We got some plums back in October and they were small this year, and so my elementary kids said we got ‘jumbo grapes,’” she said. “No, honey, those are plums, and they are grown right here in Michigan.’ They absolutely loved them. We were surprised at how many they took. We would have students come with three, four, five on a tray.”

“I think that students, when they eat something and we can tell them that it was grown near here, they relate to that. It is interesting to see.”
—Keri Carlson, Manistee Area Public Schools

GRAND HAVEN

Sarah Stone, a Chartwells Food Service Director for Grand Haven Area Public Schools, said Chartwells typically limits its food service staff in her region of the state to buying from certain larger vendors. But the 10 Cents schools have been allowed more choices, such as Michigan-focused Cherry Capital Foods, which sources from smaller growers to mid-size.

And those smaller growers, she said, often grow more “unique” products that children like, such as rainbow colored carrots. It’s made a difference.

“We got peaches and plums and some different varieties in the fall that the kids don’t normally see, and they were loving it,” she said. “They were taking their fruits and vegetables versus whining about taking them.”

FRANKFORT

Frankfort-Elberta Area Public Schools Food Service Director Jenna Noffsinger has taken the rainbow carrots to a new level.

A local cooperative of 12 growers in four area counties has joined together to create an online ordering system for their products and to process fresh vegetables largely for school markets. They provided Noffsinger with yellow and purple carrot snack sticks—the school colors of Frankfort’s Panther mascot—which she roasts and calls “Panther Fries.” They are a hit with students.

“There is always a learning curve every new school year as it seems kids’ likes and dislikes change from year to year,” she said. “With the continuation of the funding it will help continue the process of adding more and more variety to the items we serve. And the kids will learn more as well, and will be open to keep on trying new things.”

Noffsinger said the 10 Cents funds provide food service directors with stable financing to grow their farm to school programs. If they have to make hard budget cuts because of things unrelated to food costs—like lost revenues due to snow days when food service still has costs like labor and overhead—they won’t make cuts in their local food spending because they want to maximize the 10 Cents grant.



Pictured above: Jenna Noffsinger, Frankfort-Elberta Area Public Schools Food Service Director. Photo courtesy The Betsie Current. Pictured left: Romanesco

10 CENTS A MEAL

LOCAL FOOD DASHBOARD

49 MICHIGAN-GROWN
FRUITS, VEGETABLES,
AND LEGUMES SERVED



PURCHASED BY NEARLY ALL SCHOOLS

apples • pears • carrots • plums • nectarines

ALSO WIDELY PURCHASED

bell peppers • winter squash • tomatoes
• cucumbers • green beans

*Preliminary data as of December 2016, courtesy Networks Northwest Prosperity Region Office

30 NEW FOODS TRIED BECAUSE OF 10 CENTS

New foods tried by the largest number of districts, according to food service director surveys, were cherries, multicolored carrots, peaches, blueberries, strawberries, asparagus, squash, navy beans, and Romanesco.



TOP 3 REASONS TO BUY LOCAL

1. Increase student consumption of fruits and vegetables
2. Higher quality food
3. Support the local economy

TOP 3 OUTCOMES ACHIEVED FOR FOOD SERVICE BECAUSE OF 10 CENTS A MEAL

1. The variety of produce served in school meals has increased
2. Local produce and legume purchasing can be planned with greater certainty
3. Purchasing power is enhanced

*Preliminary Food Service Survey data as of February 2017, courtesy MSU Center for Regional Food Systems

MARKETING & EDUCATION

Schools that were awarded the 10 Cents grants had a wide variety of plans to educate students and promote local foods in connection with food service efforts, including focuses on nutrition, educational objectives, and parental engagement. Examples included taste tests, harvest of the month programs, and school gardens.

Here are some of the stories that show their efforts:

TASTE TESTING IN THE CLASSROOM

In Leland Public Schools, Laura Miller, Student Advocate and Farm to School Coordinator, connects kids in the classroom to what Food Service Director Dave Ruszel is serving. She provides them with samples of items he plans to make, such as winter squash soup and kohlrabi snack sticks. At the same time, she teaches them how the nutrients in the foods affect their health, and how and where they were grown.

“Parents have told me numerous stories of how their children are identifying vegetables at markets and stores that they hadn’t even tried before,” she said.

Ruszel, too, is trying things with kids he never imagined he’d try before having the 10 Cents funding, which makes a difference in what and how much he can buy. He serves apple-kale salad and kohlrabi sticks, for example. “We’ve put them on the salad bar and they fly. And, of course, the secret with those has always been the sampling we do.”

“It is very strange that kids like beets. I’ve put canned beets on the salad bar, and the kids don’t like them. But I do a fresh beet with olive oil and vinegar, and the kids love it.”
—Dave Ruszel, Leland Public Schools

Leland Public Schools was among the schools in northwest Michigan that had been part of a local, three-year 10 Cents a Meal pilot project, for which grant funding ran out last June. That’s long enough for him to see lasting change in how students eat. His middle school students now readily eat healthy food because they were exposed to it in elementary school. He’s started to train the middle school students to conduct taste tests with their fellow students because Miller only serves the elementary grades. “The kids were missing it.”



Pictured above: Diego tastes squash soup in Mrs. Klein’s 3rd grade class, Leland Public Schools.

ROLE MODELS AND FAMILY

Boyne Falls Public Schools, a tiny school of 200 students, decided three years ago to hire a chef to run its kitchen. As a result, students are eating not only local produce, but also local meat. Chef Nate Bates, with funds from a grant, purchased a locally raised pig and smoked it for use throughout the year.

With only about \$1 per meal to spend on food, Bates said the extra 10 cents a meal helps him to do more of what he wants to do. Participation rates have risen since he transformed the kitchen, and adult purchases from staff have quadrupled. Those increased purchases also help his bottom line.

And, just as important, is the role modeling staff provides for children, he said.

“That is a teaching moment right there,” he said. “When the librarian is going through the line with the fourth graders, they look at her choices and they can talk.”

That teaching is extending to families now, too. Sixty percent of the children at Boyne Falls Public School qualify for free and reduced-price meals. Bates and others in the school are holding a family crockpot cooking event in April. The school nurse will educate adults on nutrition and easy, healthy meals. An educator will teach kids basic kitchen safety. Bates will teach all how to make a one-pot meal. They will eat together, and then the families will go home with a crockpot, groceries, and recipes.

“10 Cents a Meal is making farming and eating a priority. Being exposed at a younger age to fruits and vegetables through growing, taste testing, having it on their school menus – that improves what they choose and it carries through their whole life. It would be a shame if 10 Cents is discontinued. There is still work to be done, and there is such positive momentum.” —Deb Warren, Muskegon County Farm to School



Pictured above left: Muskegon Area Career Tech Center students learn culinary skills by developing recipes for 10 Cents schools, prepping food for meals, and serving taste test recipes. Here, they visit Scholl Farms. Pictured above right: Students prepare Katie's Breakfast Cookie using ingredients such as Michigan beans from Fiebig Farm, dried cherries, and honey.

CAREER TECH CULINARY STUDENTS

Elissa Penczar teaches Catering and Culinary Management at the Muskegon Area Career Tech Center operated by Muskegon Area Intermediate School District. She says tying her program to the expanded farm to school efforts made possible by 10 Cents a Meal is a big win for her students who come from all of the high schools in Muskegon County.

“I’ve been using the farm to school framework as a big umbrella to meet my educational objectives,” she said, “such as nutrition or knife skills, scaling up recipes to serve thousands of people, marketing, and management.”

Three times a year, the students hear from Whitehall District Schools and Montague Area Public Schools Food Service Director Dan Gorman which of three Michigan products he wants them to develop recipes for and, ultimately, create 7,000 samples or more for students to taste. They use the Cultivate Michigan marketing materials that have been designed as part of the Michigan Farm to Institution Network to promote them to students.

“They are loving the notion that they are developing recipes for other kids to eat in K-12 schools,” Penczar said. “It gives them a really great leadership opportunity to really feel that they are connected and that it matters.”

They are also learning by teaching other students from other area schools how to prepare and share samples. And they are getting much needed repetitive practice in knife skills by dicing 150 pounds of potatoes from Michigan farmers that Gorman buys each week from Cherry Capital Foods. Gorman roasts them for student lunches.

**“It is a lot healthier than tater tots or French fries.”
—Dan Gorman, Whitehall District Schools and
Montague Area Public Schools**

Penczar, meanwhile, is working to get as much industry credentialing as she can for her students as a result of this experience, so they are better set for jobs. And students feel valued. At a recent meeting, adults sought their input.

“This is like when your parents finally let you sit at the grown up table. What we are doing matters.” —Student at Muskegon Area Career Tech Center

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

If a food service director serves beets, how might classroom teachers get students excited about eating them while also meeting their own teaching schedules and objectives?

In the Traverse City Area Public Schools and Boyne Falls Public Schools this year, they do so by tapping into a collection of lessons vetted by curriculum specialists at Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District. The lessons were developed with the assistance of FoodCorps service members, who are part of an AmeriCorps program that is specifically geared to help kids learn to eat healthy in schools. They have worked in the classroom with teachers to test the lessons for ease of use. In one class, FoodCorps service member Lindsay Hall worked with children to create Valentine's Day cards using beet juice as the ink.

In other schools, children learn graphing by charting the results of cafeteria taste tests.

The ISD has created a home for the lessons on a farm to school webpage that it created last year. It is available for anyone to use at www.farmtoschool.tbaisd.org.

“To connect to curriculum, we talked about how beets grow, how beets were used throughout history as fabric dye and how the words ‘beet’ and ‘beat’ are homophones — giving us plenty of un-BEET-able puns for our cards.”

—Lindsay Hall, FoodCorps Service Member, Boyne Falls Public Schools

COLLABORATION ACROSS THE STATE

Food service staff, educators, and others from Muskegon County made a “learning journey” to Traverse City in the fall to explore farm to school progress there. They discovered the professionally vetted farm to school lessons at Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, and it was a highlight, said Deb Warren, who is coordinating farm to school program development in the Muskegon Public Schools.

“We are trying to figure out a way to utilize it in our districts and, really, countywide,” she said. “A lot of times when you see curriculum, it is always in other states. The Traverse City one is very helpful.”

Mike Hill, superintendent at the ISD, is glad to hear it. He became committed to farm to school after seeing the difference it made for his son when Glen Lake Community Schools changed its food service a few years ago.

“Imagine being in middle school as an overweight boy,” he said. “You go to your school each day, eating pizza and hot dogs. Amazingly, the school adopts a farm to school and fresh food concept. The young man starts a mission to eat healthy and even brought the passion of local, fresh food home. Four years later, you have a valedictorian of his class, all-state athlete, and ambassador for fresh, locally grown food. The school made the difference. We cannot underestimate the impact this has for our priority, children.”

“We cannot underestimate the impact this has for our priority, children.”

—Mike Hill, Superintendent, Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District



Cherries

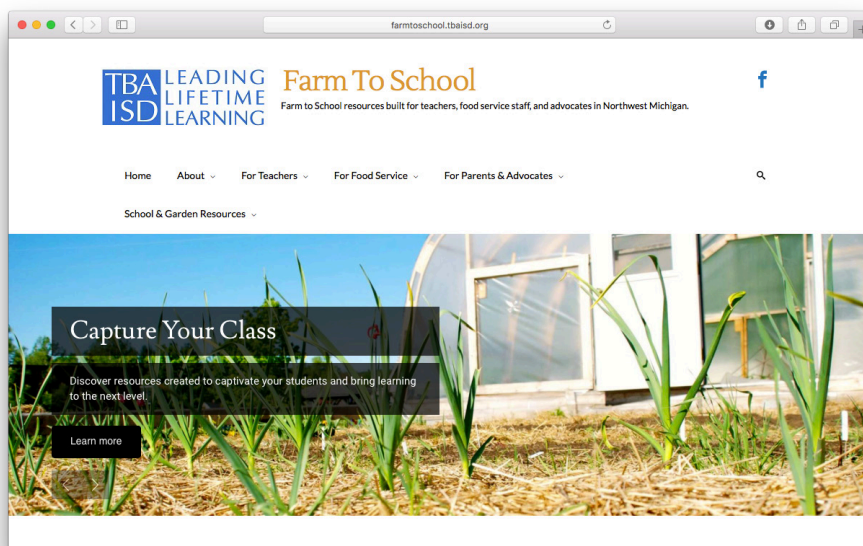


A single tart cherry tree has an average of 7,000 cherries.

Michigan is the top producer of tart cherries in the U.S. with about 1/3 of the country's total production.

Dried and frozen tart cherries are an excellent source of Vitamin A.

cultivatemichigan.org



Pictured left and above: Educational resources that promote healthy eating at school.

HISTORY

Michigan gained national prominence when the Legislature appropriated \$250,000 for its pilot 10 Cents a Meal program in fiscal year 2017 to provide incentive match funding for schools to purchase Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables.

Three other states—Oregon, New Mexico, and New York, as well as Washington, D.C.—have launched similar programs that provide funding for schools to purchase locally grown food. New York, along with Michigan, set aside pilot funding for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

“Additional reimbursement policies for facilitating local procurement go a long way in leveraging farm to school benefits for children, farmers, and communities,” said Helen Dombalis, Programs Director of the nonprofit National Farm to School Network. “With this bill, Michigan joins just a handful of states that have taken this great step forward, demonstrating its role as a national leader in this work.”

Farm to school programs, in general, have become a popular tool nationwide for leveraging school food programs to support local agricultural economies while also feeding children a variety of fresh food and fostering healthy eating habits.

Despite its popularity among food service directors, farmers, and community members, schools have cited tight budgets as one of the major reasons they don’t purchase more than they do.

A 2014 survey by the Michigan Department of Education found that 54 percent of Michigan school food service directors reported purchasing local foods. A 2013 survey by MSU’s Center for Regional Food Systems found that 82 percent were interested in purchasing local foods in the future.

And its 2012 survey of farmers found that 50 percent of Michigan vegetable growers were interested in selling to

institutions. Budget constraints were among the top three barriers cited by school food service directors in 2009, 2012, and 2013.

In 2012, the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems launched the MI Farm to School Grants Program which has provided one-year grants for up to three years to assist interested schools and early childhood programs in overcoming barriers to purchasing locally grown food, including equipment and training.

Grantees are allowed to use funds to purchase locally grown food—and that has ended up being a large expenditure. Nearly all grantees stressed in evaluation surveys and interviews that an increase in food budgets is of utmost importance to better support local food purchasing.

The 10 Cents a Meal idea was included as one of 25 recommendations in the Michigan Good Food Charter, which was created in 2010 by a statewide network of schools, organizations, and individuals looking for ways to improve health, grow jobs, and boost the state’s economy.

Governor Snyder subsequently remarked on the positive potential of farm to school initiatives in his health and wellness policy address in September 2011. And in 2012, schools, nonprofit organizations, and economic development leaders in northwest lower Michigan unveiled before Governor Snyder their intentions of testing the idea with privately raised grant funds.

The nonprofit Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities in Traverse City coordinated the local pilot, which inspired Senator Darwin Booher, R-Evart, and Senator Goeff Hansen, R-Hart, to establish the Michigan pilot.

MDE, the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems, and Groundwork Center field inquiries regularly from people across the state, the Midwest, and nationally who are interested in Michigan’s 10 Cents a Meal program.

“With this bill, Michigan joins just a handful of states that have taken this great step forward, demonstrating its role as a national leader in this work.”
—Helen Dombalis, Programs Director, National Farm to School Network

Pictured right: Children at Muskegon Heights Public Schools during the Michigan Apple Crunch event.



WHAT OTHER STATES ARE DOING

Three other states and Washington, D.C. have funding programs for schools to purchase locally grown foods. Here are some details about those programs:

NEW YORK

Components: \$300,000 divided between \$100,000 for program development and \$200,000 in up-front grants to 16 pilot school districts in two counties. Schools draw down between \$.06 and \$.25 cents per meal (based on percent of food budget that is local) for procuring food grown within New York. This includes fruits, vegetables, meats, poultry, dairy, eggs, and processed foods with at least 65 percent New York grown ingredients (cheese, yogurt, maple syrup, etc.). Up to 50 percent of the granted funds may be spent on kitchen or growing equipment, trainings, events, and educational programming.

Students enrolled in impacted schools: 21,147

How funded: General fund

Program outcomes: So far in 2016-2017 (through December), 43 different New York products have been purchased and served; 94 percent of schools purchased through three distributors (\$29,198) and 75 percent of schools also purchased directly from 15 farmers (\$28,614).

Administered by: New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets

OREGON

Components: \$4,519,189 for 2015-17, divided between \$3.6 million for all schools to purchase Oregon grown and produced products, and \$900,000 in competitive grants for school gardens and educational activities. Remaining funds are for administrative costs.

When started: 2011

Students enrolled in impacted schools: 576,407

How funding has continued: In 2011 Oregon dedicated \$200,000 to competitive grants for schools for 2011-2013, requiring 87.5 percent be used for procurement and 12.5 percent for garden-based education. Funding increased to \$1.2 million for 2013-2015, with at least 80 percent of funds for procurement and at least 10 percent for education. In the last year, Oregon transitioned to non-competitive grants for procurement and quadrupled funding.

How funded: State lottery, General Fund and other funds to the Oregon Department of Education

Program outcomes: In the 2015-2016 school year, 128 school districts incorporated Oregon products into 89 percent of school meals. In 2016-2017, 144 districts opted in to participate.

Administered by: Oregon Department of Education in collaboration with Oregon Department of Agriculture

NEW MEXICO

Components: Two different funds totaling \$335,000 for the 2016-2017 school year. Grant-winning schools for a \$250,000 fund are reimbursed up to a granted amount after turning in receipts for local purchases of dry beans, chilies, vegetables, and fruits that are New Mexico grown certified. Twelve schools in the Albuquerque School District receive \$85,000 for purchases of the same products.

When started: 2007 for Albuquerque schools; 2013 for other schools statewide

Students enrolled in impacted schools: 236,835

How funded: General fund

How has funding continued:

- For schools statewide, increased from \$100,000 in 2013 to \$240,000 in 2014, and again to \$364,300 in 2015. In 2016, budget strains reduced funding to \$250,000.
- For Albuquerque schools, consistent at \$85,000 a year.
- For both programs, any unexpended balance carries over to the next fiscal year for the farm to school procurement programs.

Program outcomes: For 2015-2016, 280 food service authorities served produce from more than 30 farms to 342,902 students.

Administered by: New Mexico Public Education Department and New Mexico Department of Agriculture

WASHINGTON, DC

Components: An extra 5 cents a meal for purchasing locally grown meat, fruits, vegetables, and locally baked breads from Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina, District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia.

When started: 2010

Students enrolled in impacted schools: 87,344

How funding has continued: It is a permanent fund.

How funded: Healthy Schools Fund, which comes from a 6 percent soda sales tax

Program outcomes: In 2016, 26 percent of all food was purchased within 100 miles of the District, including 60 percent of all apples.

Administered by: Office of the State Superintendent of Education

up to

2/3

OF A CHILD'S DAILY NUTRITION
COMES FROM SCHOOL

PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT 10 CENTS A MEAL



“I am excited about the prospect of 10 Cents a Meal helping kids across the state and right here in Detroit where we will put this program to use the second it becomes real. This is how we change the food system and get local food to our children.”

—**Betti Wiggins, Food Service Director, Detroit Public Schools;** 2016 School Nutrition Association of Michigan School Food Service Director of the Year. Detroit was not eligible to apply in the first round.



“Encouraging institutions to purchase more food from local sources is something that is extremely important, and undoubtedly has a positive impact on our farmer members producing food in regions all across Michigan.”

—**Kevin Robson, Horticulture Specialist, Michigan Farm Bureau**



“As a small, rural school district, we look for ways to increase revenue so we can increase options for our kids. In an agricultural area like ours, this funding can have a very tangible effect on the local economy. Staff and students will form a closer and healthier relationship with food because they can literally see where it’s grown.”

—**Caryn Elam, Food Service Director, Hart Public Schools,** who applied but was not funded. She hopes for another opportunity. This is from her application in the first round. The pirate is the school’s mascot.



“The 10 Cents a Meal Program has greatly increased our fresh produce business to area schools. The students are getting healthy, tasty local fruits and vegetables, which school food service directors tell us the students like and eat. The local farmers get to sell more produce, which helps the growers’ economics. Basically, great benefits for all involved.”

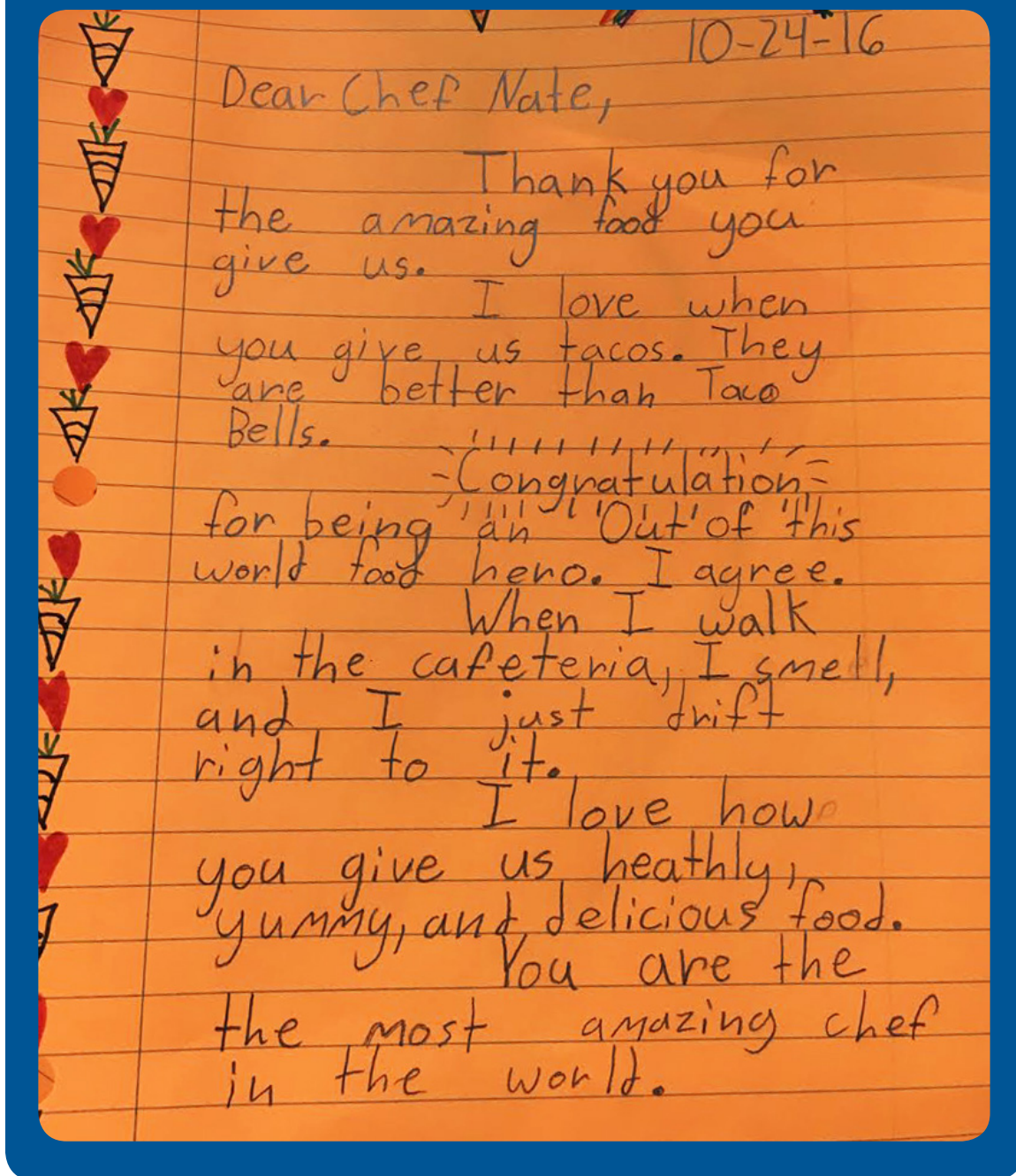
—**Jim Bardenhagen, Leelanau Farmer, MSU Extension Director Emeritus**



“Bottom-line is that Michigan enjoys a positive return on investment with the 10 Cents a Meal Program, benefiting farmers, schools, and kids...locally grown food tastes even better with this program.”

—**Matt McCauley, Chief Operating Officer, Networks Northwest**

Pictured below: a letter from a student at Boyne Falls Public Schools
written to school Food Service Director Nathan Bates.
Pictured on cover: Nathan Bates and children in lunch line at Boyne Falls Public Schools.



PROJECT TEAM



Center for
Regional Food Systems

