



News Release

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10 Cents a Meal Program Now Serving Nearly 135K Michigan Students

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LANSING – Michigan’s nationally-recognized 10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms program has expanded for a third year, now serving nearly 135,000 students in 57 school districts and 27 counties, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) announced today.

Providing grant-winning schools up to 10 cents a meal in matching funds to purchase locally-grown fruits and vegetables, the successful farm-to-school cafeteria program has more than doubled the number of children served since 2016.

“The 10 Cents a Meal program is akin to a bumper crop in terms of nutritious, locally-produced fruits and vegetables served to students,” Interim State Superintendent Sheila Alles said. “It’s a win-win partnership for local districts and local farms across the state and another example of how the business and education communities, as with our plan to become a Top 10 education state in 10 years, can collaborate toward common goals to the ultimate benefit of our children.”

School Year	Students Served	Districts	Counties	Funding
2018-19	134,000	57	27	\$575,000
2017-18	95,000	32	18	\$375,000
2016-17*	48,000	16	8	\$150,000

**State pilot program*

“The commitment of the people who are a part of this program has been extraordinary,” said Sen. Goeff Hansen, R-Hart, referring to participating schools and agri-businesses. Sen. Hansen chairs the state Senate K–12, School Aid, Education Appropriations Subcommittee, which introduced the initial funding for the program.

“They really want to get local food into local schools to help the farmer and help children understand where their food comes from, and use it as a teaching tool,” he said. “I am excited that the program has blossomed so much in its third year.”

Each year, state legislators have expanded the program’s reach and funding. Last year, schools in Michigan’s Prosperity Regions 2, 4, and 9 (northwest and west Michigan, and the Washtenaw region) were eligible to apply for the grants. This year, the legislature added Regions 6 and 8 – the Thumb region and southwest Michigan. That expansion meant that school districts in 43 of Michigan’s 83 counties are eligible to apply for 10 Cents a Meal funding.

“We have so many dedicated community farmers all over this area, and they devote their livelihood to making people healthier,” said Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich, D-Flint. “The 10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms furthers our progress in supporting local growers and helps children in our community be healthier.”

Flint Community Schools in Region 6 is among the 55 school districts participating in the program this year. Below is a complete school list.

Health officials are among those praising the 10 Cents a Meal program.

“This program provides increased exposure to healthy, local fruits and vegetables for many children in our service region,” said Grant Fletcher, system director for Healthy Living & Sustainability at Bronson Healthcare Group, with hospitals in Battle Creek and Kalamazoo in Prosperity Region 8. “We are excited to work closely with our community partners in the public school systems and at Kalamazoo Valley Community College to ensure it has the greatest possible impact.”

In 2017–2018, students tried 65 new Michigan-grown fruits and vegetables for the first time as part of the program. One food service director reported in a survey by the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems that, “Students’ plates are becoming very veggie-friendly. We have gotten students to try vegetables just because they are from around [here].”

The program also has impacted the state’s economy and agricultural sector, with schools purchasing a total of 80 products grown by 112 farms spanning 34 counties, and providing business for 19 additional businesses such as processors, distributors, and food hubs.

Said Kevin Robson, Michigan Farm Bureau Horticulture and Industry Relations Specialist: “Michigan Farm Bureau applauds the efforts of all the hard-working members of the project team behind the success of the 10 Cents a Meal program.

“We support the future endeavors of the program and encourage the project team to continue to build on their success and enhance the effectiveness of the program, to remain a paramount program example for other states to follow,” Robson added.

The 10 Cents a Meal program was featured at two national conferences this year: The National Farm to Cafeteria Conference; and the United Fresh Produce Association Convention.

“Michigan is the gold standard in state level farm to school policy incentivizing local procurement, with its innovative new approaches to invest in children’s well-being and local economies,” said Helen Dombalis, Senior Director of Programs & Policy for the National Farm to School Network. “You are collecting data, gathering information, telling the story, and getting it out to the public. Kids' health and farmer wealth is what it’s about and Michigan is doing it.”

State Sen. Darwin Booher, R-Evart, was the original champion of the program after seeing its results in the Grand Traverse region in a local pilot program coordinated by Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities. He introduced the concept to Sen. Hansen for inclusion in the education budget.

A total of 121 school districts sought 10 Cents grants, with funding enough for 57 districts serving 134,036 students. The legislature allocated \$125,000 each for four of the five prosperity regions, and \$75,000 for Prosperity Region 8. Here are the 2018–2019 program grantees:

Prosperity Region 2:

18 grant-winning districts in nine counties of a 10-county region

Number of Students: 22,496

Districts: Bear Lake Schools, Beaver Island Community School, Benzie County Central Schools, Boyne Falls Public School District, East Jordan Public Schools, Forest Area Community Schools, Frankfort-Elberta Area Schools, Glen Lake Community Schools, Kaleva Norman Dickson School District, Leland Public School District, Mancelona Public Schools, Manton Consolidated Schools, Onekama Consolidated Schools, Pellston Public Schools, Public Schools of Petoskey, St. Francis High School, Suttons Bay Public Schools, Traverse City Area Public Schools

Counties: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Wexford

Prosperity Region 4:

11 grant-winning districts in six counties of a 13-county region

Number of Students: 31,227

11 Districts: Belding Area School District, Coopersville Area Public School District, Hart Public School District, Holland City School District, Montague Area Public Schools, Saugatuck Public Schools, Shelby Public Schools, Thornapple Kellogg School District, West Ottawa Public School District, Whitehall District Schools, Zeeland Public Schools

Counties: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Muskegon, Ottawa, Oceana.

Prosperity Region 6:

Seven grant-winning districts in four counties of a seven-county region

Number of Students: 18,890

Seven Districts: Elkton-Pigeon-Bay Port Laker Schools, Genesee Intermediate School District, Grand Blanc Community Schools, Mayville Community School District, Morrice Area Schools, Owosso Public Schools, School District of the City of Flint

Counties: Genesee, Huron, Shiawassee, Tuscola

Prosperity Region 8:

Eight grant-winning districts in four counties of a seven-county region

Number of Students: 16,602

8 Districts: Battle Creek Public Schools, Bridgman Public Schools, Coldwater Community Schools, Decatur Public Schools, Mattawan Consolidated School, Paw Paw Public School District, South Haven Public Schools, Trinity Lutheran School

Counties: Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Van Buren

Prosperity Region 9:

13 grant-winning districts in four counties of a six-county region

Number of Students: 44,821

11 Districts: Ann Arbor Public Schools, Bedford Public Schools, Chelsea School District, Concord Community Schools, Dexter Community School District, Grass Lake Community Schools, Hanover-Horton School District, Hillsdale Community Schools, Hillsdale Intermediate School District, Jackson Public Schools, Manchester Community Schools, Monroe Public Schools, Whitmore Lake Public School District

Counties: Hillsdale, Jackson, Monroe, Washtenaw

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