



## 10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms

**What It Is:** 10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms is a \$575,000 state pilot program that provides matching funds to grant-winning school districts to purchase Michigan grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans. It is administered by the Michigan Department of Education and is now entering its third year. 10 Cents has grown financially and geographically each year. Currently, schools in 43 of Michigan's 83 counties are eligible to apply. These counties are in Prosperity Regions 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 (as decided by the legislature). It is funded through a line item in the K-12, School Aid, Education budget.

**Purpose:** The purpose of 10 Cents a Meal is to improve the daily nutrition and eating habits of children through the school setting, where children get up to two meals a day; and to invest in Michigan's agricultural economy.

**Return on Investment:** The program doubles the state's investment, because schools must match the grant dollars. They do this by directing existing school food purchasing dollars that they already spend on food (including federal dollars) to specifically purchase Michigan grown fruits, vegetables, and dry beans. Schools can already buy locally grown foods with those dollars, but they typically have only \$1 to \$1.20 to spend on food for each lunch they serve, with 20-30 cents of that for produce. One food service director said: "We now have the funding for [farms] to take us seriously and consciously think of us as a customer."

**Results for Kids:** Food service directors say the additional funding allows them the flexibility within their tight budgets to try new foods with their students. Last year, grant-winning districts said they tried 65 new fruits, vegetables, and dry beans that they hadn't served to their students before. They also said they've discovered local farms can provide more variety, such as differently flavored apple varieties and multi-colored carrots that children love.

**Food Service Director Quotes:** "A lot of elementary kids don't know what things are. The second or third time we menu something, we serve more of it. I was amazed we went through so many Brussels sprouts!" "The custodial staff literally grab my arm, walk me to the trash, and show me how much food is not wasted anymore. It's just huge." "The quality of the products we are getting locally is leagues beyond what we were getting from our vendor. It really gives us a sense of pride to offer the kids such great food."

**Results for Agriculture:** Food service directors provided invoices that showed they purchased 80 different fruits, vegetables, and dry beans grown by 112 farms in 34 Michigan counties, and that their business also resulted in sales for another 19 related businesses such as distributors, processors, and food hubs. Farmers say the growing school market that 10 Cents is building is also catalyzing collaborative business relationships to meet the school demand.

**Farmer Quotes:** "Farm to school is consistent business with consistent pricing. When I started with schools I was told student consumption had doubled and tripled in apples. it's nice to hear you are making a difference." "The 10 Cent program is a great opportunity for farmers to move some additional produce locally and help our young students. We sold 10,000 pounds through Leelanau Fruit to Farm to Freezer for schools. It is just a great deal all around."

**Bipartisan Support:** "I am excited that the program has blossomed so much in its third year. I hope it grows. I hope that whoever is the next chair of the education budget is able to see what it means to the schools and what it means to the local economy." –**Sen Goeff Hansen, R-Hart**, the outgoing chair of the K-12, School Aid, Education Appropriations Subcommittee, the key senate committee that sets the budget where 10 Cents is funded.

"We have so many dedicated community farmers all over this area, and they devote their livelihood to making people healthier. The 10 Cents a Meal for School Kids & Farms is a win-win: it furthers our progress in supporting local growers and helps children in our community be healthier." –**Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich, D-Flint**, a part of Prosperity Region 6, which was newly added to the program for 2018-2019.

**Learn More:** [www.tencentsmichigan.org](http://www.tencentsmichigan.org)