

# 10 CENTS A MEAL PILOT: 2018–2019 EVALUATION RESULTS



## Introduction

The response to the 2020 coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated how important schools have become as places for children to access good food. Under typical operations, school food service directors (FSDs) know best their students' tastes, preferences, and willingness to try new foods, including Michigan-grown products. As managers of extremely tight budgets and navigators of layers of requirements for operating child nutrition programs, they cannot afford to continue to serve foods that students will not take or eat. It follows, then, that FSDs participating in the 10 Cents a Meal for School Kids and Farms Pilot (10 Cents) offer the best insights into how the program impacts the children, especially in lieu of the significant financial and staff capacity that would be needed to conduct research studies of the children served by it.

**The state-funded 10 Cents a Meal for School Kids and Farms (10 Cents) Pilot program helps school/district grantees source and serve fresh and minimally processed (including frozen) Michigan-grown vegetables, fruits, and legumes in order to meet two goals: improve daily nutrition and eating habits of children through the school setting and invest in Michigan agriculture and the related food business economy.**

Across all three years, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) administered the program and the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS), the evaluation partner, developed monthly electronic surveys for participating FSDs to share their perceptions of the program. The 2018-2019 survey results help tell the story of this innovative, important program and paint a vivid picture of “the ability to which students can access a variety of healthy Michigan-grown foods through schools,”<sup>1</sup> one of the legislative reporting requirements.

To best enable learning and sharing about 10 Cents, the report that follows describes the program as well as evaluation survey results and feedback provided by FSDs in the 2018-2019 pilot year through a series of one- and two-page summaries:

- Pilot Program Overview
- School/District Grantees and their Counties by Prosperity Region, 2018-2019
- 10 Cents Grantees Across All Three Years of the Pilot Program (2017-2019)
- Monthly Evaluation Survey Plan
- Regional Participation and Students Reached
- Motivations, Barriers, and Challenges for Purchasing and Serving Local Foods
- Most Frequent Motivators, Barriers, and Logistical Challenges to Purchasing and Serving Local Foods by Program Year (2017-2019)
- Michigan-Grown Vegetables, Fruits, and Legumes Purchased and Served for the First Time
- Reported Promotional Activities Supporting 10 Cents
- Reported Educational Activities Supporting 10 Cents
- Outcomes of Participating in 10 Cents
- Impacts of Participating in 10 Cents
- Influence of 10 Cents on Farms and Food Suppliers
- Feedback from Food Suppliers about 10 Cents
- Additional Feedback about Participating in 10 Cents
- Reflections and Recommendations: Program Design, Survey Design, and Dissemination

<sup>1</sup> State of Michigan Public Act 265 of 2018. Available at <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2017-2018/publicact/htm/2018-PA-0265.htm>.