

10 CENTS A MEAL PILOT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF 2017-2018 EVALUATION SURVEY RESULTS

JANUARY 2019

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. School districts located in Michigan Prosperity Regions 2, 4, and 9 were eligible for the 10 Cents pilot in 2017-2018.

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.

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 members from:

- Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development,
- Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS),
- Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities,
- Northwest Prosperity Region 2,
- West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (Prosperity Region 4),
- Greater Ann Arbor Region's Prosperity Initiative (Prosperity Region 9), and
- Public Sector Consultants.

As part of evaluation for the pilot, CRFS set up monthly electronic evaluation surveys. These were distributed through regular email communications by MDE staff to school food service directors (FSDs) at all 32 participating school districts. The FSDs participating in 10 Cents in the 2017-2018 pilot year were asked to submit monthly evaluation 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 to support the pilot, and the number of new adults (teachers, parents, and farmers) involved in these activities. The following is a summary of results and findings from those surveys for the 2017-2018 pilot year.

School districts, total enrolled students, and grant awards by Prosperity Region

Prosperity Region 2: 14 school districts, 19,741 enrolled students, \$80,000

Prosperity Region 4: 11 school districts, 28,341 enrolled students, \$116,500

Prosperity Region 9: 7 school districts, 41,406 enrolled students, \$118,500

Budgets and Spending

Participating FSDs reported food budgets (for all foods from all sources) at the outset of the 2017-2018 school year totaled over \$15 million. This represents significant opportunity for local food purchasing. Below is a table of spending by all districts for the 2017-2018 year as reported by FSDs at the end of the school year, including spending that occurred through the 10 Cents pilot.

2017–2018 Reported Spending in Dollars by Food Category, All Districts (N = 32)

	FRUITS	VEGETABLES	LEGUMES	OTHER	TOTAL
MI-grown spending total	\$509,076	\$255,106	\$9,647	\$1,362,490	\$2,136,319
Overall spending total	\$1,121,525	\$866,412	\$96,627	\$9,055,769	\$11,140,333

Top Three Responses for Selected Baseline and Year-End Evaluation Survey Questions

Motivators for serving local foods in food service programs

Help Michigan farms and businesses
 Increase student consumption of fruits and vegetables
 Support the local economy

Barriers faced in purchasing local foods for food service programs

Lack of products available at certain times of the year
 Budget constraints
 Federal procurement regulations

Logistical challenges faced in purchasing local foods in food service program

Lack of staff labor to prepare local foods
 Lack of a distribution method to get local foods to my building(s)
 Lack of storage

Outcomes achieved through 10 Cents pilot

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.

Impacts since starting the 10 Cents pilot

We offered more local fruits in our school meals.
 I have identified new Michigan-grown fruit, vegetables, and legumes that are eaten by our student customers.
 We offered more local vegetables in our school meals.

Promotional and Educational Activities

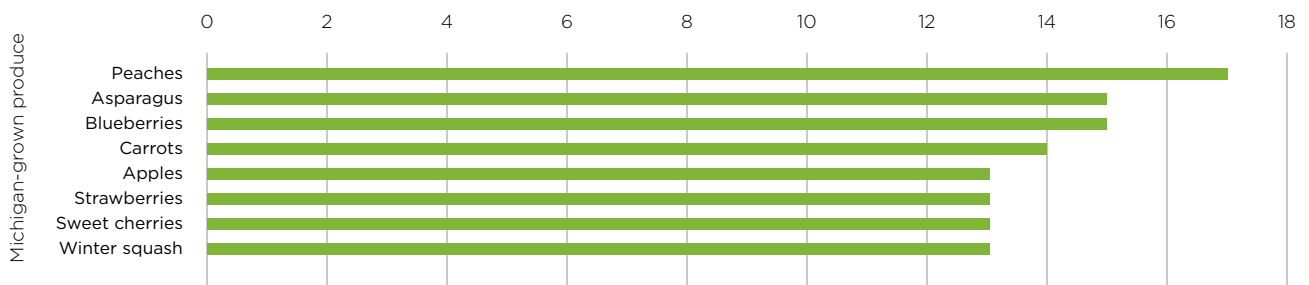
Monthly evaluation surveys asked FSDs to report, to the best of their knowledge, promotional and educational activities that took place within the school district that supported student knowledge and consumption of local food products served through the 10 Cents program. **Nearly 300 educational activities were reported throughout the year.**

- Most frequent promotional activity: Tastings (122 out of 668 promotional activities)
- Most successful promotional activity: Tastings (selected 94 times)
- Most frequent educational activity: Tastings (112 out of 298 educational activities)
- Most successful educational activity: Tastings (selected 100 times)

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

Top 8 Michigan-Grown Fruits and Vegetables, Purchased and Served for the First Time in 2017-2018 (N = 32)



Number of 10 Cents pilot school districts using a Michigan-grown produce for the first time

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 stated that there was a learning curve for the first few months of the program. This included learning the logistics of 10 Cents (such as product sourcing and tracking invoices for reimbursement processing) and, in some cases, learning new delivery methods, storage, preparation, and uses of new products. **The most noted challenge of the 10 Cents program was meeting the additional labor demand of Michigan-grown foods (many of which likely arrive whole and fresh) with no additional funds to cover this added cost.**

10 Cents a Meal legislation for the 2018–2019 school year expanded the program to two new Prosperity

Regions and \$575,000 in funding. As 10 Cents pilot efforts grow in their third year, evaluation efforts are increasing as well. The 2018–2019 monthly evaluation surveys will seek much of the same information as previous years to make comparisons. We also plan to conduct cafeteria and classroom surveys of students in some participating districts to ask whether they chose and liked Michigan-grown fruits, vegetables, and/or legumes served in school meals.

The 10 Cents pilot 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. The charter is 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. In its second year, the 10 Cents pilot is clearly helping Michigan school districts source and serve more Michigan-grown foods and provide more food education activities in schools while supporting more Michigan farmers and food businesses.



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

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Diane Golzynski of the Michigan Department of Education and Kathryn Colasanti and Rachel Kelly of MSU Center for Regional Food Systems for their thoughtful reviews of the full evaluation report. Thank you also to all of the school food service directors participating in the 10 Cents a Meal pilot for responding to monthly evaluation surveys. The authors would also like to thank Andrea Weiss of CRFS for communications guidance and Blohm Creative Partners for copyediting and design.

This evaluation work was conducted with generous funding support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

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