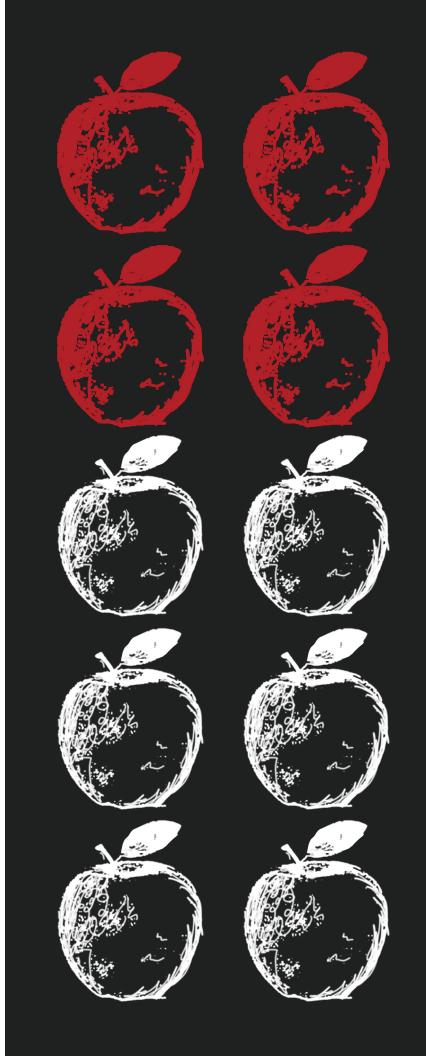
Opporunities, Barriers, and Pathways to Success

Cornell Cooperative Extension Harvest NY



## Cornell Cooperative **Extension**



# 30% NY Initiative:

# Opportunities, Barriers, and Pathways to Success

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### **Executive Summary**

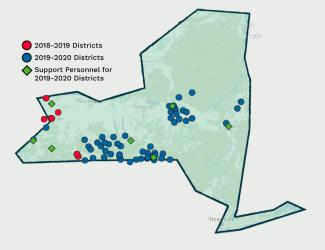
The 30% NY Initiative: Opportunities, Barriers, and Pathways to Success report is a product of Cornell Cooperative Extension Harvest NY and Cornell Cooperative Extension Allegany County. The report analyzes procurement data from 53 of the 57 school food authorities (SFAs) that qualified for the 30% NY Initiative during the 2019-20 school year. In addition to analyzing procurement data, we surveyed successful SFAs to understand how they altered their diversions and use of entitlement funds in preparation for the 2019-20 school year and barriers to purchasing local food, by commodity group. A combined analysis of the 30% procurement data and the survey results shed light on procurement trends, varying pathways, best practices, and strategic approaches to successfully achieving the 30% NY Initiative.

# Overview of Schools Served By Qualifying SFAs

The total number of students enrolled in schools served by qualifying SFAs was 145,284, of which 85,774 participated in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). 72% of successful SFAs were small in size (2,000 or fewer students), and most SFAs (67%) across NY are also small. The distribution of SFAs that qualified for the 30% NY Initiative was evenly dispersed between SFAs that participated in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and those that do not, which indicates that CEP participation does not impact an SFA's ability to qualify for the 30% NY Initiative. Demographically, student enrollment across all 71 qualifying districts was 77% white, 12% black, and 5% hispanic/ latinx. From a socio-economic standpoint, 28% of students lived at or below the poverty line, which is considerably higher than the state average of 18.1%.1

Figure 1.

Map of Qualifying SFAs



### **Overview of Successful SFAs**

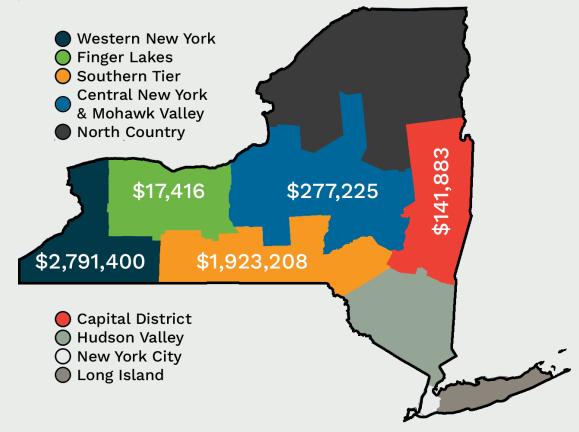
Qualifying SFAs were located in 21 out of the 62 total counties in NY. Counties with the highest number of qualifying SFAs were Broome (11), Steuben (11), and Allegany (6). The counties with the greatest number of students served by qualifying SFAs were Erie (51,565), Broome (26,557), and Steuben (14,675). There were no qualifying SFAs in New York City, Long Island, the North Country, or the Hudson Valley.

Two-thirds of the qualifying SFAs contracted their food service operations through a regional BOCES. 20 SFAs contracted with Greater Southern Tier (GST) BOCES, 15 with Broome-Tioga (BT) BOCES, and two with Capital Region BOCES. Further, Oneida-Madison-Herkimer (OHM) BOCES serves as a single SFA for 15 component districts. Despite the fact that 24% of public SFAs contract for food service management with third party providers such as ARAMARK, Whitsons, Personal Touch, Compass, and Sodexo, none have applied for the Initiative to date.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 2.

### Qualifying NY Food Product Purchases by Region

data from 53 SFAs



# Overview of Qualifying New York Food Product Purchases

The 30% NY Initiative defines a NY Food Product (NYFP) as a food item that is grown, harvested, or produced in NY; or, a food item processed inside or outside NY comprising over 51% agricultural raw materials grown, harvested, or produced in NY by weight or volume. SFAs that spend at least 30% of total food costs for their school lunch programs on NYFPs are eligible for the 30% NY Initiative.

Total food costs across successful SFAs ranged from \$21,300 (Addison CSD) to \$5,141,599 (Buffalo CSD) and the combined lunch budget of all qualifying districts was \$13,317,819. Qualifying SFAs spent a total of \$5,151,133 on NYFPs during the 2019-20 school year, ranging from

\$7,076 (Canaseraga CSD) to \$2,154,805 (Buffalo CSD). Buffalo City SD's purchases represented almost half of all NY purchases made by qualifying SFAs. Figure 2 illustrates total dollars spent on NYFPs per NY region.

The report further breaks down total NYFP purchases into six categories: dairy (22.7% of total NYFP purchases), fruit (7.9%), protein (3.8%), vegetables (3.5%), grain (0.4%), and other items (0.9%). Figure 3 provides additional information on each category, including total spent, median, range, standard deviation, and the most purchased item. As noted by the range of dollars spent in each category and the associated standard deviations, there is no perfect pathway to the 30%, a point further expanded upon in the Findings section.

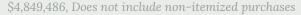
Figure 3. **Qualifying NY Food Product Purchases from SY 2019-2020**data from 53 SFAs

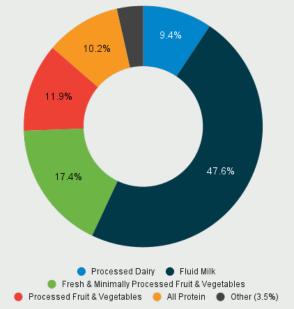
Category	<b>Total Spent</b>	Median Percent of NY Purchases	Range Of NY Purchase Percent	Standard Deviation (% of NY)	Most Purchased Item In Category
Dairy	\$ 2,877,275	65.6%	25.3%-82.3%	11.5%	Milk
Fruit	\$ 1,020,919	19.4%	0.0%-30.9%*	6.6%	Grape Juice
Protein	\$ 492,720	6.6%	0.0%-33.4%	7.2%	Hot dogs
Vegetables	\$ 456,922	4.0%	1.4%-30.6%	6.1%	Leafy Greens
Grain	\$ 52,636	0.0%	0.0%-2.3%	0.5%	Pita Chips
Other Items	\$ 121,537	0.8%	0.0%-15.0%	2.8%	Egg rolls

<sup>\*</sup>Several districts did not itemize their fruit and thus it is represented as 0.0% for the lower range. However, all districts reported purchasing qualifying NY fruits during the 2019-2020 school year.

The report also analyzes the percentage of fresh minimally processed versus processed NYFPs, delineations that are defined in Appendix B. As Figure 4 illustrates, if fluid milk purchases are removed from consideration, processed items make up a greater share of total purchases than fresh, raw, and minimally processed. While that may not wholly align with the association of "farm to school" as fresh and healthy, it's important to note that using some processed products is a matter of practicality in institutional food service settings, which typically lack properly skilled staff, equipment, time, and infrastructure to prepare all food from scratch. Further, the processed NYFPs utilized support NY farmers in a sizable way.

Figure 4.
Subcategories of Qualifying New York Food Product Purchases





### **Procuring NY Food Products**

It is undoubtedly more work to procure and serve NYFPs, and FSD were asked why they chose to participate in the 30% NY Initiative. The increased reimbursement was the largest motivator among them, with 39% of FSDs citing this. It's important to note, however, the vital role that the community and student body can play in affecting positive changes in the school cafeteria. One FSD is quoted as saying:

"buy[ing] local is important, and it does cost more, so [the] increased reimbursement is needed to continue the purchases".

Another affirmed it

"just makes sense to help out the farmers"

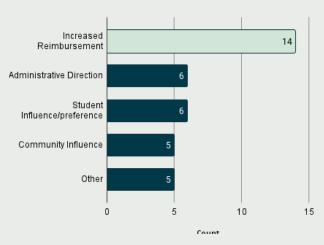
and another thought it could "improve the perception of the nutritional value [of school meals].



Figure 5.

## SFA Motivations for Pursuing the 30% NY Initiative

9 FSDs



### **Current Practices**

FSDs were asked which procurement method(s) they used to purchase NYFPs. The micro purchase was the method cited by most FSDs, with 71% reporting they used it. The small (informal) purchase was the second most commonly used method, with 59% citing its use. Further, geographic preference was a tool used by nine (51%) of FSDs to procure local items. When accounting for milk, all FSDs had previous experience in sourcing local food. 16 outlined what additional NYFPs they would purchase if available.

FSDs were asked if they changed how they spent their USDA entitlement in order to purchase more NYFPs. 13 reported changing how they used their entitlement dollars. Specifically, seven reduced their use of USDA beef in order to purchase more local beef, and three reduced their use of USDA cheese to increase use of local cheese. Regarding the USDA Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (DoD) and the Pilot Project for the Procurement of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (Pilot), the most common strategy was to simply not get NYFPs through DoD or the Pilot.

### **Challenges**

While the FSDs we surveyed were "successful" in achieving significant levels of local food procurement, they continue to face challenges in using more NYFPs. We asked them to share their challenges in procuring different food categories.



**Produce** cited by **53%** of FSDs

- Local produce is more expensive than non-local produce
- Seasonal nature of fresh produce makes it hard to menu year-round



**Animal-based Proteins** 

cited by 47% of FSDs

- Cost
- Can't justify spending school food dollars on local protein when I can use my entitlement dollars



**NY Dried Beans** 

- Student acceptability cited by 37% of FSDs
- Not enough capacity to prepare them
   cited by 32% of FSDs



### **Processed NY Food Products**

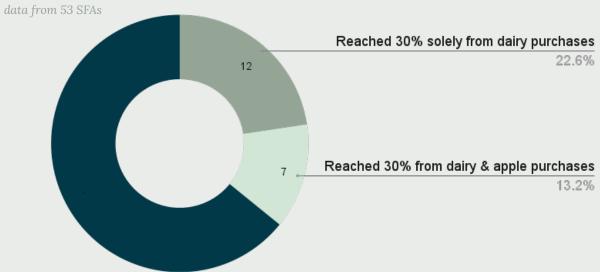
cited by **37%** of FSDs

- Cost
- Qualifying grain products are limited in my region
- Procurement process is limiting or challenging

### **Findings**

Figure 6.

### SFAs Reaching 30% Local with Dairy and Apple Purchases



# 1. The importance of dairy to the 30%.

On average, a quarter of total lunch purchases made were on dairy products. Fluid milk alone represented one-fifth of total lunch purchases. Therefore, SFAs purchasing local milk only needed to convert an additional 10% of their total lunch expenditures to NYFP purchases. Of the procurement data we have, nearly a quarter (12 SFAs, 23%) qualified for the 30% NY Initiative on dairy purchases alone. Though these 12 SFAs also purchased other non-dairy NY products, dairy purchases amounted to over 30% of their total lunch budgets. For SFAs throughout the state that do not have access to NY dairy, specifically NY fluid milk, achieving 30% local purchases proves to be difficult and potentially impossible. No SFA has qualified for the Initiative without purchasing NY fluid milk to date.

# 2. There is no perfect pathway to the 30%.

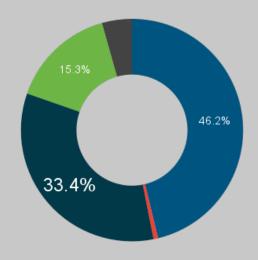
Figures 7-10 depict four unique pathways to 30% success, with the only common denominator among them being the prominent role that dairy played, as depicted by the blue part of the wheel. The first pathway illustrates a high percentage of fruit, a bit of protein, and only a tiny sliver allocated to vegetables. Figure 8 highlights a SFA that purchased a large amount of protein, at 33.4% of their total NYFP spend. When compared to the other three, it proves to be a significant difference. Figure 9 is dairy heavy, with 82.3% of this SFA's 30% spend directed to dairy purchases, and leaving only 3.2% accounted for by proteins, vegetables, and other NY items. Lastly, Figure 10 demonstrates a SFA that directed over 40% of their 30% spend to NY fruits and vegetables, again a considerable variance from the other three pathways. By analyzing unique pathways, we were able to debunk a handful of myths surrounding the type of purchases required to achieve 30% success.

Figure 7.
SFA Example with Significant
Fruit Purchase Percentage

7.2%

Figure 8.

SFA Example with Significant Protein Purchase Percentage



### Multiple Pathways to 30% Local Procurement



Figure 9.

SFA Example with Significant
Dairy Purchase Percentage

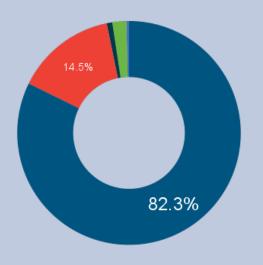


Figure 10.

# SFA Example with Significant Fruit and Vegetable Purchase Percentage

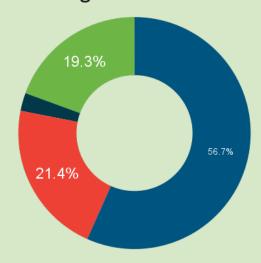
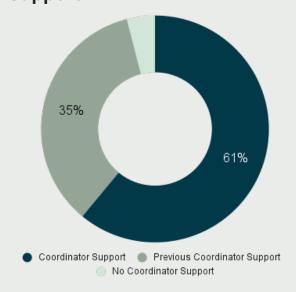


Figure 11.

Farm to School Coordinator

Support

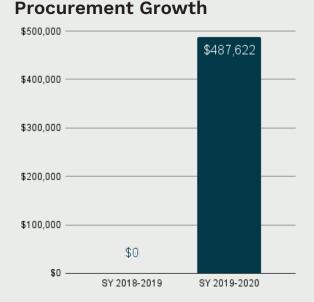


# 3. Farm to School Coordinator support is critical to an SFA's success in achieving the 30%.

61% of qualifying SFAs had regular support from a dedicated Farm to School Coordinator and an additional 35% noted they had previous support when establishing their local procurement programs. Coordinators provided a wide range of services to SFAs, including procurement-related activities, marketing, promotion, education, and recipe development. All told, during the 2019-20 school year, 8.23 Coordinators, at an estimated cost of \$453,040, supported 35 SFAs that cumulatively spent \$4,309,606 on NYFPs in service of 66,425 students.

Figure 12.

Animal-Based Protein



4. The 30% NY Initiative is driving positive behavior change.

SFAs spent a total of \$5,151,133 on NYFPs during the 2019-20 school year. Further, animal-based protein purchases increased from \$0 prior to the 30%, to \$487,622 during the 2019-20SY, despite cost being a considerable constraint to purchasing items in this food category. Specifically, Buffalo City SD worked with a 100-year old meat processing facility in Buffalo to create a custom hotdog and sausage link, using 51% NY beef, resulting in \$104,529 of new sales for the processor, and \$49,041 to the NY beef producer. Further, a pita chip was reformulated with NY grains specifically for Buffalo City SD, who spent \$45,455 on it. These are just a few examples highlighting new product development, product reformulation, and increased local procurement efforts across commodity groups.

### **Examples of Strategic Use of Entitlement Funds**

7 SFAs

reduced their use of USDA beef in order to purchase more local beef.

3 SFAS

reduced their use of USDA cheese to increase use of local cheese.

9 SFAs

reduced their use of **multiple commodities** to purchase more local foods.

4 SFAs

reduced their use of **just one USDA food** to purchase more local foods.

# 5. Strategic use and management of entitlement funds is a key ingredient to 30% success.

The 2021-22 Food Preference Survey results demonstrate the opportunity to swap out high demand USDA food items with comparable NYFPs. Appendix E lists the top 30 items ranked by SFAs across the State for use in the 2021-22SY. As illustrated, there are direct NY product swaps for seven items and comparable product swaps for an additional nine. Further, by analyzing entitlement dollars spent on fresh produce through DoD, it was observed that with the exception of citrus fruits, the majority of items purchased can be grown in NY, are available in most parts of the state, and are harvested at some point during the school year, with items like apples, potatoes, cabbage, and onions widely available throughout the entire year.

With advance planning and strategic use of DoD funds, SFAs can direct more of their food service dollars to these familiar items. They can frontload NY purchases during harvest months and reserve DoD purchases for non-NY harvest months. They can also swap products out completely by, for example, using their foodservice dollars to purchase exclusively NY potatoes, and spending their DoD funds on items NY farmers either don't grow, or aren't available year round. And finally, SFAs can also reduce the amount of their entitlement that they allocate to DoD while being mindful to maintain the quantity of fresh produce served to students. 68% and 63% of FSDs stated they changed how they spent their commodity and DoD/Pilot dollars, respectively, in order to purchase more local items and the above recommendations highlight some ways in which they did that.



# 6. Processed vs. Unprocessed Foods:

Processed products are a necessary staple of many institutional food service programs due to limitations including properly trained staff, time, and equipment. \$121,537 was spent on highly processed items including ice cream, chips, and egg rolls. Maple syrup and honey are also included in this category. Most SFAs spent a small amount on these products: the proportion of total NYFP expenditures ranged from 0-15%, with a median of 2.8%. Unlike fruits, vegetables, dairy, whole grains, and lean proteins, it's questionable if these products add more harm than good, nutritionally **speaking**. We did not tease out whether or not these highly processed products were new additions to the lunch program, or if they replaced other non-NY items. If these were new additions made in order to qualify for the Initiative, it's possible that this resulted in an overall reduction in nutritional value of meals served at these

districts. It seems this is most likely true in the case of the SFA that spent 15% of their NYFP expenditures on ice cream. We also questioned the high percentage of total fruit purchases that were accounted for by juice products, namely 47%. While juice servings were within the mandated meal pattern allowance, we wondered if qualifying juice products replaced whole fruit options. Juice, as noted by the American Academy of Pediatricians, has potential detrimental effects; namely increased caloric consumption due to high sugar content, dental risks, and a lack of protein and fiber, which can predispose children to inappropriate weight gain.<sup>3</sup> Further, with the exception of maple syrup and honey, the addition of these items to a meal program does little to increase student knowledge and awareness of where food comes from.

### **Future Research**

### **Procurement vs. Consumption**

The 30% NY Initiative is based on procurement and not consumption of NYFPs. We have no way of knowing if the Initiative is correlated to increased consumption of healthier foods by students. Further, we didn't study SFA spending patterns pre and post 30% participation, so we don't know if the meal tray has actually gotten healthier due to the Initiative. Given that a pillar of farm to school is providing students with healthy, local food, we do think this is an important question that demands exploration.

# Has the lunch tray gotten healthier because of the 30% NY Initiative?

# Are farm to school purchases new sales to our agricultural sector or are they reallocated?

### **Economic Impact**

There hasn't been an analysis of spending patterns pre and post 30% participation, so we do not know what the true cumulative economic impact of this Initiative is. Questions to consider include: are farm to school purchases new sales to our agricultural sector or are they reallocated? Is the economic output generated from these spending patterns higher than their pre-30% spending patterns? An economic impact assessment of the Buffalo Farm to School program is currently underway, a model we think would be interesting to expand to SFAs that vary in size and location.

### **Net benefit to the SFA**

A frequently asked question that we have yet to answer is what is the net benefit to the SFA for participating in the 30% NY Initiative. More specifically, how much more did they have to spend to qualify for the 30% and was there a net gain. Further, given that the increased reimbursement qualifies as revenue the following school year and that food cost is a function of revenue, how does the increased reimbursement affect a SFAs 30% success rate in the year the reimbursement is received? Does it make it more or less attainable?

How much more did SFAs have to spend to qualify for the 30%? Was there a net gain?



30% NY Initiative: Opportunities, Barriers, and Pathways to Success is a detailed report that outlines procurement trends by School Food Authorities (SFAs) that qualified for the 30% NY Initiative in school year 2019-2020. We know that these target 57 SFAs purchased 30% of their lunch ingredients from NY agricultural producers. However, we did not know what products they were purchasing and what, if any, similarities each SFA had in size, demographics, or geographic distribution. We wanted to learn more from these successful applicants about their experiences and further understand the needs of Food Service Directors (FSDs) as they try to build their Farm to School programs.

### Our research goals:

- 1. Debunk myths about the 30% NY Initiative
- 2. Assess the impact of the 30% NY Initiative on different food industry sectors
- 3. Highlight pathways to achieving 30% local procurement

In part one of this report, we look at who the SFAs were that qualified for the 30% NY Initiative. In part two, we examine their collective New York Food Product (NYFP) purchases made in six food categories (dairy, protein, fruit, vegetables, grain, and other items) and explore behavioral changes SFAs made to achieve the 30% threshold.

We hope that the results from our study will benefit other SFAs, students, and NY food businesses. The experiences shared in this report can help inspire additional SFAs to achieve 30% local procurement; once Food FSDs see how other SFAs are shifting procurement strategies to purchase more local ingredients, they may adopt similar practices. This research also provides insight into the challenges faced by SFAs and informs how CCE and other Farm to School champions can tailor our programs to better fit the needs of our school partners to serve locally produced, healthy meals.

### **About Cornell Cooperative Extension**

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability, and social well-being. Rooted in every county of the state, we bring local experience and research-based solutions together, helping NY families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world. CCE is a dynamic education system connecting Cornell's world-class research with regional and county-based educators and partners across the state.

CCE partners with local, state and federal government agencies, and is supported by the national Land-Grant system and Cornell University. In fulfillment of Cornell's Land-Grant mission, faculty and staff—primarily from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the College of Human Ecology—collaborate with extension associates, agriculture specialists, CCE educators and staff, local partners and volunteers across NY to engage citizens and empower communities to transform and grow from the ground up.

The resulting education system is responsive, nimble, research-based, and locally-rooted. CCE educators develop programming that collects information and experience from their own communities to inform Cornell research and program development. Such a dynamic organization would not be possible without the dedicated staff, volunteers and partnerships that power the CCE system.

CCE supports Farm to School procurement efforts across NY through a network of Farm to School Coordinators and support personnel. Farm to School Coordinators also work with CCE's local agriculture specialists and Regional Agriculture Teams to deliver impactful programming. After the announcement of the NY 30% Initiative, Farm to School Coordinators recognized knowledge and resource gaps that hindered SFAs' abilities to qualify for the increased reimbursement. They responded by providing training and technical assistance that:

- Improved FSD's understanding of procurement regulations
- Increased the awareness of and the ability to apply Geographic Preference in bid development
- Improved FSD's ability to:
  - Establish a baseline of local procurement
  - Identify new sources of local foods available from vendors and distributors
  - Track local food purchases
  - Obtain documentation that adequately establishes NY farm origin from farmers, vendors, distributors, producers, and processors
  - Maintain documentation required for 30% NY Initiative audit purposes

To help SFAs locate qualifying products, CCE Harvest NY created the 30% NY Eligible <u>Product Database</u> with input from the NYS Education Department (NYSED), NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, SFAs, and other partners. The database is a collection of products that qualify for the 30% NY Initiative, and are widely available for purchase by SFAs for use in their lunch programs. All products are either NY Grown & Certified, or contain 51% or more raw NY agricultural products. Product Formulation Statements are included for all products that are not NY Grown & Certified. Current distributors are also listed for each product, which is important for SFAs that have preferred vendors.

### **Methods**

The primary data included in this report was collected in two ways. First, the 57 NY SFAs that applied for the 30% NY Initiative provided procurement data based on their 2019-2020 expenditures. These SFAs passed a preliminary assessment by the NYSED Child Nutrition Services team, but were not fully audited by the department due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, SFAs were surveyed by the research team in April 2021. In addition to the primary data collected, the research team used publicly available data.

### **Publicly Available Data**

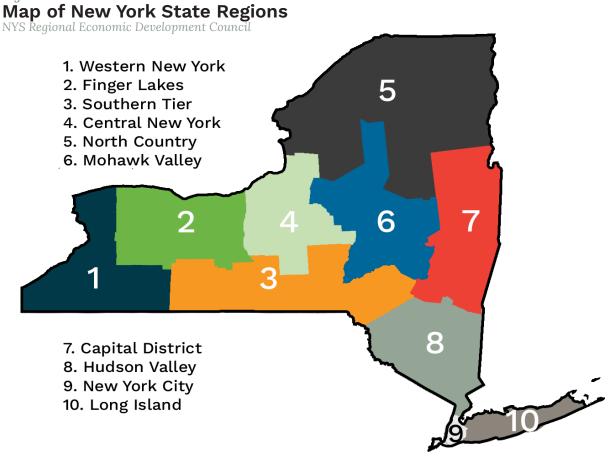
Variables including Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) status, district enrollment, Average Daily Participation (ADP), dollars spent on NY food items, total food cost for lunch, and percentage of NYFPs purchased were determined using NYSED's Public Reports Portal Child Nutrition Reports Listing, found on the department's website.4 For the purposes of this report, February 2020 ADP counts were used as this was the last full month during which SFAs operated the NSLP prior to transitioning to emergency feeding. These counts were used as a percent of total enrollment to find the ADP rate for each district. This method was recommended by NYSED officials, rather than using the ADP listed on the NY 30% Initiative Applications Report on the Child Nutrition Public Reports Portal. SFA regions were classified according to NY's Regional Economic Development Councils.

These regions are also used for geographic scoring in the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Farm to School grant application process. They are as follows:

- Capital Region: Albany, Columbia, Greene, Saratoga, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Warren, Washington
- **Central New York**: Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, Oswego
- Finger Lakes: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
- Long Island: Nassau, Suffolk
- Mid-Hudson: Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
- Mohawk Valley: Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie
- New York City: Bronx, Kings, New York, Richmond, Queens
- North Country: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence
- **Southern Tier**: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins
- Western New York: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara

Data for this report came from (1) Procurement Summaries from School Food Authorities, (2) Surveys taken by Food Service Directors, and (3) Public Information from State and Federal Agencies.

Figure 13.



### Data Provided by School Food Authorities

The NYSED 30% NY application requires each SFA to complete a "30% NY Initiative Attachment", itemizing NY food items purchased for the school lunch program during the qualification period. Our team approached each SFA that applied, or their affiliated Farm to School Coordinator, to request the application attachment for the 2019-2020 school year. 53 of the 57 qualifying SFAs shared their procurement data for this analysis. Of the 53 application attachments received, five SFAs did not itemize all NY products, but rather listed the total amount spent per vendor or general product category. These SFAs were excluded from results reported when there was not clear enough data for a given category.

### **Survey**

An electronic survey was administered to the 57 SFAs that qualified for the 30% NY Initiative during the 2019-20SY. 19 FSDs, representing 52 SFAs, completed the survey. FSDs from Broome-Tioga BOCES and Greater Southern Tier BOCES completed a single survey on behalf of their 15 and 20 SFAs, respectively. The following five SFAs did not respond to the survey and thus are not represented in the survey analysis: Akron CSD, Argyle CSD, Barker CSD, Berne-Knox-Westerlo CSD, and Lancaster CSD.

### **Coding Process**

Our team coded purchases into six product categories. Five of the product categories-dairy, fruit, vegetables, protein, and grains-are aligned with the USDA's meal patterns for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The sixth category, "other items", includes food items that do not individually count toward NSLP reimbursable meals. These food products may incorporate multiple components of a reimbursable lunch (for example, egg rolls count toward grain and vegetable requirements), may be used as supplements, or may be sold as a la carte items. Purchases were further broken down into specific item types as follows:

- Dairy: Cheese, Cheese Sticks, Fluid Milk, Non-Itemized Items, Other Dairy, Yogurt
- Fruit:\* Apples, Apple Sauce, Apple Slices, Berries, Cantaloupe, Cider, Grapes, Juice, Other Fruit, Pears, Slushies, Stone Fruit (peaches, plums, apricots, cherries), Watermelon
- Vegetables:\* Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Corn, Cucumbers, French Fries, Green Beans, Lettuce/Greens/Kale, Non-Itemized Items, Onions, Other Root Vegetables, Other Vegetables, Peppers, Potatoes, Summer Squash, Tomatoes, Winter Squash
- Protein: Beans, Burger Patties, Chicken Products, Deli Meat, Eggs, Ground Beef, Hot Dogs, Other Beef, Other Meat, Pork Products, Tofu
- **Grains**: Granola Oats, Other Grain, Pita Chips

• Other Items: Egg Roll, Ice Cream, Maple Syrup, Non-Itemized Items, Other Processed Items, Potato Chips, Tomato Sauce Products

In multiple instances, the total food cost for lunch from NY products as indicated by SFAs on their 30% NY Initiative Application Attachments did not match the records in the NYSED Public Reports Portal. Based on guidance received from NYSED, we used the information provided by the SFAs. Using this method, the total reported NY food purchases were \$48,107 less than the amount shown in the NYSED portal. We have indicated SFAs for whom reported data differed from that provided in the portal by more than 5% with an asterisk in Appendix C.

\*Non-Itemized produce was listed under the Non-Itemized Item category in "Vegetables" even if the non-itemized produce likely or definitely contained a combination of fruits and vegetables, as SFAs typically purchase a higher volume of vegetables from the indicated vendors. This totaled \$58,881.72.

### Limitations

Because a full audit was not conducted by NYSED, our analysis is based on self-reported data and may not accurately reflect NYFP purchases made by the SFAs. Nonetheless, the applicants will be referred to as "qualifying SFAs" or "SFAs" throughout this report. Not all SFAs fully itemized purchases. The non-itemized amount totaled \$172,523.46 (\$111,938.76 for dairy, \$58,881.72 for produce, and \$1,702.98 for other items). This prevented us from being able to accurately calculate total dollars spent in some sub-categories.

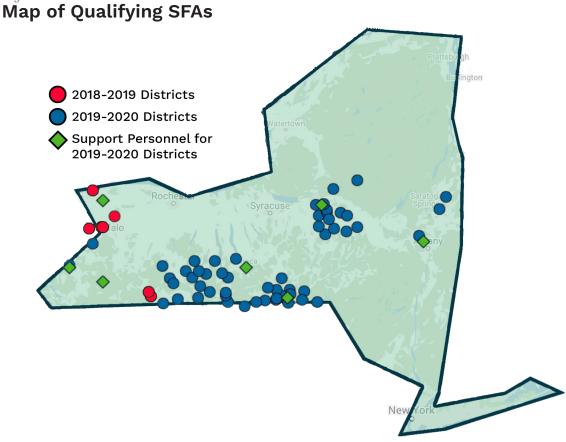
Further, NYFP purchases may be underreported. Anecdotally, after exceeding 30% NYFP purchases, some SFAs choose to "stop counting" or to exclude products for which documentation is cumbersome.



In 2018, former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced the launch of the No Student Goes Hungry Initiative to provide access to healthy, locally-grown food for low income students. Included in this Initiative was an incentive for schools to increase the use of locally-grown foods in their cafeterias. Referred to as the 30% NY Initiative, this incentive increases the per-meal lunch reimbursement rate from \$0.056 per meal (a rate that has been in place for over 40 years) to \$0.25 per meal for any SFA that can demonstrate spending at least 30% of their total food costs for lunch on foods grown, raised, or produced in NY. The Initiative is the most generous local-procurement incentive program in the nation.

The 30% NY Initiative defines a NYFP as a food item that is grown, harvested, or produced in NY; or, a food item processed inside or outside NY comprising over 51% agricultural raw materials grown, harvested, or produced in NY by weight or volume. In order to receive the increased reimbursement, SFAs must undergo a review conducted by NYSED during which they are required to demonstrate having spent 30% or more of their food costs for lunch on qualifying products during the preceding school year.

Figure 14.



In the Initiative's first year (2018–2019), over 40 SFAs submitted applications, and seven passed the NYSED review. The total amount spent on NYFPs for lunch was \$2,928,580. In the second year, 57 SFAs qualified, spending a total of \$5,199,240 on NYFPs for lunch. A comprehensive list of the qualifying SFAs is located in Appendix F.

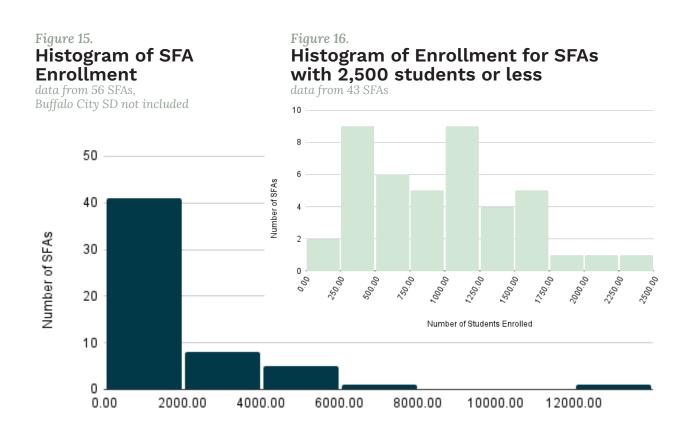
Due to COVID-19, SFAs were forced to implement emergency feeding plans beginning March 16th, 2020. SFAs began operating the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), or the Seamless Summer Option (SSO). NYFP purchases made under SFSP did not count toward SFAs total NYFP purchases, while purchases made under SSO did. SFAs operating SSO during the 2020-2021 school year were eligible to receive the increased per-meal rate. Because the per-meal reimbursement rate under SFSP was already higher than

the rate received by SFAs operating SSO plus the additional reimbursement, the 55 qualifying SFAs operating SFSP did not receive additional per-meal reimbursement during the 2020-2021 school year. In May 2021, the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets provided the 55 SFAs operating SFSP performance-based awards totaling \$494,650, stipulating that the awards should be used to increase the volume and variety of NY farm products procured by SFAs for inclusion in meal programs. Examples of acceptable uses include, but are not limited to employing a Farm to School Coordinator, purchasing equipment needed to increase capacity to prepare and serve NYFPs, implementing school meal programs that feature NYFPs, and conducting or attending trainings for food service staff on how to prepare and serve fresh produce.

### **Enrollment**

For the purposes of this report, the term "enrollment" refers to the total number of students enrolled in the school districts that are part of a given SFA. This differs from district enrollment, because SFAs can represent or include more than one school district. For example, Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES, for example, is a single SFA that serves 15 different districts. In many cases we will refer to SFA enrollment rather than district enrollment. For more information on Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), please refer to page 30.

- The total number of students enrolled in schools served by qualifying SFAs was 145,284.
- Enrollment ranged from 183 to 38,970.
- The median student enrollment in qualifying SFAs was 1,158.
- 95% of SFAs (54) had a student enrollment below 6,000.
- 72% of SFAs (41) had student enrollment below 2,000.
- 39% of SFAs (22) had an enrollment of less than 1,000 students.
- Buffalo City SD is an outlier, serving 38,970 students.
- The median student enrollment across all SFAs in NY for the same period was 1,186, suggesting that **enrollment size did not** have a significant effect on the ability of an SFA to qualify.



### **Average Daily Participation**

The term Average Daily Participation (ADP) refers to the percent of students that eat school lunch each day (number of meals served/SFA student enrollment). Figure 17 represents an average rate for each district during the month of February 2020.

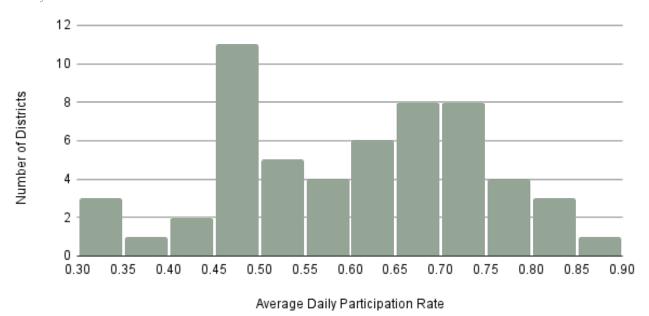
The average ADP rate for school lunch was 60% and the median was 61%. ADP ranged from 32% to 88%, with the middle 50% of ADP rates between 47% and 73%. There are no outliers. This is higher than the average and median ADP of NY SFAs during this period, which were 53.9% and 53.1%, respectively. This could suggest that it may be easier for SFAs with higher participation to qualify.

We also compared the rate of participation prior to the 30% NY Initiative to rates after its introduction, for both SFAs statewide and qualifying SFAs. Participation statewide rose 1.81% between February 2018 and February 2020. Among qualifying SFAs, participation

Each day, 85,774 students ate meals provided by qualifying SFAs.

rose 2.27%. 34 (60%) of the qualifying SFAs saw an increase in participation, with an average increase of 5.26 percentage points. 22 (40%) saw a decrease in participation, though the average rate of reduction was much lower: 2.16 percentage points. For seven SFAs, participation increased over 10 percentage points. An additional nine SFAs saw an increase between 5-10 percentage points. It's possible that the increase in participation could be correlated with the introduction of new, fresh, or local menu items, and related education and promotion, though our analysis neither validates nor refutes that.

Figure 17. **Histogram of Average Daily Participation Rate from Qualifying SFAs**data from 57 SFAs



### **Community Eligibility Provision**

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) was established by the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, which allows predominantly low-income schools to serve reimbursable school meals at no charge to all students. Individual school buildings, a group of school buildings, or entire districts can qualify for CEP.

Districts or buildings must have a minimum Identified Student Population (ISP) of 40% in the prior year to qualify and the ratio of students reimbursed at the free rate versus the paid rate is based on a multiplier of  $1.6.^5$  For example, if the ISP rate in the SFA or the building(s) is 40%, they would receive 64% of their reimbursement in the free category and 36% in the paid category (40 x 1.6 = 64).

The distribution of SFAs that qualified for the 30% NY Initiative was evenly dispersed between SFAs that participated in CEP and those that did not. 20 SFAs (35%) participated in CEP, and 23 SFAs (40%) did not. There

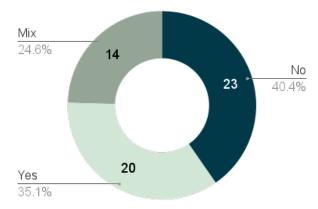
were 14 SFAs (25%) in which some schools participated in CEP, and others did not. These results indicate CEP participation does not impact an SFA's ability to qualify for the 30% NY Initiative.

Figure 18.

SFA Participation in the

Community Eligibility Provision

data from 57 SFAs



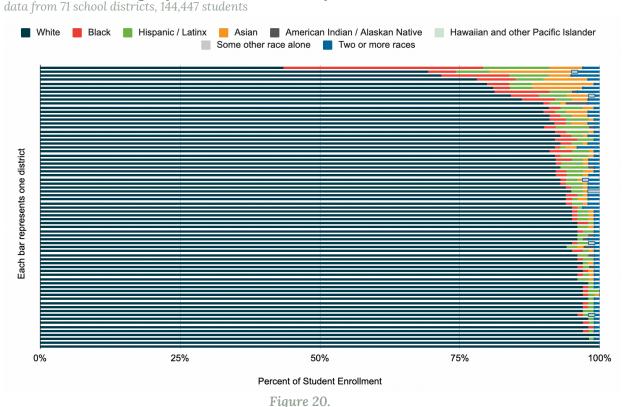


### **Demographic Diversity**

**83%** (59) of the 71 districts served by the 57 SFAs that qualified for the 30% NY Initiative had a student population that was over 90% White. The percent White student population ranged from 44% (Buffalo City SD) to 100% (Whitesville CSD and Brookfield CSD), with a median White population of 95%. There were seven outlier districts that served more diverse student populations: Buffalo City SD, Ithaca City SD, Binghamton City SD, Johnson City CSD, Vestal CSD, Niskayuna CSD, and Elmira City SD.

Figure 19.

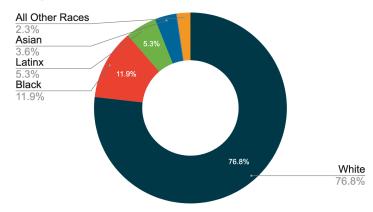
Student Demographic Information per District



When we consider the demographics of the students who stand to benefit from the program in aggregate, we see more diversity. Of the 144,447 students enrolled in the qualifying districts, 77% were White (111,332), 12% were Black (17,252), and 5% (7,630) were Hispanic/Latinx. This is because Buffalo City SD, the districts served by Broome-Tioga BOCES and Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES included more students of color and were larger in size than smaller, Whiter, more rural districts.

# Aggregated Number of Students based on Race

data from 71 school districts, 144,447 students



This audience is still much less diverse than the state as a whole: 43% of NY students identify as White, 17% as Black, and 27% as Hispanic/Latinx. 12 **The 30% NY Initiative did not serve a representative sample of these students.** We note that this is likely in part because schools downstate and in the New York City Metropolitan region, which tend to have more students of color than the rest of the state, did not qualify for the 30% NY Initiative.

### **Student Poverty**

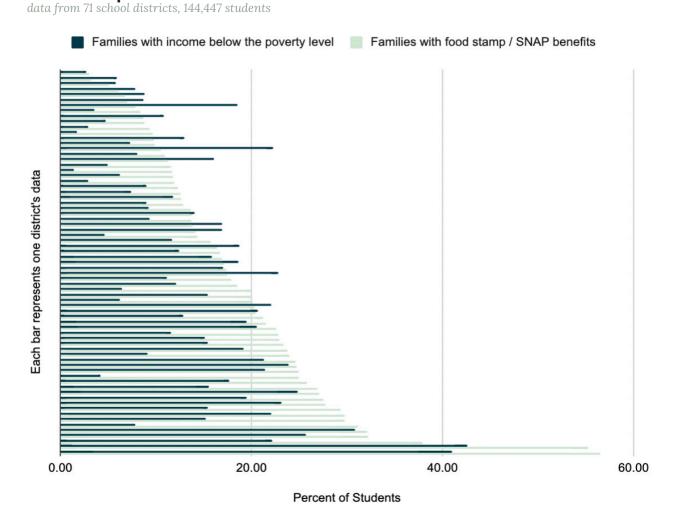
In aggregate, 28% of students (31,212 students) enrolled in qualifying SFAs lived at or below the poverty line.<sup>8</sup> 36% of students (41,050) received SNAP/EBT benefits. The students represented here experience more economic hardship than the rest of the state: 18.1% of children live below the poverty line.<sup>9</sup>

When we examine low-income indicators on a district level, we observe that the median percent of students in poverty is 13%, with 17% of students receiving SNAP/EBT benefits per district. 44% of districts (31) had more students in poverty than the state average of 18.1%.<sup>10,11</sup>

Figure 21.

Percent of Low-Income

Students per District



### **Geographic Distribution**

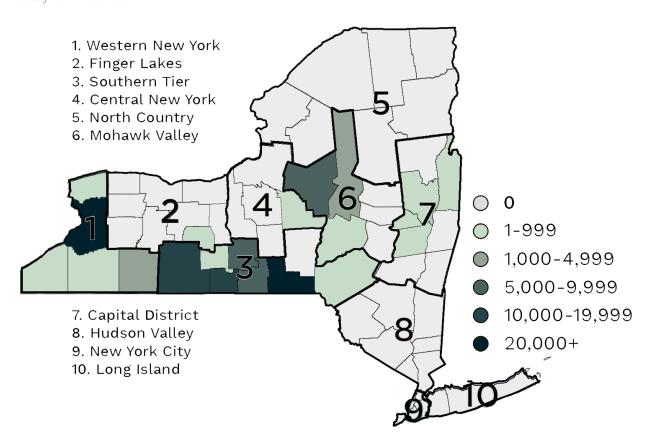
Qualifying SFAs were located in 21 of NY's 62 total counties (34%). Counties with the highest number of qualifying SFAs were Broome (11), Steuben (11), and Allegany (6). The counties with the greatest number of students served by qualifying SFAs were Erie (51,565), Broome (26,557), and Steuben (14,675).

SFAs in six of NY's 10 regions qualified for the 30% NY Initiative. The Southern Tier represented both the greatest number of students enrolled in qualifying SFAs (66,123), and number qualifying SFAs (34). Western NY represented the second most students (59,664) and SFAs (17).

There were no qualifying SFAs in New York City, Long Island, the North Country, or the Hudson Valley.

Most of qualifying SFAs were located in Western New York and the Southern Tier.

Figure 22. **Student Enrollment in Qualifying Districts**data from 71 districts



### **Coordinator Presence and Administrative Support**

Two-thirds of qualifying SFAs had regular support from a dedicated Farm to School Coordinator. 35 of the 57 SFAs received direct support from a Farm to School Coordinator. 20 (91%) of the SFAs that did not work with a coordinator contract for food service with Greater Southern Tier BOCES (GST BOCES). GST BOCES provided administrative oversight to its component SFAs, supporting local procurement and tracking requirements.

Despite not working with a Coordinator during the 2019-20SY, GST BOCES did state in a separate interview that the Farm to School Coordinator previously employed by their partner CCE office did help get their local procurement program established. Schuylerville CSD and Argyle CSD also reported that they did not work with a Coordinator.

Figure 24 depicts how FSDs that responded to the survey worked with Farm to School Coordinators. As illustrated in the chart, Coordinators provided a wide range of services to SFAs. These include procurement-related activities, marketing, education, and recipe development. In this case, the 19 FSDS that responded represented 52 SFAS.

Figure 23.

SFAs that Received Assistance from a Coordinator

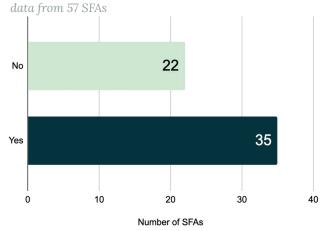
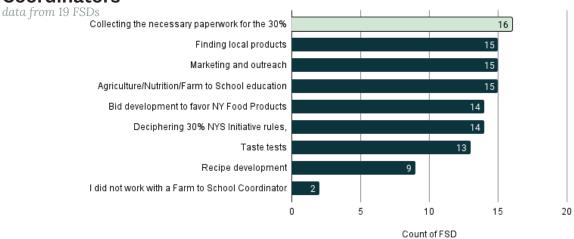




Figure 24.

## How Food Service Directors worked with Farm to School Coordinators



During the 2019-20 school year, 8.23 Coordinators, at an estimated cost of \$453,040, supported 35 SFAs that cumulatively spent \$4,309,606 on NYFPs in service of 66,425 students. Given the critical services that Coordinators provide and the local procurement they helped facilitate, the benefit clearly outweighs the cost.

### **School Food Management**

School food is managed in one of three ways:

- 1. "Self-op" refers to a SFA that manages their own food service department, independent of an outside management company or partner BOCES
- 2. A Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)
- 3. A Contract Food Service Management Company, E.G., ARAMARK, Sodexo, Whitsons, Personal Touch, or Compass Group

Who receives the 30% NY Initiative reimbursement is conditional on who the designated SFA is. More information on reimbursement can be found on CCE Harvest NY's FAQs Regarding 30% NY Initiative Reimbursement.

### **BOCES**

BOCES, which stands for Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, was

established in 1948 by the NY legislature. BOCES provides cost-effective shared educational programs and services to school districts across the state; though it is important to note that BOCES membership is not currently available to the "Big Five" city school districts: New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Yonkers, and Syracuse. 13 Specific to food service, BOCES offers a range of services, including food service management and operation, labor, and cooperative bidding. The range of food services a school district receives from BOCES varies across the state, with some having their entire food service operation managed by a BOCES, others only using their cooperative bidding services, and a handful using no services.

Two-thirds of the qualifying SFAs contracted their food service operations through a regional BOCES. 20 SFAs contracted with GST BOCES (35%, representing 30,012 student enrollment), 15 with Broome-Tioga (BT) BOCES (26%, 31,265 student enrollment), and two with Capital Region BOCES (4%, representing 3,751 students enrolled). Oneida-Madison-Herkimer (OHM) BOCES serves as a single SFA for 15 component districts, and also manages their food service operations. OHM BOCES has an enrollment of 13,113 students. In total, these SFAs represented 78,141 students, just over half (54%) of all students enrolled in qualifying SFAs.

# Food Service Management Companies

A Food Service Management Company (FSMC) is a commercial enterprise or a nonprofit organization with which SFAs may contract to manage their food service operations.

According to NYSED's Child Nutrition

Program, 24% of public SFAs contract for food service management. Thus far, no SFA that contracts for food service management has applied for the Initiative. Representatives from FSMCs have not provided any insight, but it's possible FSMC-managed SFAs have not applied because the additional reimbursement goes to the SFA and not to the FSMC, or because the documentation process is outside the scope of their contracts.

### **New York Purchases**

In order to receive the increased reimbursement, SFAs must undergo a review conducted by the NYSED during which they are required to demonstrate having spent 30% or more of their food costs for lunch on qualifying NYFPs during the preceding school year.

58% of SFAs (33) had school lunch budgets under \$125,000. 82% of SFAs (47) had school lunch budgets under \$250,000. Total food costs ranged from \$21,300 (Addison CSD) to \$5,141,599 (Buffalo City SD). There were four outlier SFAs that had significantly higher lunch budgets: Elmira City SD, Binghamton City SD, Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES, and Buffalo City SD. The combined lunch budget of all qualifying districts was \$13,317,819, with a median of \$106,595.



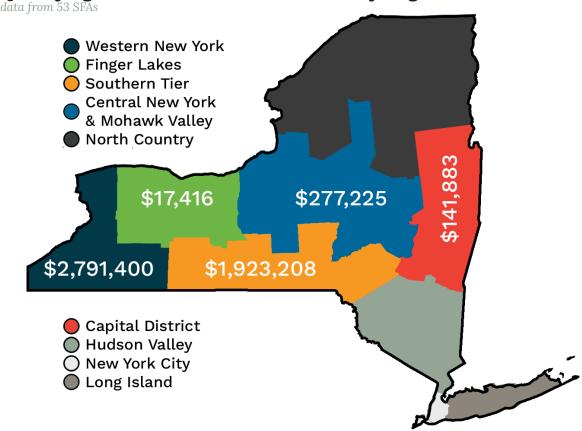
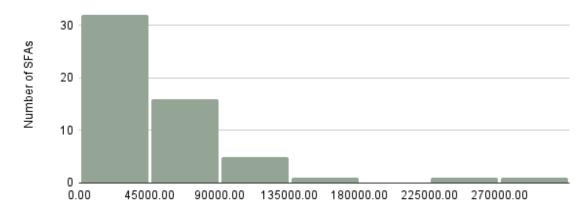


Figure 26.

Total Annual New York Purchases by SFA

data from 57 SFAs



Food cost from NY Products (\$)

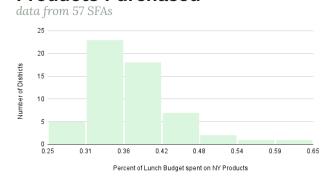
Qualifying SFAs spent a total of \$5,151,133 on NYFPs during the 2019-2020 school year. The distribution of food cost for lunch from NY mirrors the total food cost for lunch. Per SFA, this ranged from \$7,076 (Canaseraga CSD) to \$2,154,805 in Buffalo City SD, whose purchases represented almost half of all NY purchases made by qualifying SFAs. The median amount spent on NYFPs was \$38,791 with three outliers: Binghamton City SD, Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES, and Buffalo City SD.

Western NY purchased the most NYFPs of any region, representing over half of all purchases made by qualifying SFAs (\$2,791,400), followed by the Southern Tier (\$1,923,208), Central NY/Mohawk Valley (\$277,225), the Capitol Region (\$141,883), and the Finger Lakes (\$17,416). The Central NY and Mohawk Valley regions are combined because OHM BOCES serves districts in both regions. Since OHM BOCES reported their total NY purchases as one SFA, rather than on a per district basis, we could not further break down the combined regions.

SFAs that spend at least 30% of total food costs for their school lunch programs on NYFPs are eligible for the 30% NY Initiative. The 57 qualifying SFAs spent 25.4%-63.5% of

their lunch budgets on NYFPs. The average spent on NYFPs was 38.0% with a median of 36.6%. The middle fifty percent of SFAs spent between 33-41% of their lunch budgets on NYFPs. There are seven outliers whose NY food cost percentages are significantly higher than the other qualifying SFAs (>45%). Based on purchasing data from other SFAs and the difficulty the majority of SFAs in the state have reaching just 30% NY purchases, this level of spending on NYFPs is notable. It's possible that a more rigorous audit, as was conducted in the first year of the Initiative, could have revealed a miscalculation or inadvertent error in how food expenditures were reported.

Figure 27.
Histogram of Percentage of NY
Products Purchased



### **Motivations**

FSDs were asked why they chose to participate in the 30% NY Initiative; it is undoubtedly more work for them to procure and serve NYFPs. The increased reimbursement was the largest motivator among them, with 39% of FSDs citing this. It's important to note, however, the important role that the community and student body can play in affecting positive changes in the school cafeteria. One FSD is quoted as saying:

"buy[ing] local is important, and it does cost more, so [the] increased reimbursement is needed to continue the purchases".

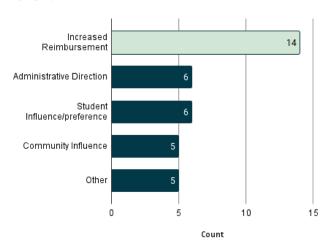
Another thought it could:

"improve the perception of the nutritional value [of school meals].

Figure 28.

## SFA Motivations for Pursuing the 30% NY Initiative

19 FSDs





### **Key Takeaways:**

- Successful SFAs received support from Farm to School Coordinators or had administrative support.
- Participation by low-income and non-low-income districts was comparable.
- The Community Eligibility Provision did not appear to have an impact on SFA's ability to qualify.
- A majority of SFAs (72%) were small in size (2,000 or fewer students), but most SFAs (67%) across NY are also small.
- Most successful districts were located in the Southern Tier and Western NY.





This section reviews the NYFPs that were purchased by qualifying SFAs in 2019-2020. In order for a school lunch to be considered reimbursable, SFAs are required to adhere to a federally approved meal pattern.<sup>15</sup> The meal pattern dictates the:

- minimum serving sizes for the five components of a reimbursable meal: fluid milk, fruit, vegetables, meat or meat alternatives, and grains, which vary by grade level.
- type of acceptable products within those components. For example, to satisfy the vegetable component, a prescribed amount of vegetable subgroups has to be served weekly and

- regarding milk, only fat-free or low-fat (1% or less) are allowed.
- minimum and maximum calories, the maximum amount of saturated fats and sodium allowed, and a zero tolerance for trans fats.

Offer versus Serve (OVS) introduces additional requirements. While OVS is required for lunches served at high schools, it's optional at elementary and middle schools. Under OVS, SFAs are required to offer five components in the minimum required amount and students are required to take three of them, of which one must be the minimum requirement of fruit and/or vegetable.<sup>17</sup>

### **Overview of New York Purchases**

New York Purchases by Category

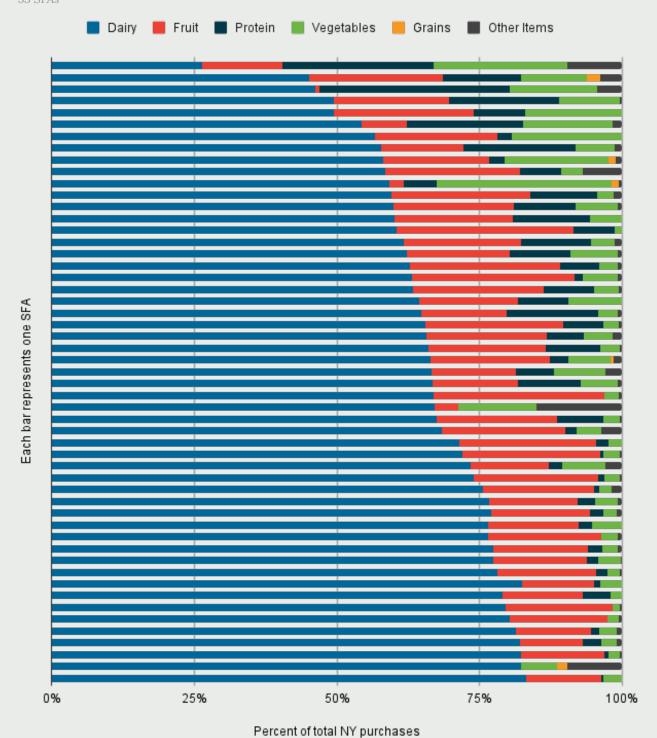


Figure 30.

Total Qualifying NY Food Product Purchases from SY 2019-2020 \$12,952,120, 53 SFAs

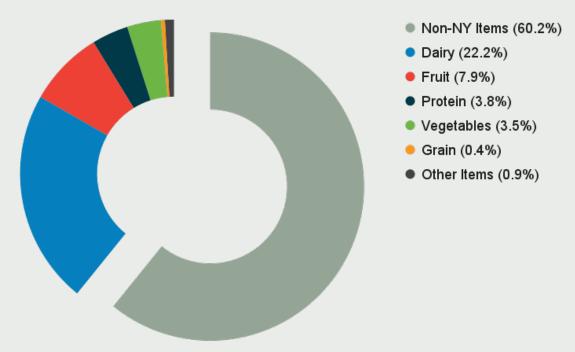


Figure 31.

Qualifying NY Food Product Purchases from SY 2019-2020

data from 53 SFAs

Category	<b>Total Spent</b>	Median Percent of NY Purchases	Range Of NY Purchase Percent	Standard Deviation (% of NY)	Most Purchased Item In Category
Dairy	\$ 2,877,275	65.6%	25.3%-82.3%	11.5%	Milk
Fruit	\$ 1,020,919	19.4%	0.0%-30.9%*	6.6%	Grape Juice
Protein	\$ 492,720	6.6%	0.0%-33.4%	7.2%	Hot dogs
Vegetables	\$ 456,922	4.0%	1.4%-30.6%	6.1%	Leafy Greens
Grain	\$ 52,636	0.0%	0.0%-2.3%	0.5%	Pita Chips
Other Items	\$ 121,537	0.8%	0.0%-15.0%	2.8%	Egg rolls

<sup>\*</sup>Several districts did not itemize their fruit and thus it is represented as 0.0% for the lower range. However, all districts reported purchasing qualifying NY fruits during the 2019-2020 school year.

# **Top Ten Purchased New York Items**



**#1** Fluid Milk \$2,310,046



#6 Hot Dogs \$161,469



**#2 Grape Juice**\$313,099



#7 Cheese Sticks \$156,338



**#3 Apples**\$296,979



**#8 Burger Patty**\$152,256



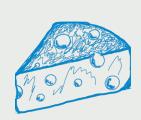
#4
Grape
Slushies
\$170,612



#9
Apple
Slices
\$145,469



**#5 Yogurt**\$161,672



**#10 Cheese**\$120,693





## DAIRY

Cheese, Cheese Sticks, Fluid Milk, Other Dairy, Yogurt

SFAs are required to provide 8oz. of fluid milk or milk substitute to students as part of a reimbursable lunch. Dairy was the most purchased category, with a median of 65.6% of all NYFP purchases spent on dairy products. These purchases ranged from 25.3%-82.3% of all NY purchases, with 91% (48) of SFAs spending more than half of their NY purchases on dairy. In total, the SFAs in this report spent over 2.5 million dollars (\$2,877,275) on local dairy. Fluid milk was the most purchased item in this category.

### FRUIT

Apples, Apple Sauce, Apple Slices, Berries, Cantaloupe, Cider, Grapes, Juice, Other Fruit, Pears, Slushies, Stone Fruit (peaches, plums, apricots, cherries), Watermelon

SFAs are required to offer each student a ½ (grades K-8) or 1 cup (grades 9-12) serving of fruit for each reimbursable meal.<sup>19</sup> No more than half of the fruit served in a week may be in the form of juice, and only 100% juice is allowable. In total, the SFAs in this report spent over one million dollars (\$ 1,020,919) on local fruit, with a range of 0%-31% of their NYFP expenditures being on fruit. Several SFAs did not itemize fruit: they either lumped all produce purchases together, which we recorded under vegetable purchases, or their fruit purchases were included in the Other Items category. All of the SFAs with itemized procurement data reported purchasing fruit products, with a median of 19.4% of total itemized NY purchases being spent on fruit. 69% of the SFAs spent more than 15% of their NY purchases on local fruit. Grape juice was the most purchased item in this category.



# MEAT OR MEAT VEGETABLES

Beans, Burger Patties, Chicken Products, Deli Meat, Eggs, Ground Beef, Hot Dogs, Other Beef, Other Meat, Pork Products, Tofu

**ALTERNATIVES** 

SFAs are required to offer each student a 1 oz. (grades K-8) or 2 oz. (grades 9-12) serving of meat or meat alternative for each reimbursable meal.<sup>20</sup> Protein can be meat derived or derived from "alternative" protein sources, like eggs, dairy products, or plants. Protein is the third largest category by purchase amount. In total, the SFAs in this report spent almost half a million dollars (\$492,720) on local protein, with a range of 0%-33.4% of total NY purchases being spent on protein. Hot dogs were the most purchased item in this category.

Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Corn, Cucumbers, French Fry, Green Beans, Lettuce/ greens/kale, Non-Itemized Items, Onions, Other Root Vegetables, Other Vegetables, Peppers, Potatoes, Summer Squash, Tomatoes, Winter Squash

SFAs are required to offer each student a ¼ cup (grades K-8) or 1 cup (grades 9-12) serving of vegetables for each reimbursable meal.<sup>21</sup> Further, they are required to serve a minimum of ½ - 1¼ cup(s) of five vegetable subgroups per week (dark green, red/orange, legumes, starchy, and other), plus additional vegetables to reach weekly minimums, which are also dependent on the grade level. In total, the SFAs in this report spent nearly half a million dollars \$456,922 on local produce, with a range of 1.4%-30.6% and a median of 4.0% of total NY purchases being spent on produce. All SFAs reported purchasing vegetable products, but there was no specific vegetable variety that was purchased by all SFAs. Leafy greens were the most purchased vegetable in this category.



## **GRAIN**

Granola Oats, Other Grain, Pita Chips

SFAs are required to serve 1 oz. (grades K-8) or 2 oz. (grades 9-12) of qualifying grain products per reimbursable lunch.<sup>22</sup> **Only seven SFAs purchased grain products**, with the highest purchases amounting to 2.3% of total NY purchases. Most SFAs (46, 87%) did not purchase any NY grain products. Pita chips were the most purchased item in this category.



# OTHER ITEMS

Egg Roll, Ice Cream, Maple Syrup, Non-Itemized Items, Other Processed Items, Potato Chips, Tomato Sauce Products

The sixth category, "Other Items," includes food items that do not individually count toward NSLP reimbursable meals. These food products may contain multiple components of a reimbursable lunch (for example, egg rolls count toward grain and vegetable requirements), or may be used as supplements. These food items can be included in addition to a reimbursable lunch as long as the SFA complies with salt and sugar regulatory thresholds for their meal period. Eight SFAs (15%) did not purchase any items in this category and 35 SFAs (66%) spent 1% or less of their NY purchases in this category. The most purchased items in the "Other Items" category were vegetarian egg rolls (which feature NY cabbage), potato chips, and ice cream.

Figure 32.

Procurement Methods Used to Purchase NY Food Products
17 FSDs



### **Procurement Methods**

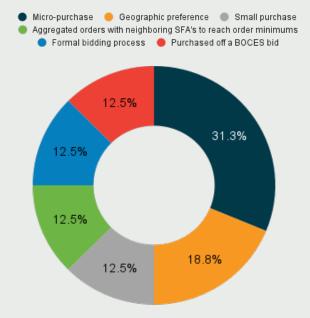
FSDs were asked which procurement method(s) they used to purchase NYFPs. The micro purchase was the method cited by most FSDs, with 71% reporting they used it. The small (informal) purchase was the second most commonly used method, with 59% citing its use. One FSD wrote that they issued a request-for-information (RFI) that revealed favorable prices. As RFI was not one of the options provided to all respondents, it's uncertain if others used this tool to identify products potentially available for purchase.

As observed in Figure 32, FSD's used multiple procurement tools to purchase NYFPs, with only one FSD noting the use of a single tool (small purchase). 31% of FSDs cited micro purchase as the procurement tool that best helped them to purchase NYFPs. Every procurement method presented has been used to successfully purchase NYFPs.

Figure 33.

### Most Helpful Procurement Tools that Helped FSDs Purchase NY Food Products

16 FSDs



### **Geographic Preference**

Geographic preference was a tool used by nine (51%) of FSDs to procure local items. Per the 2008 Farm Bill, SFAs can apply a geographic preference to any type of procurement, which effectively allows for lowest price to not be the sole factor considered when awarding bids. Other factors NY SFAs have weighted in their bids include proximity to the district, date of harvest, food safety certifications, and proper product formulation statements. Two important points about geographic preference. First, it's a preference, not a specification, meaning factors can't be required. Second, it can only be applied to unprocessed or minimally processed food products. "Processed", in this case, means any food item that has gone through the following cooking techniques: cooking, heating, or canning. Further any foods, minimally processed or not, that include additives and/or fillers can not have a geographic preference applied to them. More information on geographic preference can be found on this factsheet created by USDA Food and Nutrition Services.

FSDs were then asked the types of NYFPs they purchased prior to the 30% NY Initiative.

79% and 84% cited they purchased dairy and apples, respectively. Also of note, 47% reported purchasing potatoes, and 53%, tomatoes. Two FSDs indicated purchasing other products prior to the Initiative: corn, squash, and "all other products avail[able] when in season", and grapes, peaches, pears, nectarines, plums, and watermelon. **No FSD** cited purchasing animal-based proteins, which is notable given that animal-based protein purchases in the 2019-2020 school **year amounted to \$487,622**, with all but five SFAs purchasing NY animal-based proteins during this time. One FSD indicated not purchasing any local products prior to the 30% NY Initiative and the response was recorded and reported here as such; however, we know that in actuality this district purchased NY fluid milk prior to the Initiative.

NY Protein Purchases grew from **\$0** to nearly **half a million dollars** between school year 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Figure 34.

NY Food Purchased Prior to the 30% NY Initiative
19 FSDs



FSDs were then asked what NYFPs they would purchase more of, if available. 16 FSDs responded, as illustrated in Figure 35. Some listed specific items, while others indicated broader subcategories. "Demand by ADP" is used as a proxy for the volume of potential demand per item, as we did not de-aggregate responses by individual SFA. For example, the total ADP of the seven FSDs that indicated they would purchase more fresh

fruit and vegetables equated to 39,616, which represents 52% of the total ADP of SFAs that responded. Important to note that a single, but different FSD, noted they would purchase the following: more "NY Grown & Certified products", "entree items that are not in direct comparison with commodity items", and "anything fresh and local". Further, another FSD noted they would "purchase the same".

Figure 35.

### NYFPs that FSDs Would Purchase if Available

16 FSDs

Items	Demand by ADP (#) and (% of total ADP)	FSDs (#)	Items Specified
Fresh Fruit and Vegetables	39,616 (52%)	7	Broccoli, Green Beans, Lettuce, Cherry Tomatoes, Greens
Processed Fruit and Vegetables	48,870 (64%)	5	Mashed Potatoes, Riced Cauliflower, Canned Beans, Frozen Vegetables
<b>Shelf Stable Juices</b>	24,175 (32%)	3	Cider
Deli Meats	5,928 (8%)	1	
Poultry	18,048 (24%)	2	
Eggs	29,606 (39%)	2	Preference for liquid
<b>Processed Meats</b>	30,450 (40%)	3	Cooked Ground Beef, Cooked Chicken
Grain/Bakery	1,840 (2%)	3	Pita Bread, Oats, Corn Muffin Mix, Flour
Pizza Shells	6,396 (8%)	2	
Other Processed Items	468 (1%)	1	Marinara

When asked what resources would help FSDs increase their use of NYFPs, the following statements were made:

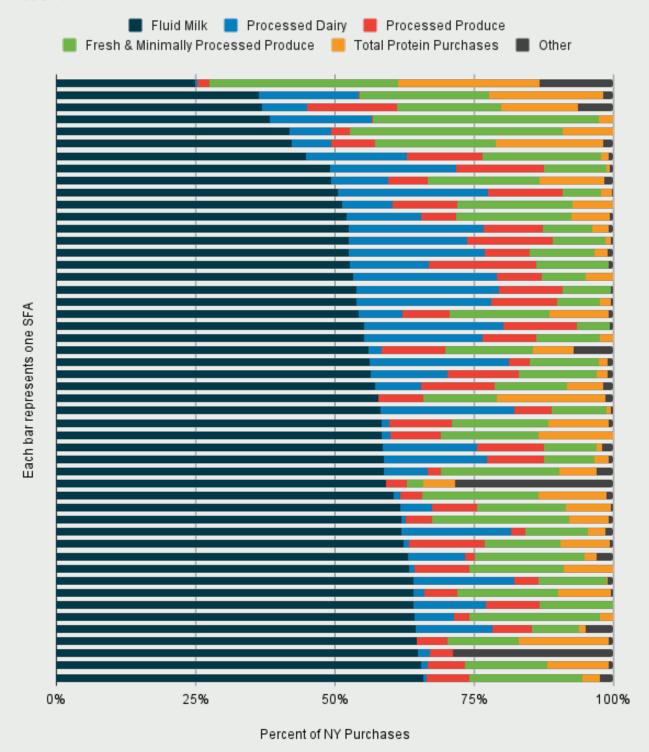
- I just don't have the time to go out and find all the products available and jump through hoops to do the paperwork involved with the purchase.
- Have all manufactures state that they are a NY product
- Access to downstate vendors that tend to work with NYC and area
- Receiving merchandise through grants would be helpful
- Marketing products as well as needed supplies that we just don't have spare funds for, such as thermal bags for transporting food items and even packaging supplies.
- Classroom and community engagement tools would help as it feels like we are moving beyond just the cafeteria.
- Updated NY Grown & Certified list
- More high quality low cost options that are distributed through my current vendors
- Information on products that qualify
- Approved variances for processing our own NY produce
- NY student approved recipes
- A refrigerated truck where we can go to farm directly and pick up food
- A Farm to School Coordinator
- Having the manufacturer be NY Grown & Certified so the paperwork is easier to file for the 30% review
- Meet-and-greet with farmers willing to sell to schools, to connect and figure out distribution
- Shared drive with all 30% documentation for items available to schools
- List of farmers willing to sell to schools with their contact information and qualifying products available.

Further, a few noted the resources that have helped them. They include the support of Farm to School Coordinators, the 30% NY Eligible Product Database, and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Note that while we may not have the perfect solution to every challenge, below is a list of resources that answer some of the challenges.

- NY Farm to School Coordinators are available across the state. If you don't see one in your region, you can contact Cheryl Bilinski and she will pair you with a Coordinator to support your procurement needs.
- NY Grown & Certified List: If you follow the link to the 30% NY Eligible Product Database, you'll note that one of the tabs is NY Grown & Certified, which is the most upto-date list of NY Grown & Certified producers in the state. This is a great place to search for farmers in your region that may have qualifying NYFPs.
- 30% NY Eligible Product Database: This lists all products that qualify for the 30% NY Initiative and are widely available for distribution across the state. Embedded in each product record is either attestation that the product is NY Grown & Certified or an approved product formulation statement. Farm to School Coordinators can assist in collecting other required documentation.

# **Subcategories**

Figure 36.
Subcategories of New York Purchases by Category
50 SFAS

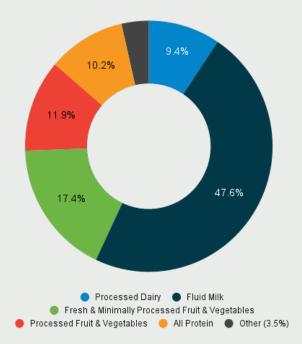


"Farm to School" is often associated with fresh, healthy, local foods from the farm down the road. To explore if purchases made toward the 30% NY Initiative were in line with this expectation, we categorized NYFP purchases as either "fresh, raw, and minimally processed" or "processed." Fresh, raw, and minimally processed products include whole fruits and vegetables, such as whole apples and whole potatoes, and raw products that have been slightly altered so that they are more convenient to use, or suitable for human use or consumption, such as fluid milk, peeled carrots, cubed butternut squash, sliced apples, frozen cherries, raw chicken, ground beef and beef patties, maple syrup, and honey. Processed products have been further refined to alter them for reasons other than rendering them suitable for consumption, to include cooking, preservation, and the addition of ingredients. Examples include flavored milk, cheese, french fries, chips, and juice. Appendix B categorizes all NYFPs purchased by qualifying SFAs as either "fresh, raw, and minimally processed" or "processed."

Figure 37.

# Subcategories of Qualifying New York Food Product Purchases

\$4,849,486, Does not include non-itemized purchases



Fluid milk represented nearly half (48%) of all NYFP purchases.

Fresh, raw, and minimally processed products made up over two-thirds of all NYFP purchases (69%, \$3,448,763). Just over a quarter of qualifying NY purchases were on processed items (28%, \$1,400,723) with 3% non-itemized purchases (\$172,523). Fluid milk represented almost half of all NY purchases (48%), and represented two-thirds (67%) of all minimally processed, raw, and fresh purchases. If we remove fluid milk purchases, we see that processed items made up a greater share of total purchases than fresh, raw, and minimally processed ingredients: 52% (\$1,400,723) of purchases were processed, and 42% (\$1,138,717) were fresh, raw, and minimally processed (non-itemized purchases total \$172,523 or 6%). Processed dairy and fluid milk combined represented 57% of all NYFP purchases. Nearly 30% of all NYFP purchases were represented by produce, both fresh, raw, and minimally processed, and processed. Of this 30%, nearly a third (9.1% of total NYFP purchases) were fresh apples. 10% of all purchases were local protein.

While processed foods like french fries, grape juice, hot dogs, ice cream, and egg rolls may not typically be associated with Farm to School, for many SFAs trying to qualify for the 30% NY Initiative, using these processed products is a matter of practicality. Unlike fresh produce, which is seasonal by nature, processed products are available throughout the entire school year, often from existing vendors. They can be easier to prepare and serve in institutional settings, and their longer shelf life is an added advantage. While we didn't specifically ask FSDs if they used processed NYFPs to replace non-NYFPs in their kitchens, we did ask if FSDs shifted their use of USDA foods. Seven (out of 19) reduced their use of USDA beef in order to purchase more local beef, and three reduced their use of USDA cheese to increase use of local cheese. Further research should be conducted to examine whether or not SFAs replaced more nutritionally-dense non-NYFPs with processed NYFPs (for example, to what extent did SFAs replace fresh fruit with NY grape juice, or add NY ice cream to their menus when they previously didn't offer this product?).

Purchases of processed NYFPs contribute to NY's agricultural economy by supporting local farms and food manufacturers. In response to the 30% NY Initiative, entirely new products were created to meet the needs of schools and support local farmers, and existing products were reformulated to contain at least 51% NY ingredients. These products include a pita chip made using NY-grown wheat flour, grape juice made using NY-grown Concord grapes, and several beef products.





**Purchases of dairy** products and apples made up two-thirds of all NY product expenditures. In a supplemental survey, a majority of SFAs selfreported purchasing local items in these categories before the Initiative was introduced, 79% of SFAs were purchasing NY dairy products, and 84% of SFAs reported purchasing NY apples. Based on this survey and SFA procurement data, we can estimate that for most qualifying SFAs, 20% of their total lunch budgets had already been composed of NYFPs before 2018. For over three-quarters of qualifying SFAs, the 30% NY Initiative resulted in an approximated 10% increase in new NYFP purchases.

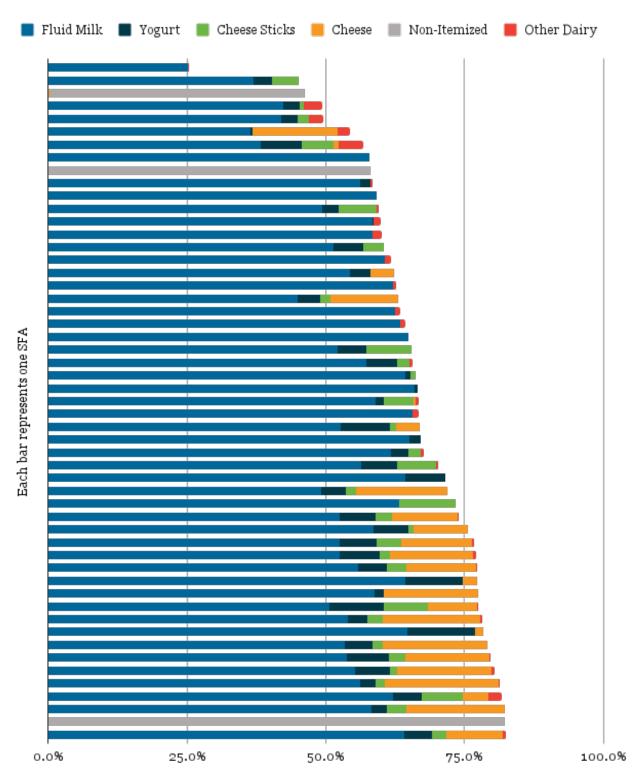


Dairy was the most purchased category, with a median of 65.6% of all NY purchases spent on dairy products. These purchases ranged from 25.3%–82.3% of all NY purchases, with 91% (48) of SFAs spending more than half of their NY purchases on dairy. In total, the SFAs in this report spent over two and a half million dollars (\$2,877,275) on local dairy.

All SFAs reported purchasing fluid milk products. A total of \$ 2,310,046 was spent on fluid milk, representing 84% of all itemized dairy purchases made. SFAs spent 25.3%-65.9% of their NYFP purchases on fluid milk, with a median of 57.8%. There was one outlier SFA whose fluid milk purchases made up just 25.3% of all NYFP expenditures.

Figure 38.

Dairy Purchases by District
53 SFAs, \$ 2,765,334 total



Percent of Total NY Purchases



Description of Dairy Purchases by Subcategory 53 SFAs

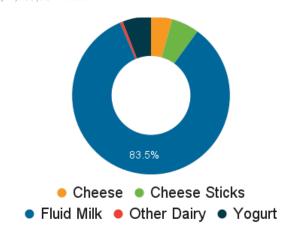
Item	Total Spent	Median	Range of NY Purchases by Percent	Standard Deviation (% of NY)
TOTAL	\$ 2,877,275	65.6%	25.3%-82.3%	11.5%
Fluid Milk	\$ 2,310,046	57.8%	25.3%-65.9%*	15.5%
Yogurt	\$ 161,672	3.2%	0.0%-12.3%	3.2%
Cheese Sticks	\$ 156,338	0.0%	0.0%-10.2%	2.6%
Cheese	\$ 120,693	0.0%	0.0%-20.6%	7.0%
Non-Itemized	\$ 111,939	0.0%	0.0%-82.3%	14.9%
Other Dairy	\$ 16,587	0.1%	0.0%-4.3%	0.9%

### **Dairy Purchases by Category**

The majority of dairy purchases were minimally processed, with fluid milk making **up 84% of all dairy expenditures.** 16% of dairy purchases were processed, with \$455,000 spent on value-added items including yogurt (\$161,672), cheese sticks (\$156,338), cheese (\$120,693), sour cream, and cottage cheese. Cheese and cheese sticks were separated because cheese is typically purchased in bulk and used as an ingredient in reimbursable lunches, and cheese sticks were purchased in 1 oz. individual portion controlled packets. 26 (49%) SFAs reported using cheese, and 31 (58%) reported using cheese sticks. **SFAs that** purchased cheese spent an average of 10% of all NYFP purchases on cheese products. 18 of the 20 SFAs that purchased the highest percent of dairy purchases incorporated local cheese on their menus.

\*Other Dairy - As explained in the methods section, a handful of SFAs submitted partially itemized lists of their NY purchases. In these cases, non-itemized dairy purchases were placed in the "Non-Itemized" column. Other dairy products listed in this category include sour cream and cottage cheese. The fluid milk range was not listed as 0.0%, it was listed as the lowest itemized dairy percent for which we have an itemized catalog.

Figure 40. **Dairy Purchases by Item**§ 2,765,334 total





### The Importance of Dairy to 30%

On average, a quarter (25.2%) of total lunch purchases made were on dairy products, with a median of 23.8%. Fluid milk alone represented one-fifth (average 19.6%, median 20.1%) of total lunch purchases. Therefore, SFAs purchasing local milk only needed to convert an additional 10% of their total lunch expenditures to NYFP purchases. Of the procurement data we have, nearly a quarter (12 SFAs, 23%) qualified for the 30% NY **Initiative on dairy purchases alone.** Though these 12 SFAs also purchased other non-dairy NY products, dairy purchases amounted to over 30% of their total lunch budgets. For SFAs throughout the state that do not have access to NY dairy, specifically NY fluid milk, achieving 30% local purchases proves to be difficult and potentially impossible. **No** SFA has qualified for the initiative without purchasing NY fluid milk.

SFAs obtain fluid milk through dairy bids. Entire regions of the state, including Long Island and areas of the Hudson Valley, have been excluded from qualifying for the 30% NY Initiative because NY dairy processors do not respond to fluid milk bids, or these dairy processors do not come in as the lowest cost bidders. Geographic preference cannot be applied to flavored milk, which makes awarding bids to NY dairy vendors in certain regions even more challenging.

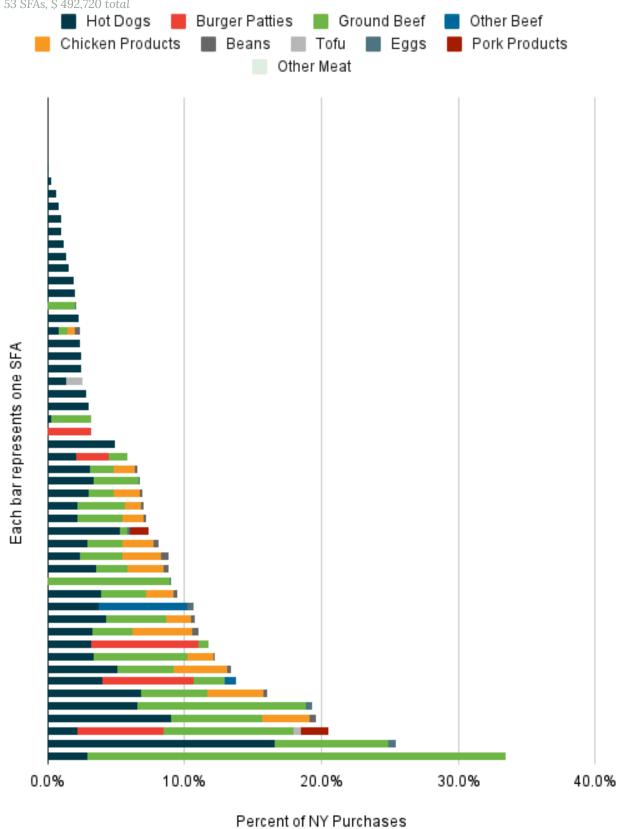


Protein can be meat derived, or derived from "alternative" protein sources, like eggs, dairy products, or plants. Protein was the third largest category by purchase amount. In total, the SFAs in this report spent almost half a million dollars (\$492,720) on local protein, with a range of 0%-33% of total NY

purchases being spent on protein. Five SFAs did not purchase any protein products and over half of the SFAs (28) spent less than 5% of their total NY purchases on local protein. Hot dogs were the most purchased NY protein item (\$161,469), followed closely by beef burger patties (\$152,256) and ground beef (\$112,450).

Figure 41.

Protein Purchases by District





Description of Protein Purchases by Subcategory 53 SFAs

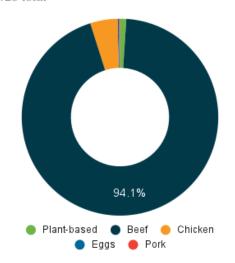
Item	Total Spent	Median	Range of NY Purchases by Percent	Standard Deviation (% of NY)
TOTAL	\$ 492,720	6.6%	0.0%-33.4%	7.2%
Hot Dogs	\$ 161,469	2.3%	0.0%-16.6%	2.8%
Burger Patties	\$ 152,256	0.0%	0.0%-7.9%	1.7%
Ground Beef	\$ 112,450	1.3%	0.0%-30.5%	4.9%
Other Beef	\$ 37,279	0.0%	0.0%-6.5%	0.9%
<b>Chicken Products</b>	\$ 22,148	0.0%	0.0%-4.4%	1.2%
Beans	\$ 3,604	0.0%	0.0%-0.5%	0.2%
Tofu	\$ 1,495	0.0%	0.0%-1.2%	0.2%
Eggs	\$ 1,115	0.0%	0.0%-0.6%	0.1%
Pork Products	\$ 904	0.0%	0.0%-2.0%	0.3%

### **Protein Purchases by Category**

A vast majority (94%) of all protein products purchased were beef-based, with items like hot dogs, ground beef, beef patties, and other beef represented in this category. "Other Beef" was purchased by two SFAs. The products in this category include beef italian style sausage and meatballs.

Figure 43.

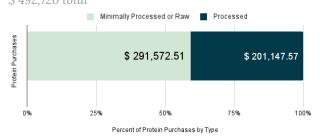
Purchases by Protein Source
\$ 492.720 total



Overall, protein products purchased by SFAs were mostly minimally processed or raw items, with 59% of purchases spent on items that include ground beef, burger patties, chicken products, beans, and eggs. **41% of protein purchases were processed items,** which include hot dogs, other beef, tofu, and pork products. An explanation of our definitions is located in <u>Appendix A</u> of this report.

Figure 44.

Protein Purchases by Processing Type
\$ 492,720 total





### **Sourcing Local Protein**

Figure 45 shows selected NY protein products and the approximate price of a 2 oz. serving. These prices were provided by FSDs and are not meant to be representative of the cost of these products throughout NY. Some of these protein products are also not available in each region and cannot be procured by every SFA. For chicken and beef products, this price is for the raw product and shrinkage will occur during the cooking process. Beef products tend to be more expensive than pork, chicken, eggs, and meat-alternatives.

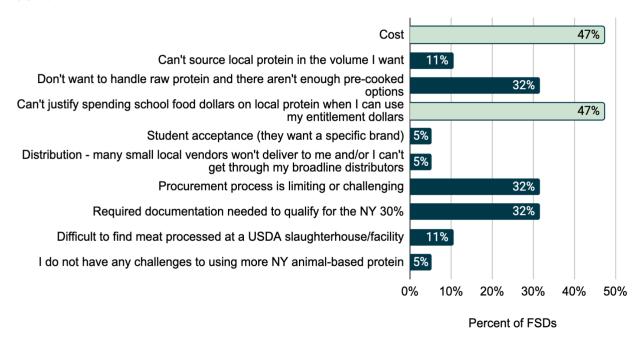
Figure 45. Approximate Price Per 2oz. Serving of Various NY Protein Products				
<b>Burger Patties</b>	\$0.76			
Hot Dogs	\$0.56			
Yogurt	\$0.53 (8oz.)			
Ground Beef \$0.51				
Cheese Sticks* \$0.49				
Chicken Products \$0.38				
<b>Bulk Cheese</b> \$0.29-0.32				
<b>Tofu</b> \$0.22				
<b>Beans</b> \$0.19				
<b>Eggs</b> \$0.10				
<b>Bulk Cheese</b> \$0.29-0.32				

\*20z. is equal to two portion controlled cheese sticks

Figure 46.

### FSD's Challenges to Using More NY Animal-Based Protein

19 SFAs



# Challenges to Using More Animal-Based Protein

FSDs were asked to identify their challenges to using more NY animal-based proteins, and then to identify their single biggest challenge. "Cost" and "can't justify spending school food dollars on local protein when I can use my entitlement dollars" ranked the highest, with nearly half (47%) of FSD's citing each of these as a challenge. One respondent, representing a single SFA stated "I have no challenges using more NY animal-based proteins". Important to note is that one SFA used the "other" text box option to identify challenges associated with student acceptance; another identified distribution challenges. Because these answer choices were not available as preset choices. it's unclear if other FSDs would have cited them given the opportunity.

When distilled to a FSD's single biggest challenge, "cost" ranks the highest (26% of FSDs), and "can't justify spending school food dollars on local protein when I can use my entitlement dollars" ranks second (21% of FSDs).

Figure 47.

### Top Five Responses: FSD's Single Biggest Challenge to Using More NY Animal-Based Protein

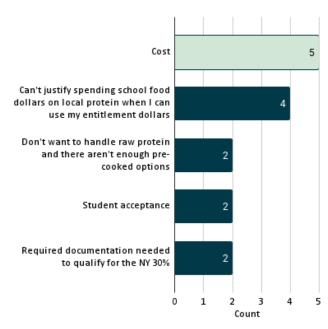
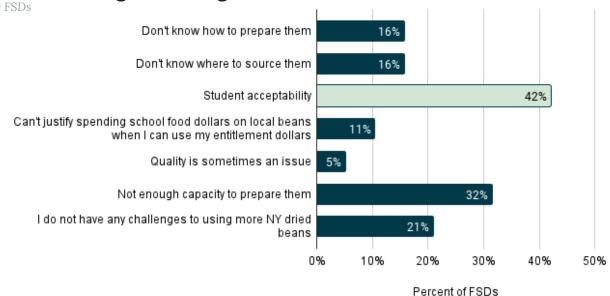


Figure 48.

### FSD's Challenges to Using More NY Dried Beans



#### **Dried Beans**

FSDs were asked to identify their challenges to using more NY dried beans, which were then distilled to their single biggest challenge. "Student acceptability" ranked the highest, with 42% of SFAs citing this as a challenge. "Not enough capacity to prepare them" ranked the second highest, cited by 32% of FSDs citing this, with one FSD adding "presoaked/boiled beans would be great to have". While 21% of FSDs stated "I do not have any challenges to using more NY dried beans", only one of the four SFAs contributing to that percentage had used NY dried beans at the time the survey was administered. In fact, two-thirds (68%) of SFAs reported they didn't use NY dried beans. Of the 32% that did, 16% of SFAs credited them as a vegetable, 5% as a meat-alternative, and 11% as both. Important to note the challenge "quality is sometimes an issue" was written into the "other" text box option by a single SFA. Not surprisingly, FSDs single biggest challenge was "student acceptability", with 40% of FSDs citing this, to include the FSDs serving the three districts with the highest ADP rates.





Figure 49.

How SFAs Credited Dried Beans
19 FSDs

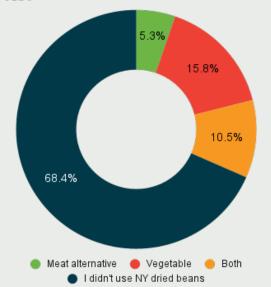
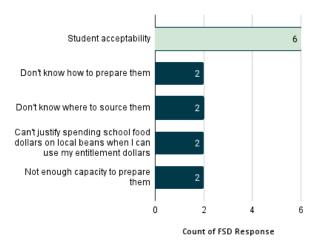


Figure 50.

### Top Five Responses: FSD's Single Biggest Challenge to Using More NY Dried Beans

15 FSDs



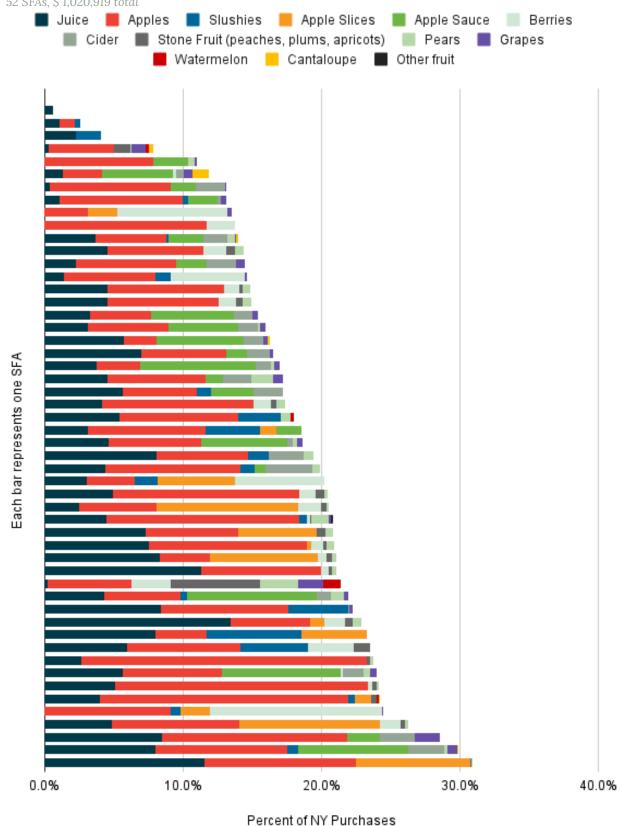


In total, qualifying SFAs spent over a million dollars (\$1,020,919) on local fruit, with a range of 4%–31%\* (p. 63) and a median of 19.4% of total NY purchases being spent on fruit. All SFAs reported purchasing fruit products, with 69% of the SFAs spending more than 15% of their NY purchases on local fruit. Grape juice was the most purchased NY fruit item (\$313,099), with

48 SFAs reporting grape juice purchases. This was followed closely by fresh apples (\$296,979), with 50 SFAs reporting the purchase of whole apples. To the naked eye, total apple purchases may seem low, given their popularity with students and FSDs alike. However, NY SFAs directed \$15.1 million of their entitlement funds to apple products, both fresh and processed during the 19-20 SY.<sup>23</sup>

Figure 51.

Purchases by District





Description of Fruit Purchases by Subcategory 52 SFAs

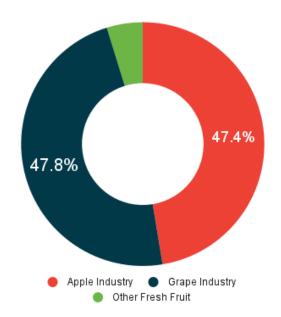
Item	Total Spent	Median	Range of NY Purchases by Percent	Standard Deviation (% of NY)
TOTAL	\$ 1,020,919	20.9%	4.1%-30.9%*	6.7%
Juice	\$ 313,099	4.9%	0%-13.5%	3.2%
Apples	\$ 296,979	8.1%	0%-20.7%	4.4%
Slushies	\$ 170,612	0.0%	0%-6.9%	1.4%
Apple Slices	\$ 145,469	0.0%	0%-10.3%	2.7%
Apple Sauce	\$ 27,449	0.0%	0%-9.4%	2.7%
Berries	\$ 21,020	0.0%	0%-12.5%	2.3%
Cider	\$ 13,904	0.0%	0%-3.4%	0.9%
Stone Fruit	\$ 12,666	0.0%	0%-6.5%	0.9%
Pears	\$ 12,232	0.2%	0%-2.7%	0.5%
Grapes	\$ 4,545	0.0%	0%-1.8%	0.4%
Watermelon	\$ 2,266	0.0%	0%-1.3%	0.2%
Cantaloupe	\$ 621	0.0%	0%-1.2%	0.2%
Other fruit	\$ 57	0.0%	0%-0.2%	0.0%

### **Fruit Purchases by Category**

Fruit varieties were evenly split between grape and apple products, with 48% of purchases spent on items that include grape juice, grape slushies, and fresh grapes. 47% of fruit purchases supported the apple industry, with purchases of whole apples, apple slices, applesauce, and apple cider. The remaining 5% includes other fresh and minimally processed fruits, including berries, stone fruit, pears, cantaloupe, and watermelon. The only item in the "other fruit" category was IQF cherries.

\*As explained in our methods section, five SFAs submitted partially itemized lists of their NY purchases. In some cases, itemized fruits were listed from one vendor while another vendor listed an aggregated amount for multiple kinds of produce (fruits and vegetables combined). Therefore, the lowest percentage of NY purchases here, 4.1%, is an actual itemized cover sheet provided by an SFA. Aggregated sums of non-itemized produce purchases can be seen in the vegetable section of this report.

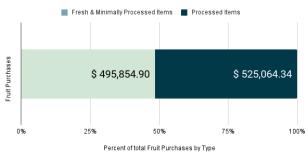
Figure 53.
Fruit Purchases by Industry \$ 1,020,919 total



#### Figure 54.

# Fruit Purchases by Processing Type

\$ 1,020,919 total



The majority of fruit purchases were processed items, with 51% of purchases spent on grape juice, grape slushies, apple cider, and applesauce. 43% of fruit purchases were on fresh apples, with \$440,000 spent on whole apples and apple slices. An explanation of our definitions are located in <u>Appendix A</u> of this report.



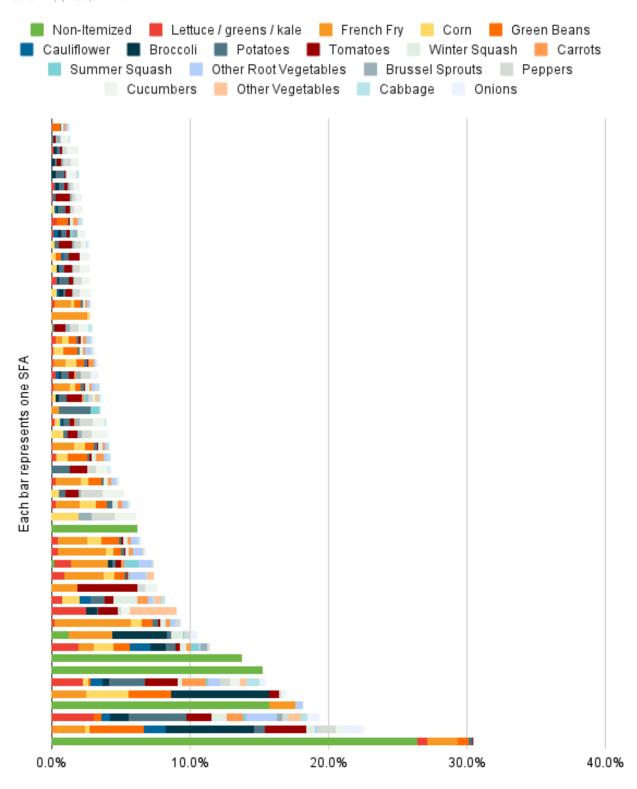


In total, the SFAs in this report spent nearly half a million dollars (\$456,922) on local vegetables, with a range of 1.4%-30.6% and a median of 4% of total NY purchases being spent on vegetables. All SFAs reported purchasing vegetable products, but there was no specific vegetable variety that was purchased by all SFAs. 58% (31) of SFAs spent less than 5% of all NY purchases on vegetables, and 81% (43) of SFAs spent less than 10% of their NY purchases on vegetables. Among the itemized vegetable purchases, NY greens including lettuce and kale were the most purchased vegetable type (\$56,552), followed by french fries (\$49,815), and corn (\$41,517).

### Other / Non-itemized Vegetables:

As explained in our methods section, four SFAs submitted only partially itemized lists of their NY purchases. In some cases, itemized fruits were listed from one vendor while an aggregated produce total was provided for another. Aggregated sums of non-itemized produce purchases are lumped under the "Non-itemized" category above. Vegetables listed in the "other vegetables" category include garlic, celery, cilantro, eggplant, and green onion, among others. Items in "other root vegetables" include beets, sweet potatoes, parsnips, and turnips.

Figure 55. **Vegetable Purchases by District** 53 SFAs, \$ 456,922 total



Percent of Total NY Purchases



Description of Vegetable Purchases by Subcategory 53 SFAs

Item	Total Spent	Median	Range of NY Purchases by Percent	Standard Deviation (% of NY)
Total Vegetables	\$ 456,922	4.0%	1.4%-30.6%	6.1%
Non-Itemized Vegetables	\$ 58,882	0.0%	0.0%-26.5%	5.0%
Lettuce / Greens / Kale	\$ 56,552	0.1%	0.0%-3.1%	0.7%
French Fry	\$ 49,815	0.0%	0.0%-5.6%	1.3%
Corn	\$ 41,517	0.3%	0.0%-3.1%	0.6%
Green Beans	\$ 36,790	0.0%	0.0%-3.9%	0.7%
Cauliflower	\$ 36,013	0.0%	0.0%-1.6%	0.3%
Broccoli	\$ 31,001	0.0%	0.0%-7.1%	1.4%
Potatoes	\$ 29,446	0.2%	0.0%-4.2%	0.7%
Tomatoes	\$ 19,771	0.2%	0.0%-4.3%	0.8%
Winter Squash	\$ 17,800	0.0%	0.0%-1.7%	0.3%
Carrots	\$ 14,188	0.0%	0.0%-1.7%	0.3%
Summer Squash	\$ 13,203	0.0%	0.0%-1.0%	0.2%
Brussels Sprouts	\$ 12,148	0.0%	0.0%-0.9%	0.2%
Other Root Vegetables	\$ 12,398	0.0%	0.0%-2.2%	0.4%
Peppers	\$ 8,647	0.1%	0.0%-1.7%	0.4%
Cucumbers	\$ 7,331	0.0%	0.0%-1.6%	0.4%
Other Vegetables	\$ 5,180	0.0%	0.0%-3.4%	0.5%
Cabbage	\$ 2,398	0.0%	0.0%-0.9%	0.1%
Onions	\$ 3,843	0.0%	0.0%-1.4%	0.2%

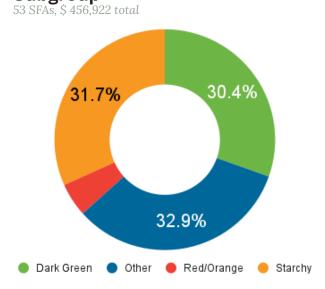
Part Two: New York Purchases

# **Vegetable Purchases by Category**

Vegetable varieties were distributed fairly evenly between three different vegetable categories as defined by USDA meal pattern requirements, with 33% of vegetable purchases in the "other" group (Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumbers, green beans, onions, peppers, summer squash), 32% of purchases in the "starchy" vegetable group (corn, french fries, and potatoes), and 30% of vegetable purchases in the dark green vegetable category (broccoli, kale, and lettuce). The least purchased vegetable subgroup was red/orange with 5% of purchases. These items include carrots, tomatoes, and winter squash.

Figure 57.

Vegetable Purchases by Subgroup

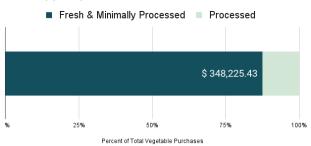


All SFAs reported purchasing vegetables, and 87% of purchases were fresh or minimally processed items.

Figure 58.

# Vegetable Purchases by Processing Type

53 SFAs, \$ 456,922 total



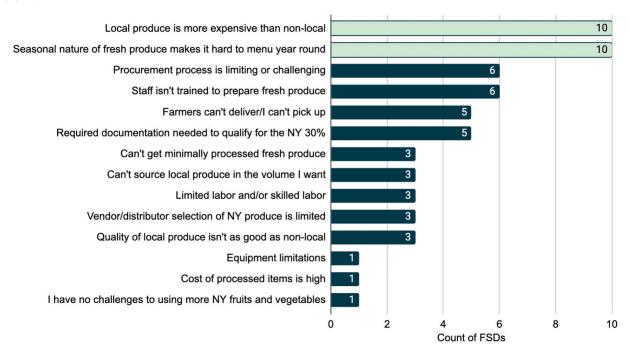
The majority of vegetable purchases were unprocessed, with 87% of purchases spent on fresh or minimally processed vegetables. 12% of vegetable purchases were processed, with \$50,000 spent on NY french fries. French fries were the only identified processed vegetable available to SFAs. An explanation of our definitions is located in Appendix A of this report.



Figure 59.

### FSD's Challenges to Using More NY Produce

19 SFAS



# Challenges to Using More Local Produce

FSDs were asked to identify their challenges to using more NY produce, which was then distilled down to their single biggest challenge. "Local produce is more expensive than non-local produce" and the "seasonal nature of fresh produce makes it hard to menu year-round" received the highest percentage of responses, with 53% of FSDs citing these as challenges. One respondent, representing a single SFA, stated "I have no challenges using more NY fruits and vegetables". Important to note is that three FSD's wrote in challenges under the "other" text box option that we coded as "limited labor and/or skilled labor", and one FSD wrote in "cost of processed items is high".

When the same challenges are represented as a function of total SFAs that responded, the highest ranking challenge becomes "can't source local produce in the volume I want", with 69% of SFAs noting this as a challenge.

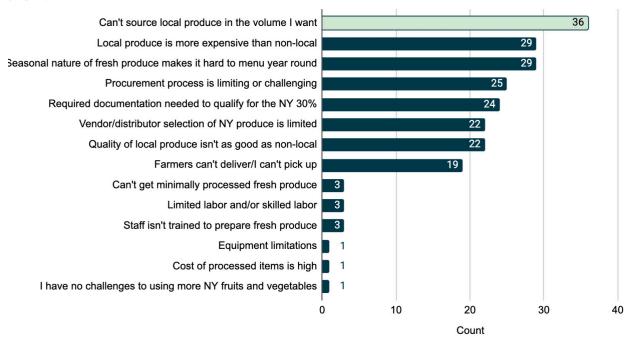
Tied for the second biggest challenge faced by SFAs, with 56% reporting, are "local produce is more expensive than non-local" and the "seasonal nature of fresh produce makes it hard to menu year-round".



Figure 60.

### SFA'S Challenges to Using More NY Produce

52 SFAs



**Seasonality** is the top challenge for Food Service Directors to use more NY Produce.

When distilled to FSDs single biggest challenge, "seasonal nature of fresh produce makes it hard to menu year round" ranked the highest, with 39% of respondents citing this. This was followed by "local produce is more expensive than non-local", with 17% of respondents citing this as their single biggest challenge. FSDs serving 63% of the total students served by ADP cited seasonality as their biggest challenge, with both the smallest and largest SFA, based on ADP, contributing to this percentage. There were four challenges that no FSD cited as their single biggest: "can't source local produce in the volume I want", "equipment limitations", "quality of local produce isn't as good as non-local", and "staff isn't trained to prepare fresh produce".

Figure 61.

18 FSDs

### Top Five Responses: FSD's Single Biggest Challenge to Using More NY Produce

Seasonal nature of fresh produce makes it hard to menu year round

Local produce is more expensive than non-local



Number of FSDs

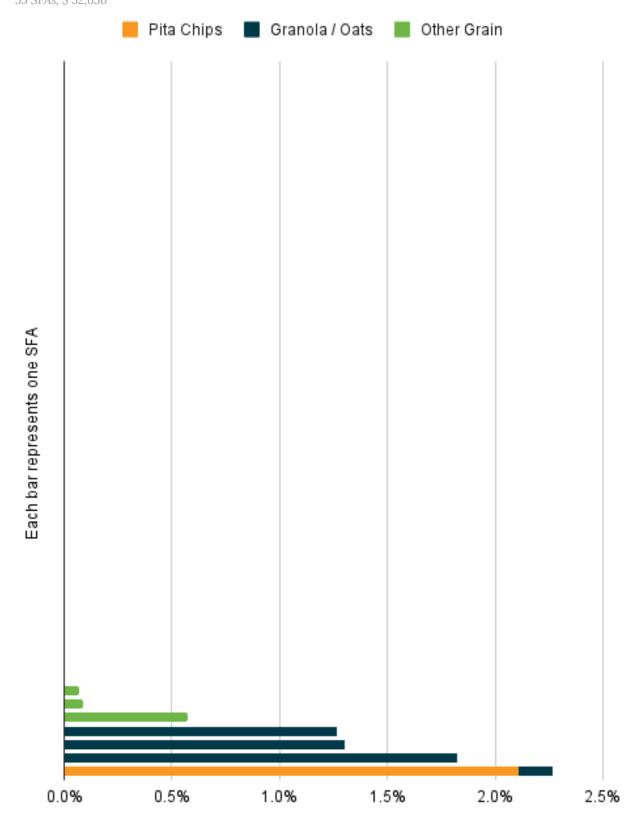
7



As demonstrated by the white space on Figure 62, only seven SFAs purchased grain products, with the highest purchases amounting to 2.3% of total NY purchases. Most SFAs (46, 87%) did not purchase any NY grain products. The low purchase percentage of grain products is due to the lack of grain manufacturers and food producers interested and capable of using NY grain for sale into institutional markets.

While there are many grain manufacturers in the state, they typically do not use grains that were grown within the state's boundaries, and if they do, they're sold at a premium price in the direct to consumer market. In total, \$52,000 was spent on NY grain products, making grain the least purchased category by both amount spent and the number of SFAs that purchased these products.

Figure 62. **Grain Purchases by District**53 SFAs, \$ 52,636





Description of Grain Purchases by Subcategory

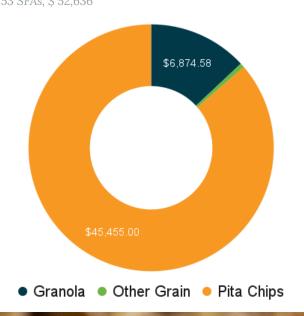
Item	<b>Total Spent</b>	Median	Range of NY Purchases by Percent	Standard Deviation (% of NY)
TOTAL	\$ 52,636	0.0%	0%-2.3%	0.5%
Pita Chips	\$ 45,455	0.0%	0%-2.1%	0.3%
Granola / Oats	\$ 6,875	0.0%	0%-1.8%	0.3%
Other Grain	\$ 306	0.0%	0%-0.6%	0.1%

#### **Grain Purchases**

All grain products purchased are considered processed products. A vast majority (86%) of all grain products purchased were pita chips. 13.1% of all grain purchases were spent on granola or oat products. "Other grain" was purchased by two SFAs, Trumansburg and Ithaca SD, who purchased polenta.

Only three manufacturers were known to have made and sold their NY grain products to SFAs.

Figure 64. **Grain Purchases by Item**53 SFAs, \$ 52,636





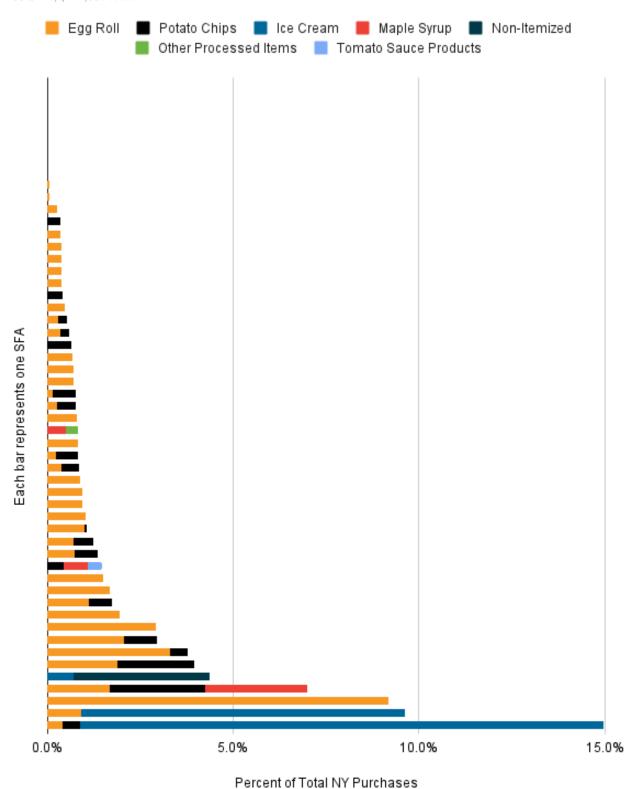


The sixth category, "Other Items," includes foods that do not individually count toward NSLP reimbursable meals. These food products may contain multiple components of a reimbursable lunch (for example, egg rolls count toward grain and vegetable requirements), or may be used as supplements. Other NY products in this category that do not explicitly count toward component requirements toward

the requirement or as an ingredient for a reimbursable school lunch include ice cream and potato chips. These food items can be served with reimbursable lunches as long as the SFA complies with salt and sugar regulatory thresholds for their meal period. The most purchased items in the "Other Items" category were egg rolls (which feature NY cabbage), potato chips, and ice cream.

Other Item Purchases by District

53 SFAs, \$ 121,537 total





Description of Other Item Purchases by Subcategory 53 SFAs

Item	Total Spent	Median	Range of NY Purchases by Percent	Standard Deviation (% of NY)
TOTAL	\$ 121,537	0.8%	0%-15.0%	2.8%
Egg Roll	\$ 56,255	0.4%	0%-9.2%	1.4%
Potato Chips	\$ 49,698	0.0%	0%-2.6%	0.5%
Ice Cream	\$ 10,684	0.0%	0%-14.1%	2.3%
Maple Syrup	\$ 2,183	0.0%	0%-2.8%	0.4%
Non-Itemized	\$ 1,703	0.0%	0%-3.7%	0.5%
Other Processed Items	\$ 882	0.0%	0%-0.3%	0.0%
Tomato Sauce Products	\$ 133	0.0%	0%-0.4%	0.1%

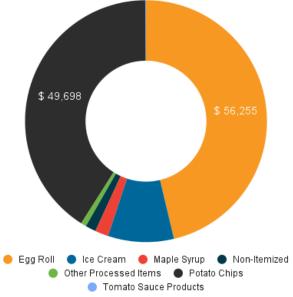
#### **Other Item Purchases**

Eight SFAs (15%) did not purchase any items in this category, and 35 SFAs (66%) spent 1% or less of their NY purchases in this category. The highest percent of purchases spent by an SFA in this category was 15% of all NY purchases, with 14.1% of this spent on ice cream.

The "other processed items" include \$882 of local honey purchased by one SFA. The lump sum of \$1,703 was a non-itemized reported purchase from another SFA. This lump sum includes egg rolls, ice cream, and more items. This sum was placed here as we wanted to report the purchases, but were not able to itemize them from our data set.

Figure 67.
Other Item Purchases by Category

\$ 121,537 total



The most purchased item in the "Other Items" category was **egg rolls**.

#### **Local Sweeteners**

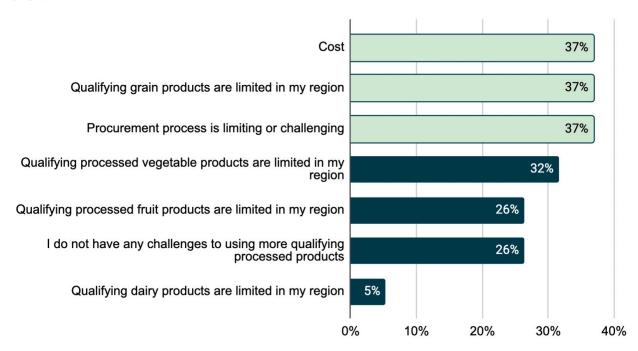
Three SFAs reported purchasing maple syrup and one reported purchasing honey to use as ingredients in reimbursable lunches. One SFA spent 2.8% of their NY purchases on maple syrup. Local sweeteners present an interesting opportunity to highlight NY products when many fresh fruits and vegetables are out of season. These meals can be featured as part of a NY Thursday or Harvest of the Month, and pose an opportunity to educate students about NY's agricultural industries.



Figure 68.

#### FSD's Challenges to Using More NY Processed Foods

19 FSDs



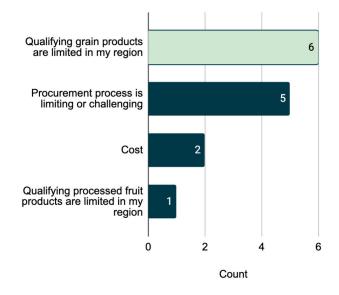
#### **Processed NY Food Products**

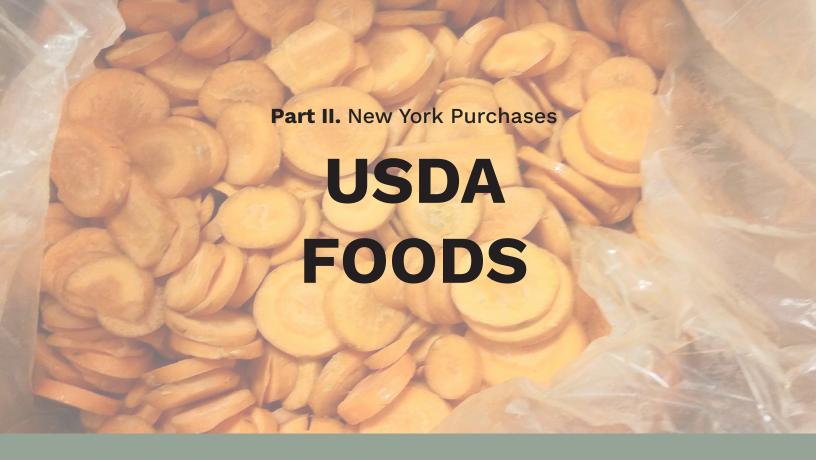
FSD's were asked to report their challenges to using more processed NYFPs and to drill down to their single biggest challenge. It is important to note that we didn't identify processed items in the same way that Appendix B breaks them down, so there is a certain amount of subjectivity based on the FSD's perception of what qualifies as "processed". Tied for first, 37% of FSDs noted "cost", "qualifying grain products are limited in my region", and "(the) procurement process is limiting or challenging" as challenges to using more processed NYFPs. "Qualifying grain products are limited in my region" is the single biggest challenge among FSDs. There were two options offered that no SFA noted as their single-biggest challenge: "qualifying dairy products are limited in my region" and "qualifying processed vegetable products are limited in my region". Also important to note that five of the 19 SFAs did not cite any challenge as their "single-biggest".

Figure 69.

#### FSD's Single Biggest Challenge to Using More NY Processed Foods

14 FSDs





USDA Foods, sometimes referred to as "commodity foods," are foods purchased by the USDA from American farmers, dairymen, ranchers, and fishermen to support nutrition assistance programs and agriculture. According to USDA FNS, 15-20% of the foods on a lunch tray on a given day are USDA foods.<sup>24</sup>

SFAs are awarded an entitlement for USDA foods based on their ADP. They may use that entitlement to get direct delivery of certain USDA foods sometimes referred to as "brown box;" contract with commercial food processors to process raw bulk USDA foods such as whole turkeys into more user-friendly products, like turkey taco meat (this process is also known as diversion); order fresh fruits and vegetables as part of USDA's Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program (commonly referred to as "FFAVORS" by FSDs); or to procure fresh fruits and vegetables as part of USDA's Pilot Project for the Procurement of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (commonly referred to as "the Pilot," or simply "Pilot").

Preference Survey to indicate the top "brown box" foods they are interested in obtaining from USDA using their entitlement. This survey reduces available products from a list of about 200 to a list of approximately 30 to help meet ordering and delivery constraints. The state is divided into 10 distribution regions, and a final list of roughly 30 products is made available to each region based on the surveys completed there. Orders are placed during March and April for the following school year. SFAs may also elect to use part of their entitlement for the Pilot Project and/or DoD, through which they can obtain fresh whole or minimally processed domestic (USA) produce from approved vendors. While local products may be available through any of these USDA programs, the use of entitlement funds to procure local products does not contribute toward an SFA's NY 30% Initiative.

#### **Opportunity: Commodity Foods**

Some USDA foods are products that are also available from NY growers, or can be made using NY ingredients. FSDs were asked if they changed how they spent their entitlement dollars in order to purchase more local items. 13 reported changing how they used their entitlement. There were some commonalities in specifically how SFAs changed their use of commodity dollars: seven reduced their use of USDA beef in order to purchase more local beef, and three reduced their use of USDA cheese to increase use of local cheese. Nine of the SFAs shifted away from multiple commodities, while four SFAs focused on reducing use of just one USDA food (two reduced beef, one reduced cheese, and one reduced fruits and vegetables). Buffalo City SD shifted the use of commodity foods toward the breakfast program. Several shared very specific strategies:

All entitlement was diverted away from diversions (a small discount on certain products through K12 or Processor Link), as money would still need to be spent to receive these items. Instead this money was allocated mostly to FFAVORS and government 'brown box' items.

- Cut beef items to incorporate more NY beef.
  - Cut brown box fries and divert to McCain for NY fries.
  - Divert for NY apple slices and sauce.
  - Order brown box broccoli to start in December after our NY harvest.
- [I] did not divert beef for burgers so could buy local burgers.
  - [I] put more money into DoD so my produce cost would not be so high, and therefore NY produce would a greater % of total \$ spent.
  - [I] got less canned/frozen fruit/veg



Most SFAs that qualified for the 30% NY Initiative adjusted what foods they obtained using their entitlement or "commodity dollars." There are several ways SFAs looking to qualify for the 30% NY Initiative can both adjust and leverage their USDA entitlement and commodity foods:

- Reduce the use of commodity beef, mozzarella cheese, and cheddar cheese, which can be purchased from NY farms/ made with NY ingredients.
- 2. To offset the cost of NY products, mix commodity and locally-grown foods. For example, combine commodity beef with NY beef, top NY yogurt with commodity frozen berries, or combine frozen NY vegetables with commodity frozen vegetables.
- 3. Shift the use of commodity foods to the breakfast program. This strategy may be especially beneficial to low-income districts with high breakfast participation.

The 2021-22 Food Preference Survey results demonstrate the opportunity to swap out high demand USDA food items with comparable NYFPs. Appendix E lists the top 30 items ranked by SFAs across the state for use in the 2021-22SY. As illustrated, there are direct NY product swaps for items such as apple sauce, beef, and mozzarella cheese, and comparable NY product swaps for a handful of other items, such as frozen and canned vegetables, orange juice, and American cheese.

#### Opportunity: Pilot and DoD Fresh

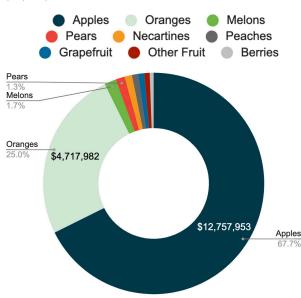
SFAs were also asked whether or not they used DoD or the Pilot. 16 of the 19 FSDs indicated using these programs. We asked these FSDs if they changed how they used these programs to purchase fresh produce, and if so, what changes they made. 14 indicated that they changed how they used DoD and the Pilot. Three FSDs reported increasing DoD in direct response to the pandemic: because participation in the lunch program decreased during the pandemic. SFAs were not able to use up their commodity foods and were left with excess entitlement. These three districts reported shifting excess entitlement to DoD and using it to obtain fresh produce.

Two main strategies emerged in how SFAs reported changing their use of DoD and/or the Pilot (below):

- 1. Three SFAs increased their use of DoD. One used the increase as a cost savings, which enabled them to purchase more NYFPs. A second put more money into DoD in order to reduce their overall produce cost, thereby making NY produce a greater percentage of their overall spend. The third didn't specify why or how they increased their DoD allotment
- 2. The most common strategy was to simply not get NYFPs through DoD or the Pilot. Seven FSDs reported not getting NY produce through DoD or the Pilot. One reported "When local produce is available I purchase as much as possible. When not available or it is too costly, I purchase from FFAVORS and the Pilot"

DoD Fresh Fruit Purchases by Category SY 2019-2020

\$18,849,391 total

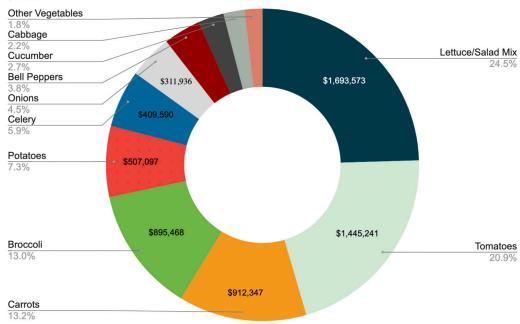


Charts 70 and 71 summarize the total DoD fresh fruit and vegetable purchases made by NY SFAs in the 2019-20 school year.<sup>25</sup> A total of \$25,750,867 was spent on 19,847,293 lbs. of fresh produce. Some items, like citrus fruits, aren't grown in NY. The majority of the remaining items, however, can be grown in NY, and are available in most parts of the state, and are harvested at some point during the school year, with items like apples, potatoes, cabbage, and onions widely available throughout the entire year. With advance planning and strategic use of DoD funds, SFAs can direct more of their food service dollars to these familiar items. They can frontload NY purchases during harvest months and reserve DoD purchases for non-NY harvest months. They can also swap products out completely by, for example, using their foodservice dollars to purchase exclusively NY potatoes, and spending their DoD funds on items NY farmers either don't grow, or aren't available year round. And finally, SFAs can also reduce the amount of their entitlement that they allocate to DoD while being mindful to maintain the quantity of fresh produce served to students.

Figure 71.

DoD Fresh Vegetable Purchases by Category SY 2019-2020

\$6.901.476 total



As with commodity foods, there are several ways SFAs looking to qualify for the 30% NY Initiative can adjust or leverage DoD and the Pilot:

Use DoD/Pilot allocation to obtain only non-NY produce.

Use DoD/Pilot allocation to obtain produce for breakfast programs or other school meal programs.

Consider seasonality when planning the use of DoD/Pilot allocation and front load and backload NY produce purchases when they're plentiful and affordable, namely in fall and late spring.

For example, one FSD reported "I don't buy potatoes, apples, or cabbage through FFAVORS, or other produce in season in the fall".

SFAs can also strategize their overall use of entitlement funds across the USDA Foods programs. For example, SFAs can purchase local beef instead of using their entitlement to obtain commodity beef, and shift the excess entitlement to DoD where it can be used to purchase fresh, non-NY produce.



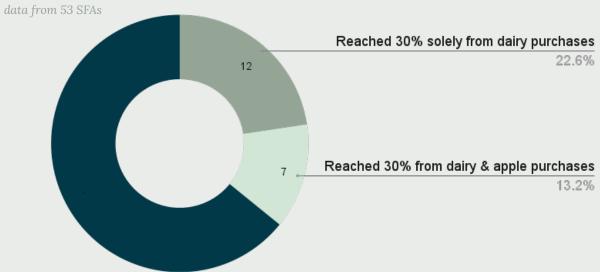
During the 2019-2020 school year 57 SFAs successfully qualified for the 30% NY Initiative, purchasing \$5,151,133 worth of NYFPs and serving 85,774 students. Our research debunked several myths about the Initiative: SFA size and CEP status do not impact ability to qualify; there is no "perfect pathway" to achieving 30% NYFP purchases; a district cannot qualify without access to NY milk; strategic use and management of entitlement funds is a key ingredient to success; and the support of Farm to School

Coordinators was critical, with 96% of qualifying SFAs utilizing their support at some point during their local procurement journeys. We also identified barriers to success beyond those cited by qualifying SFAs, namely that four of the state's nine regions (Long Island, NY City, the North Country, and the Hudson Valley) were unrepresented, due in large part to the fact that SFAs in these areas did not have access to NY milk and experienced other distribution challenges.

#### **Findings**

Figure 6.

#### SFAs Reaching 30% Local with Dairy and Apple Purchases



## 1. The importance of dairy to the 30%.

On average, a quarter of total lunch purchases made were on dairy products. Fluid milk alone represented one-fifth of total lunch purchases. Therefore, SFAs purchasing local milk only needed to convert an additional 10% of their total lunch expenditures to NYFP purchases. Of the procurement data we have, nearly a quarter (12 SFAs, 23%) qualified for the 30% NY Initiative on dairy purchases alone. Though these 12 SFAs also purchased other non-dairy NY products, dairy purchases amounted to over 30% of their total lunch budgets. For SFAs throughout the state that do not have access to NY dairy, specifically NY fluid milk, achieving 30% local purchases proves to be difficult and potentially impossible. No SFA has qualified for the Initiative without purchasing NY fluid milk to date.

## 2. There is no perfect pathway to the 30%.

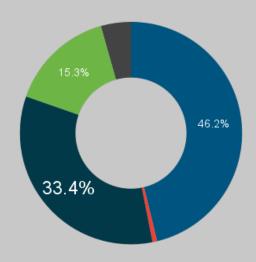
Figures 7-10 depict four unique pathways to 30% success, with the only common denominator among them being the prominent role that dairy played, as depicted by the blue part of the wheel. The first pathway illustrates a high percentage of fruit, a bit of protein, and only a tiny sliver allocated to vegetables. Figure 8 highlights a SFA that purchased a large amount of protein, at 33.4% of their total NYFP spend. When compared to the other three, it proves to be a significant difference. Figure 9 is dairy heavy, with 82.3% of this SFA's 30% spend directed to dairy purchases, and leaving only 3.2% accounted for by proteins, vegetables, and other NY items. Lastly, Figure 10 demonstrates a SFA that directed over 40% of their 30% spend to NY fruits and vegetables, again a considerable variance from the other three pathways. By analyzing unique pathways, we were able to debunk a handful of myths surrounding the type of purchases required to achieve 30% success.

Figure 7.
SFA Example with Significant
Fruit Purchase Percentage

7.2%

Figure 8.

SFA Example with Significant Protein Purchase Percentage

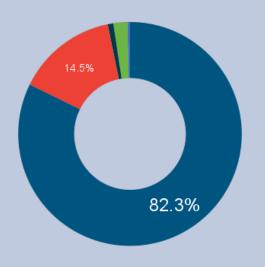


#### Multiple Pathways to 30% Local Procurement



Figure 9.

SFA Example with Significant
Dairy Purchase Percentage



#### Figure 10.

## SFA Example with Significant Fruit and Vegetable Purchase Percentage

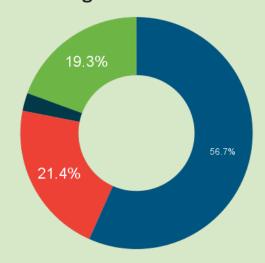
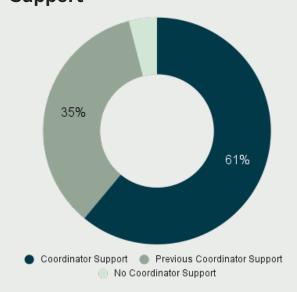


Figure 11.

Farm to School Coordinator
Support

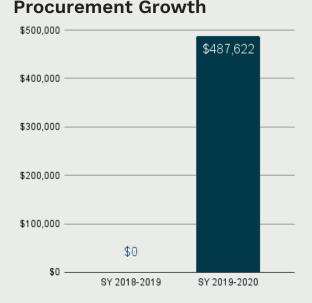


## 3. Farm to School Coordinator support is critical to an SFA's success in achieving the 30%.

61% of qualifying SFAs had regular support from a dedicated Farm to School Coordinator and an additional 35% noted they had previous support when establishing their local procurement programs. Coordinators provided a wide range of services to SFAs, including procurement-related activities, marketing, promotion, education, and recipe development. All told, during the 2019-20 school year, 8.23 Coordinators, at an estimated cost of \$453,040, supported 35 SFAs that cumulatively spent \$4,309,606 on NYFPs in service of 66,425 students.

Figure 12.

Animal-Based Protein



## 4. The 30% NY Initiative is driving positive behavior change.

SFAs spent a total of \$5,151,133 on NYFPs during the 2019-20 school year. Further, animal-based protein purchases increased from \$0 prior to the 30%, to \$487,622 during the 2019-20SY, despite cost being a considerable constraint to purchasing items in this food category. Specifically, Buffalo City SD worked with a 100-year old meat processing facility in Buffalo to create a custom hotdog and sausage link, using 51% NY beef, resulting in \$104,529 of new sales for the processor, and \$49,041 to the NY beef producer. Further, a pita chip was reformulated with NY grains specifically for Buffalo City SD, who spent \$45,455 on it. These are just a few examples highlighting new product development, product reformulation, and increased local procurement efforts across commodity groups.

#### **Examples of Strategic Use of Entitlement Funds**

7 SFAs

reduced their use of USDA beef in order to purchase more local beef.

3 SFAs

reduced their use of USDA cheese to increase use of local cheese.

9 SFAs

reduced their use of **multiple commodities** to purchase more local foods.

4 SFAs

reduced their use of **just one USDA food** to purchase more local foods.

## 5. Strategic use and management of entitlement funds is a key ingredient to 30% success.

The 2021-22 Food Preference Survey results demonstrate the opportunity to swap out high demand USDA food items with comparable NYFPs. Appendix E lists the top 30 items ranked by SFAs across the State for use in the 2021-22SY. As illustrated, there are direct NY product swaps for seven items and comparable product swaps for an additional nine. Further, by analyzing entitlement dollars spent on fresh produce through DoD, it was observed that with the exception of citrus fruits, the majority of items purchased can be grown in NY, are available in most parts of the state, and are harvested at some point during the school year, with items like apples, potatoes, cabbage, and onions widely available throughout the entire year.

With advance planning and strategic use of DoD funds, SFAs can direct more of their food service dollars to these familiar items. They can frontload NY purchases during harvest months and reserve DoD purchases for non-NY harvest months. They can also swap products out completely by, for example, using their foodservice dollars to purchase exclusively NY potatoes, and spending their DoD funds on items NY farmers either don't grow, or aren't available year round. And finally, SFAs can also reduce the amount of their entitlement that they allocate to DoD while being mindful to maintain the quantity of fresh produce served to students. 68% and 63% of FSDs stated they changed how they spent their commodity and DoD/Pilot dollars, respectively, in order to purchase more local items and the above recommendations highlight some ways in which they did that.



### 6. Processed vs. Unprocessed Foods:

Processed products are a necessary staple of many institutional food service programs due to limitations including properly trained staff, time, and equipment. \$121,537 was spent on highly processed items including ice cream, chips, and egg rolls. Maple syrup and honey are also included in this category. Most SFAs spent a small amount on these products: the proportion of total NYFP expenditures ranged from 0-15%, with a median of 2.8%. Unlike fruits, vegetables, dairy, whole grains, and lean proteins, it's questionable if these products add more harm than good, nutritionally **speaking**. We did not tease out whether or not these highly processed products were new additions to the lunch program, or if they replaced other non-NY items. If these were new additions made in order to qualify for the Initiative, it's possible that this resulted in an overall reduction in nutritional value of meals served at these

districts. It seems this is most likely true in the case of the SFA that spent 15% of their NYFP expenditures on ice cream. We also questioned the high percentage of total fruit purchases that were accounted for by juice products, namely 47%. While juice servings were within the mandated meal pattern allowance, we wondered if qualifying juice products replaced **whole fruit options.** Juice, as noted by the American Academy of Pediatricians, has potential detrimental effects; namely increased caloric consumption due to high sugar content, dental risks, and a lack of protein and fiber, which can predispose children to inappropriate weight gain.<sup>26</sup> Further, with the exception of maple syrup and honey, the addition of these items to a meal program does little to increase student knowledge and awareness of where food comes from.

#### **Future Research**

#### **Procurement vs. Consumption**

The 30% NY Initiative is based on procurement and not consumption of NYFPs. We have no way of knowing if the Initiative is correlated to increased consumption of healthier foods by students. Further, we didn't study SFA spending patterns pre and post 30% participation, so we don't know if the meal tray has actually gotten healthier due to the Initiative. Given that a pillar of farm to school is providing students with healthy, local food, we do think this is an important question that demands exploration.

# Has the lunch tray gotten healthier because of the 30% NY Initiative?

# Are farm to school purchases new sales to our agricultural sector or are they reallocated?

#### **Economic Impact**

There hasn't been an analysis of spending patterns pre and post 30% participation, so we do not know what the true cumulative economic impact of this Initiative is. Questions to consider include: are farm to school purchases new sales to our agricultural sector or are they reallocated? Is the economic output generated from these spending patterns higher than their pre-30% spending patterns? An economic impact assessment of the Buffalo Farm to School program is currently underway, a model we think would be interesting to expand to SFAs that vary in size and location.

#### **Net benefit to the SFA**

A frequently asked question that we have yet to answer is what is the net benefit to the SFA for participating in the 30% NY Initiative. More specifically, how much more did they have to spend to qualify for the 30% and was there a net gain. Further, given that the increased reimbursement qualifies as revenue the following school year and that food cost is a function of revenue, how does the increased reimbursement affect a SFAs 30% success rate in the year the reimbursement is received? Does it make it more or less attainable?

How much more did SFAs have to spend to qualify for the 30%? Was there a net gain? To determine if the 30% NY Initiative is realizing its goals, we first need to clarify what the goals of the program are. In our humble opinions, four stand out:

- 1. Increase the consumption of healthy local food by K-12 students
- 2. Create new economic opportunities for NY's food and agriculture sectors
- 3. Provide SFAs with the additional revenue they need to serve healthy, local meals
- 4. Provide educational opportunities to students that connect them to the source of their food and help them understand the importance of healthy eating

Our research doesn't provide clarity on consumption or agricultural educational literacy and it only scratches the surface on the creation of new economic opportunities for food and farm partners. A series of questions are presented below, the answers to which will only strengthen the Initiative's long term outcomes.

- 1. Is the 30% NY Initiative correlated with increased consumption of healthier foods by students?
- 2. Did the 30% NY Initiative cause districts to change their spending patterns to include more healthy foods?
- 3. Are Farm to School purchases new sales to our agricultural sector or are the reallocated? What agricultural sectors most benefited from the Initiative?
- 4. How much more did SFAs have to spend in order to qualify for the 30% NY Initiative, and did they experience a net gain after receiving the increased reimbursement?

Through future research and the continued financial support of Farm to School Coordinators, the 30% NY Initiative has the potential to support our local agricultural economies and improve the quality of food consumed by hundreds of thousands of students each day.





#### APPENDIX A. **Definitions**

Average Daily Participation (ADP)	The average number of student reimbursable meals served in a school nutrition program on a daily basis.
BOCES	BOCES stands for Board of Cooperative Educational Services. BOCES are public organizations that were created by the New York State Legislature in 1948 to provide shared educational programs and services to school districts. In terms of food service, BOCES can serve a variety of roles including issuing cooperative bids which individual SFAs can participate in, serving as an SFA for one or multiple districts, and providing food service management services to component school districts.
Enrollment	The number of students enrolled in a school district.
Identified Student Population	Students that are certified for free or reduced meals without the use of household applications (for example those directly certified through SNAP).
Individually Quick Frozen (IQF)	A method of freezing that does not allow for the formation of large ice crystals. Each piece of food is frozen individually, so particles do not adhere and the final product is not frozen into a solid block. Individual pieces of food (for example, peas, blueberries, or strawberries) are loose inside their packaging, making them easier to work with.
Local	Grown in New York State.
Minimally Processed Product	A raw (fresh or frozen) product that has been slightly altered so that it is more convenient to use. Examples of minimally processed products include peeled carrots, cubed butternut squash, sliced apples, and frozen cherries. Raw chicken, ground beef, and beef patties, milk, and maple syrup and honey are also considered minimally processed.
New York Food Product	According to NYSED, a food item that is grown, harvested, or produced in NY; or a food item processed inside or outside NY comprising over 51% agricultural raw materials grown, harvested, or produced in NY, by weight or volume.
Processed Product	A product that has been mechanically or chemically refined or altered by the addition of other ingredients, or by cooking.
Processing	Any alteration of a food product from its raw or original state to enhance its value or render it suitable for consumption. Examples of processing include butchering of meat or poultry, pasteurizing, cooking, juicing, peeling, cutting, and packaging of food products.
School Food Authority (SFA)	An SFA is the governing body responsible for the administration of meal programs at schools. SFAs have the legal authority to operate a nonprofit school food service therein, or otherwise approved by the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to operate the National School Lunch Program. SFAs may serve one school district, several school districts, or individual schools and are managed by a food service director. Additionally, one food service director can oversee multiple SFAs.

### APPENDIX B. Categories for "Fresh and Minimally Processed" and "Processed" Items

	Fresh and Minimally Processed	Processed
Dairy	Fluid Milk	Cheese, Cheese Sticks, Other Dairy (cottage cheese and sour cream), Yogurt
Protein	Beans, Raw Burger Patties, Raw Chicken Products, Eggs, Raw Ground Beef	Deli Meat, Hot Dogs, Other Beef, Other Meat, Pork Products, Tofu
Fruit	Apples, Apple Slices, Berries, Cantaloupe, Grapes, IQF Cherries, Pears, Stone Fruit (peaches, plums, apricots, cherries), Watermelon	Apple Sauce, Cider, Juice, Slushies
Vegetables	Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Corn, Cucumbers, Green Beans, Lettuce/Greens/Kale, Onions, Other Root Vegetables, Other Vegetables, Peppers, Potatoes, Summer Squash, Tomatoes, Winter Squash	French Fry
Grain		Granola Oats, Other Grain (polenta), Pita Chips
Other	Maple Syrup, Other Processed Items (honey)	Egg Roll, Ice Cream, Non- Itemized Items, Potato Chips, Tomato Sauce Products

#### APPENDIX C. Qualifying School Districts (2019-20SY)

- Addison CSD\*
- Akron CSD
- Alfred-Almond CSD\*
- Allegany-Limestone CSD
- Argyle CSD\*\*
- Avoca CSD\*
- Barker CSD\*\*
- Bath CSD\*
- Berne-Knox-Westerlo CSD\*\*
- Binghamton City SD
- Bradford CSD\*
- Buffalo City SD
- Campbell-Savona CSD\*
- Canaseraga CSD\*
- Canisteo-Greenwood CSD\*
- Cassadaga Valley CSD
- Chenango Forks CSD
- Chenango Valley CSD
- Corning City SD\*
- Depew UFSD
- Deposit CSD
- Dundee CSD\*
- Elmira City SD
- Elmira Heights CSD
- Forestville CSD\*
- Franklinville CSD
- Genesee Valley CSD
- Hamburg CSD
- Hammondsport CSD
- Harpursville CSD
- Hornell City SD\*
- Horseheads CSD
- Ithaca City SD
- Jasper-Troupsburg CSD
- Johnson City CSD
- Lancaster CSD
- Maine-Endwell CSD

- Newark Valley CSD
- Niskayuna CSD\*\*
- Odessa-Montour CSD\*
- Oneida-Herkimer-Madison Boces serves 15 school districts including:
  - Brookfield CSD
  - Clinton CSD
  - Frankfort Schuyler CSD
  - Herkimer CSD
  - Mount Markham CSD
  - New Hartford CSD
  - New York Mills CSD
  - Oriskany CSD
  - Owen D. Young CSD
  - Poland CSD
  - Remsen CSD
  - Richfield CSD
  - Sauquoit CSD
  - Waterville CSD
  - Westmoreland CSD
- Owego-Apalachin CSD
- Prattsburgh CSD
- Schuylerville CSD
- Scio CSD
- Susquehanna Valley CSD
- Tioga CSD
- Trumansburg CSD
- Union-Endicott CSD
- Vestal CSD
- Watkins Glen CSD\*
- Waverly CSD
- Wellsville CSD
- Whitesville CSD
- Whitney Point CSD
- Wilson CSD
- Windsor CSD

<sup>\*</sup>Denotes a 5% or greater difference in the NY purchases reported by NYSED and found by our team through gathering procurement data from SFAs individually.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Denotes SFAs that did not share their procurement data with us.

#### APPENDIX D. Vegetable Subgroups

Subgroup	Vegetable Variety
Dark Green Fresh, frozen, and canned	Arugula, Beet greens, Bok choy, Broccoli, Broccoli rabe, Broccolini, Butterhead lettuce (Boston, bibb), Dark green leafy lettuce, Chicory, Collard green, Endive, Escarole, Kale, Mesclun, Mustard greens, Spinach, Swiss chard, Red leaf lettuce, Romaine lettuce, Turnip greens, Watercress
Red/Orange Fresh, frozen, and canned	Acorn squash, Butternut squash, Carrots, Chili peppers (red), Hubbard squash, Orange peppers, Pumpkin, Red peppers, Sweet potatoes/yam, Tomatoes, Tomato juice, Winter squash
Beans and Peas (Legumes)* Canned, frozen, or cooked from dry	Black beans, Black-eyed peas (mature, dry), Cowpeas, Fava beans, Garbanzo beans (chickpeas), Kidney beans, Lentils, Lima beans, mature, Mung beans, Navy beans, Pink beans, Pinto beans Soy beans/edamame, Split peas, White beans  * does not include green peas, green lima beans and green (string) beans
Starchy Fresh, frozen, and canned	Black-eyed peas, fresh (not dry), Corn, Cassava, Cowpeas, fresh (not dry), Field peas, fresh (not dry), Green banana, Green peas, Lima beans, green (not dry), Pigeon peas, fresh (not dry), Plantains, Potatoes, Taro, Water chestnuts
Other	Artichokes, Asparagus, Avocado, Bamboo shoots, Bean sprouts (alfalfa, mung), Beets, Brussels sprouts, Cabbage, green and red, Cauliflower, Celeriac, Celery, Chives, Cucumbers, Daikon (oriental radish), Eggplant, Fennel, Green beans, Garlic, Green peppers, Horseradish, Iceberg lettuce, Jicama, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Mushrooms, Olives, Okra, Onions, Parsnips, Peas in pod, Peppers (green sweet bell, green chili), Pickles, Radishes, Rhubarb, Shallots, Snow peas, Spaghetti squash, Tomatillo, Turnips, Wax beans, Yellow beans, Yellow peppers, Yellow summer squash, Zucchini squash

#### APPENDIX E. Commodity Foods and Local Food Swaps

Ranking	Commodity	Local Food Swap
1 and 15	110361 Applesauce, Unsweetened, Cups Shelf- Stable 110541 Applesauce, Unsweetened, Canned	Motts has 50 qualifying applesauce products and ZeeZee's has 17.
2	100256 Strawberries, Diced, Cups, Frozen	No comparable product swap.
3	100241 Peaches, Diced, Cups, Frozen	No comparable product swap.
4	110651 Orange Juice, Unsweetened, Cups, Individual, Frozen	While there is no qualifying orange juice, Welch's produces qualifying grape juice products.
5	100018 Cheese, American, Yellow, Pasteurized, Sliced, Chilled	While there is no qualifying American cheese, there is a variety of qualifying cheddar, provolone, and mozzarella cheese products produced by Great Lake Cheese Co. and Cabot.
6	100277 Orange Juice, Unsweetened, Cartons, Individual, Frozen	While there is no qualifying orange juice, Welch's produces qualifying grape juice products.
7	100357 Potatoes, Oven Fries, Low-sodium, Frozen	McCains previously produced a qualifying NY french fry, but suspended production due to lack of demand.
8, 23, 28	110473 Broccoli Florets, No Salt Added, Frozen 100348 Corn, Whole Kernel, No Salt Added, Frozen 100352 Carrots, Sliced, No Salt Added, Frozen	Headwater Food Hub launched a line of local IQF vegetables in 2021, including peas, corn, and green beans. As these products tend to be less cost competitive, one strategy employed by an SFA is to blend them with USDA frozen vegetables.
9, 10, 11, 12	100220 Peaches, Diced, Extra Light Syrup, Canned 100225 Pears, Diced, Extra Light Syrup, Canned 100212 Mixed Fruit (Peaches, Pears, Grapes), Extra Light Syrup, Canned 110859 Mixed Berries (Blueberries, Strawberries), Cups, Frozen	No comparable swap.

Ranking	Commodity	Local Food Swap
13	110396 Cheese, Mozzarella, Low Moisture Part Skim, String, Chilled	Upstate Farms produces a qualifying 1oz string cheese.
14	100119 Turkey, Taco Filling, Cooked, Frozen	No comparable swap.
16, 25, 27, 29	110080 Chicken, Oven Roasted, Cut-up 8 pcs, Cooked, Frozen 100101 Chicken, Diced, Cooked, Frozen 110921 Chicken, Grilled Fillet, 2.0 MMA, Cooked, Frozen 110462 Chicken, Unseasoned Grilled Strips, Cooked, Frozen	While qualifying chicken products aren't widely available across the state for distribution, a small handful of SFAs have been successful sourcing raw chicken products from regional producers.
17, 19	100313 Corn, Whole Kernel, No Salt Added, Canned 100307 Beans, Green, Low- sodium, Canned	No comparable swap.
18	100293 Raisins, Unsweetened, Individual Portion	No comparable swap.
20	100158 Beef, Fine Ground, 100%, 85/15, Frozen*	There are multiple vendors that produce qualifying NY beef products, both fresh and pre-cooked.
21 and 22	110396 Cheese, Mozzarella, Low Moisture Part Skim, String, Chilled	Great Lakes Cheese Co. produces a number of different qualifying mozzarella cheese products.
24	110721 Sweet Potatoes, Crinkle Cut Fries, Low-Sodium, Frozen	No comparable swap.
26	100336 Spaghetti Sauce, Low-sodium, Canned	No comparable swap.
30	100364 Beans, Vegetarian, Low-sodium, Canned	Genesee Valley Bean Co. produces qualifying black, pinto, white kidney, light red kidney, and red kidney dried beans, some of which are organically produced.

#### APPENDIX F. Successful SFAs by Year

#### 2018-19 30% NY Initiative Approved Applications

Sponsor LEA Code	Sponsor Name	Enroll- ment	ADP	Food Cost for Lunch from NYS	Total Food Cost for Lunch	Percent- age of NY Products Purchased
142101040000	Akron CSD	1396	755	44000	135631	32.44
140600010000	Buffalo City SD	38351	295202	2631414	8578464	30.67
140707030000	Depew UFSD	1866	834	40145	131058	30.63
141901060000	Lancaster CSD	5614	1842	98699	311105	31.73
22401040000	Scio CSD	371	2939	235787	77061	30.6
22601060000	Wellsville CSD	1227	96	55734	177838	31.34
401501060000	Wilson CSD	1122	510	35006	99406	35.22

#### 2019-20 30% NY Initiative Approved Applications

Sponsor LEA Code	Sponsor Name	Enroll- ment	ADP	Food Cost for Lunch from NYS	Total Food Cost for Lunch	Percent- age of NY Products Pur- chased
570101040000	Addison CSD	1056	707	32559	69349	46.95
142101040000	Akron CSD	1394	1488	51643	170151	30.35
20101040000	Alfred-Almond CSD	611	289	16251	50878	31.94
40302060000	Allegany- Limestone CSD	1160	1091	47948	137069	34.98
640101040000	Argyle CSD	461	450	19028	29962	63.51
570201040000	Avoca CSD	449	372	19034	33452	56.9
401301040000	Barker CSD	728	300	22656	67319	33.65
570302060000	Bath CSD	1581	1164	61781	114331	54.04
10201040000	Berne-Knox- Westerlo CSD	800	591	21624	62039	34.86
30200010000	Binghamton City SD	6390	4240	246753	701092	35.2

Sponsor LEA Code	Sponsor Name	Enroll- ment	ADP	Food Cost for Lunch from NYS	Total Food Cost for Lunch	Percent- age of NY Products Pur- chased
570401040000	Bradford CSD	259	187	9621	31674	30.38
140600010000	Buffalo City SD	38970	29202	2154805	5141599	41.91
570603040000	Campbell- Savona CSD	870	577	25157	53874	46.7
21102040000	Canaseraga CSD	219	164	7887	21300	37.03
571502060000	Canisteo- Greenwood CSD	1013	671	33552	83175	40.34
60401040000	Cassadaga Valley CSD	860	942	47262	106939	44.2
30101060000	Chenango Forks CSD	1409	669	33898	82276	41.2
30701060000	Chenango Valley CSD	1724	905	60993	181091	33.68
571000010000	Corning City SD	4678	2116	108137	266796	40.53
140707030000	Depew UFSD	1854	1635	41652	135565	30.72
31301040000	Deposit CSD	474	360	17982	53441	33.65
680801040000	Dundee CSD	651	597	18758	56323	33.3
70600010000	Elmira City SD	5894	3866	157919	499065	31.64
70902060000	Elmira Heights CSD	1158	715	32042	82498	38.84
61503040000	Forestville CSD	445	444	23231	63780	36.42
41101040000	Franklinville CSD	683	635	35881	114409	31.36
20702040000	Genesee Valley CSD	610	463	27801	59209	46.95
141601060000	Hamburg CSD	3716	1764	82823	260516	31.79
572901040000	Hammondsport CSD	424	312	15205	30890	49.22
30501040000	Harpursville CSD	698	528	27560	68873	40.02
571800010000	Hornell City SD	2527	1440	79476	151129	52.59
70901060000	Horseheads CSD	4523	2208	93035	205635	45.24
610600010000	Ithaca City SD	5243	2482	111796	273534	40.87
572702040000	Jasper- Troupsburg CSD	400	304	17476	45579	38.34

Sponsor LEA Code	Sponsor Name	Enroll- ment	ADP	Food Cost for Lunch from NYS	Total Food Cost for Lunch	Percent- age of NY Products Pur- chased
31502060000	Johnson City CSD	2289	1592	89903	298018	30.17
141901060000	Lancaster CSD	5631	2797	111137	314684	35.32
31101060000	Maine-Endwell CSD	2502	1170	86888	207698	41.83
600402040000	Newark Valley CSD	1109	644	54982	136017	40.42
530301060000	Niskayuna CSD	2951	995	65815	206298	31.9
550101040000	Odessa- Montour CSD	767	524	28274	77409	36.53
419000000000	Oneida- Herkimer-Madison Boces	13113	6070	277225	803104	34.52
600601060000	Owego-Apalachin CSD	2204	1179	62333	171692	36.31
572301040000	Prattsburgh CSD	384	315	14190	34299	41.37
521701040000	Schuylerville CSD	1521	1029	37092	116162	31.93
22401040000	Scio CSD	348	279	24756	67716	36.56
30601060000	Susquehanna Valley CSD	1393	794	37369	104575	35.73
600903040000	Tioga CSD	921	729	39979	106251	37.63
611001040000	Trumansburg CSD	1084	599	30840	75498	40.85
31501060000	Union-Endicott CSD	3815	1881	92387	211835	43.61
31601060000	Vestal CSD	3337	1190	70457	226943	31.05
550301060000	Watkins Glen CSD	1034	578	22291	47014	47.41
600101060000	Waverly CSD	1514	1050	38795	93238	41.61
22601060000	Wellsville CSD	1184	861	46308	118104	39.21
22101040000	Whitesville CSD	183	175	12702	32735	38.8
31401060000	Whitney Point CSD	1361	876	68057	205074	33.19
401501060000	Wilson CSD	1068	870	38791	96540	40.18
31701060000	Windsor CSD	1639	1014	45442	145278	31.28

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