

Sparta Area Schools Food Services Newsletter

October 2026



Time sure flies! We've officially made it through our first full month of school, and October gives us **plenty of reasons to celebrate!** From recognizing the people who keep our schools running to celebrating Michigan-grown foods and National School Lunch Week, there is lots happening in our cafeterias and throughout our school communities. October is **National Farm to School Month**, so it is only fitting that we celebrate with our **Annual Michigan Apple Crunch Event on October 14th**. Food Service will provide **fresh Michigan-grown apples to all students and staff**, and participating buildings will "crunch" together at the same time! 🍏 This event is a fun way to connect students with where their food comes from and spark conversations about **Michigan agriculture, local farmers, family food traditions, and the importance of making sure everyone has access to nutritious food**. And apples aren't the only Michigan-grown foods we enjoy! Throughout the school year, we are proud to serve many locally grown fruits and vegetables, including **nectarines, peaches, plums, pears, cauliflower, cucumbers, lettuce, tomatoes, and select fresh herbs**. Stay tuned for more details about our **Apple Crunch celebration!** 🗡️ **Custodian Appreciation Day – October 2nd** Our schools wouldn't be the same without the hardworking custodians who help keep our buildings **clean, welcoming, and safe** every day. Take a moment on October 2nd to thank a custodian for everything they do for our students and staff! 🏠 **National School Lunch Week – October 12–16**. Get ready for a little **Cafeteria Circus!** 🎪 This year's National School Lunch Week theme is "**Cafeteria Circus**," and Food Service will be celebrating all week long with fun activities, special surprises, and plenty of excitement in our cafeterias! Keep an eye out for our **National School Lunch Week flyer coming next week** with all the details about what students can look forward to each day. 🍷 **Looking Ahead to Halloween** We'll also be bringing a little healthy Halloween fun to our cafeterias on **Friday, October 30th**, with some festive and healthy treats for our students! 🎃 **Enjoy Fall in Michigan!** As we head into the beautiful fall season, we encourage our families to take some time to **visit a local farm, orchard, or farmers market**. Michigan truly is a beautiful state, and fall is a wonderful time to get outside, enjoy the changing colors, support local farmers, and make some great family memories. **Happy Fall from your School Food Service Team!** 🍁 🍷 🏠



Fun Fact: Every School Day more than 95,000 schools & institutions serve lunch to over 30 million students nationwide!

National School Lunch Week (NSLW) 2026 will be celebrated from October 12-16, 2026. The theme for NSLW 2026 is "**Cafeteria Circus**". Learning is tough work-and kids need fuel if they're going to learn! That's why a healthy midday meal is crucial to the growing children who go to school. Since 1962, when President John F. Kennedy created National School Lunch Week (NSLW), this annual observance has promoted the importance of a healthy school lunch in a child's life and the impact it has both in and out of the classroom. In each of our buildings, we have fun activities for the week! Students who participate by getting a full complete lunch and get involved with our fun days for the week, have the chance to win prizes & treats. For More information about this week please check out our **National School Lunch Week Flyer!**



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Dates to Remember:

October 1st – ½ Half Day
October 2nd – No School
October 2nd - Custodian Day
October 6th -National Taco & Coaches Day
October 7th – Count Day
October 12-16 – National School Lunch Week
October 14th-Michigan Apple Crunch
October 16th - National Boss's Day
October 26th – Pumpkin Day
October 29th – Oatmeal Day
October 30th – National Candy Corn Day
October 31st - Halloween

chartwells 
serving up happy & healthy

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

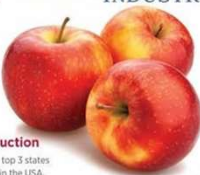


2026 MICHIGAN APPLE

INDUSTRY AT-A-GLANCE

TOP
3

in Apple Production
Michigan ranks in the top 3 states
for apple production in the USA.



AVERAGE CROP IS
27.2 MILLION
BUSHELS
OF APPLES

Michigan's average annual apple crop size is 27.2 million bushels (134 billion pounds). *based on five-year average, data from USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

17.6 MILLION
APPLE
TREES

Michigan has 17.6 million apple trees in commercial

A Big Deal

Apples are the largest
and most valuable fruit
crop in the state.

850

family-run farms

Many in their 4th or
5th generations, grow
apples in Michigan.

Michigan Apple Crunch Day Oct. 14, 2026



The Michigan Apple Crunch is an annual event hosted by MSU Extension, Michigan Farm to School, and the Michigan Apple Committee to promote National Farm to School Month and celebrate the iconic Michigan Apple. Thousands of participants from K-12 schools, Early Care and Education sites and other institutions and organizations across the state and Great Lakes Region register to crunch into a local Michigan apple on Crunch Day. Apples provide a great way to get local schools and institutions excited about supporting local farmers and they are a nutritious snack that is available in Michigan eleven months of the year.

Global Eats:

October's featured country is Mexico!
Dishes are simple yet packed with fresh
flavors like lime and cilantro and the heat of
peppers and spices. Some of our
highlighted recipes include Chorizo, Pollo al
Chipotle, and Frijoles Negros.

Fun Facts:

*Mexico is the world's largest exporter of
avocados, tomatoes, & corn.

- Mexico is home to the world's largest pyramid
- *Avocados and chiles are native to Mexico
- *There are 7 different culinary regions in Mexico



Behind every breakfast and lunch served is a dedicated team of school food service professionals who work tirelessly to nourish our students each day. They are planning menus, preparing fresh meals, accommodating special dietary needs, receiving deliveries, monitoring food safety, and ensuring every meal meets national nutrition standards. Their work continues long after lunch ends through cleaning, ordering, paperwork, inventory, and planning for the next day. Our cafeteria team does far more than serve meals—they create welcoming spaces, greet students with a smile, and play an important role in supporting learning and student success. During National School Lunch Week, we would like to recognize and thank these incredible individuals for their hard work, kindness, and commitment to feeding our school community every day.

♥ Join us in celebrating our food service team and the difference they make for students all year long!

