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More Than Half Of Michigan Schools Privatize

More than half of Michigan school districts now use private vendors to provide food, custodial or transportation services, according to the Mackinac Center's 2011 school privatization survey.

The survey found that 295 of the state's 550 local school districts -- 53.6 percent -- contract for at least one of these support services. The mid-Michigan and central Michigan areas contracted services at a slightly lower rate than the rest of the state, with 48.0 percent of the region's districts contracting services to private vendors.

According to the Center's annual survey, school support services contracting has grown from 31.0 percent in 2001. Districts newly privatized 57 major support services this year.

Custodial service contracting grew the most, with 29 districts beginning to use private-sector vendors to clean and maintain schools. Most districts say they contract this service in order to save money. Beaverton Rural Schools, for example, expects to save \$157,000 per year by contracting for custodial work.