



FEEST SEATTLE

# Annual Report

2021-2022





*This report is dedicated to our Student Organizers,  
and Youth all over the world fighting for change.*





*Image is of FEEST Staff standing in front of the FEEST Mural, located at Lee's Produce in White Center*

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## 2008

FEEST began as part of the King County Food and Fitness Initiative, seeking a community and policy-driven approach to reversing health inequities in some of Seattle's lowest-income and most diverse neighborhoods.

We began with weekly dinners in the bustling community kitchen of Youngstown Cultural Center in Delridge and quickly grew to be a staple of the center!

## 2016

Through our strategic planning process in 2016, we identified school food as the biggest opportunity for improving young people's health in our community.

FEEST youth leaders at Evergreen High School won an unprecedented student advisory committee with Highline Public Schools, giving them direct access to decision-makers to advocate for more fresh and culturally relevant food items in the cafeteria.

**Today, locally sourced, scratch-made meals** are being served at all elementary, middle, and high schools in the district.

## 2011-2013

After a number of successful years at Youngstown — including national replication work in New York, Oakland, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Orleans, and Detroit — FEEST made the strategic decision to move directly into two local high schools:

Chief Sealth International High School in Delridge and Evergreen High School in White Center.

## 2018 - 2019

Building on the incredible success of our youth leaders, we expanded our programs into two new schools: Rainier Beach High School in South Seattle and Tyee High School in SeaTac.

At this time FEEST also started two Snack Pilot Programs in the Highline Schools District (HSD) and Seattle Public Schools (SPS).

In SPS, we partnered with Chief Sealth High School, Aaron Smith, and Nutrition Services, and in HSD we built a partnership between Evergreen High School & Lee's Produce. We brought fresh and free fruits, veggies, and culturally relevant snacks on campus!



## 2018 - 2019

The Healthy Food Round Table (HFRT) Committee, made up of our White Center students, alumni parents, teachers & staff, and community members, created a survey to gather community feedback on how young people access healthy food options in White Center.

A total of 219 individuals completed the survey in person and online from October 22, 2018, to January 31, 2019.

This data identified three major barriers to youth accessing healthy, fresh food in White Center: cost, distance, and quality.

## 2021

In 2021 we expanded our programming into Franklin High School in the Mt. Baker neighborhood. During this time, FEEST Youth leaders, staff, and board came together to build a new organizing strategy to guide our work for the next 5 years. This strategy process was rooted in being responsive to youth needs, and building authentic youth power for systemic change.

Current student concerns and needs, which include:

- Student Mental Health
- Transformative & Restorative Justice
- Food Justice

With this in mind, student organizers at FEEST set off to interview and survey their peers to get a better grasp on the issues impacting them at school. This was the catalyst for FEEST's current campaign, which is all about getting Mental Health Resources for students.

## 2020

In 2020 FEEST released **Part 2 of our HFRT Policy Agenda**. In this, we detailed the positive impacts that having access to fresh, free food has on students including that they are more alert throughout the school day, skip class less often, and perform better!

When schools closed in March 2020 due to COVID, many students who rely on school meals could no longer get them. With this in mind, FEEST started our Grocery Program! Families who lost jobs or income due to the pandemic were able to receive direct assistance from FEEST, in the form of grocery deliveries and gift cards. With the help of nearly 200 volunteers, over 1,000 families have been served with food assistance.

The catalyst that was George Floyd's murder started what is now referred to as the 2020 Uprisings, in the same year, countless Black people were murdered by police. Breonna Taylor, Manual Ellis, Tony McDade are just a few names of those who lost their lives in 2020.

In June of 2020, listening to our youth, we decided to team up with BlackMindsMatter, and WA-BLOC to campaign to **remove the Seattle Police Department from Seattle Public Schools**. We were able to secure 20k+ signatures in support from students, families, and community members, and successfully removed SPD from SPS!

## To Our Beloved FEEST Family,

2021-2022 has been a year full of excitement, grief, reflection, depth, and transformation for FEEST and for our communities. Adjusting to our students being back at school in person was a heavy lift for families, parents, and teachers alike. We all grappled with hard questions and tough choices as we made our way back to school.

We saw youth rejoice from the upsides of being back in person -- seeing, hugging, and loving their friends, laughing together, and being able to get help with last night's homework before class being some of the best benefits. In the same light, students were feeling the pressure. They were feeling stressed, anxious, grief-stricken, and uncertain, for good reason. **As crises continue to occur on the local, national, and global levels, we know it is crucial to provide our young people with support and to focus on the changes we can make possible, together.**

These last few years the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have changed us, our students, our families, and our communities. Major shifts had to happen, we had to adapt, to adjust, to be flexible with ourselves.

In 2021, we took a deeper look at the work we were doing and the needs of our youth. During this time of reflection and visioning, we decided to develop a new organizing strategy for how we are going to move forward in an uncertain world. **Our youth, staff, and board took months of retreats, prep, and coaches to guide us in the direction to be most responsive to youth needs and build power to win real, systemic changes that our students deserve.**

Young people are leading us, helping us co-create our new reality together, ensuring we are focusing on the issues that matter most to students **right now**. That's why in 2021-2022, FEEST's campaigns expanded to include a holistic wellness approach. This means in addition to our food justice work, which has grown up to a systems policy level, we are also focusing on all of the ways students can be nourished and cared for at school.

This report is a collection of our new discoveries, lessons learned, and memories **as we work towards a world where working-class youth and families of color are thriving in vibrant, politically powerful communities**. We are honored to have you share in this journey with us!

**In Solidarity,  
FEEST Staff & Board**



What's the point of having a voice if I am not allowed to speak, it's like training your whole life for a marathon and then being told you can't compete.

But when I use my voice and speak my truth I feel complete so how dare you try to silence me and place me in the backseat telling me that it's not my place to speak.

I don't know if you know this, but this is the truth, anything that has to do with humanity and the future, has to do with me too, has to be controlled by youth, you don't get to mess up your lives and try to mess up ours too, everyone is given a chance to create the future they desire but unfortunately and I love to break this to you, time doesn't do redo's.

You chose what you chose and we shall choose what we choose, you don't get to control what's to come because what's to come does not concern you.

What's to come involves the youth and we shall stand together hand in hand and make that vision of a United world, come true.

- R.M (Rahma Mohammed)



**Cece, our longtime and beloved FEEST staff member transitioned from their role. They shared this letter reflecting on their years at FEEST, and the importance of the work we are doing.**

**We are thrilled to be able to share this letter with you all!**

It is with an immense amount of love and gratitude that I announce my transition out of FEEST after 4.5 years of growth, abundance and community learning. I began my journey at FEEST as a freshly-out-of-college 22-year-old, called to movement work by way of deep hurt and anger towards schooling, white supremacy, and capitalism. I'm leaving FEEST as a nearly 27-year-old, inspired to organize through my deep love for young people, the Soufend, and my vision for a future where our behaviors as traumatized and oppressed people are no longer criminalized. I am still angry.

I am still upset at the ways our current systems do not prioritize Black and Brown life, however, FEEST taught me that the most sustainable movements are deeply life-affirming and center hope & connection.

I want many things from this lifetime; love, connection, community, but what I want more than anything is to be a part of collectively moving forward. Like many people in 2020, I felt a complex mixture of stuckness, hopefulness, hopelessness and yearning for something different. As an organizer, I see crisis as a portal to monumental change, where people have the power to leverage the political moment to win demands that just months ago seemed unattainable.

We saw this with schools opting out of standardized testing, receiving stimulus checks from the government, cities announcing eviction moratoriums and creating 5 year plans to defund the police by 50-100%; the list goes on of the resources the government provided during the beginning of COVID-19 that proved it is possible for the government to show care for its people.

While we have been given some resources, we are simultaneously witnessing a time of deep reflection, grief and mourning that has led folks to demand more from these institutions who have harmed us. And so, throughout this moment of history & my time at FEEST, I have asked myself what would a trauma-informed resistance look like and what personal choices do I have to make to align myself with that vision?

My time as a Youth Organizer at FEEST has shown me that at the root, what people desire the most, is to feel a sense of belonging, care and connection. Every summer camp, we begin by asking students "what communities are you a part of?" Sometimes, students identify their ethnic, religious, and/or cultural backgrounds, but more often than not, the majority of our youth leaders start FEEST uncertain who their communities are. And this is intentional, right?

It is not simply that our communities do not know how to be with each other, or that we as individuals aren't putting in the effort to make care possible, but that the United States' foundations of racial capitalism and exploitation of Black and Brown, working-class people, is antithetical to care.

At FEEST, our demands for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) at every grade level, goes far deeper than having young people be able to identify their emotions using an emotions wheel. Our demands for SEL in every class is a call to fundamentally change the way we engage with youth in the classroom, and to decriminalize youth behaviors that are more often than not, a learned behavior from these systems that have denied themselves and their families the freedom of living their lives authentically. We organize for trauma-informed mental health resources in schools because our communities deeply yearn for care and connection, for a different, more joyful, human experience.

My favorite part about organizing with FEEST is that we center the vision, by living it. If we are going to fight for our school systems to center our health and wellness, then we are going to center Black and Brown Health and Wellness in our org. If the solutions students are identifying is the need for deeper care and community, then our staff models what it would look like to be a part of a world where we are accepted and valued for our wholeness. FEEST is a powerful place where transformation, love and abundance is at our core. Without love, care, or connection, movement work is not possible. We win, not by knowing what is wrong, but more importantly, by knowing what we want and holding a strong commitment to each other to move forward until we get it.

I wish the FEEST Staff, Student Organizers, and Supporters, a future of deeper connection, belonging and wholeness. I am who I am because of who we are together. Thank you for having me for the last 4.5 years, I am changed forever because of the love and care of the FEEST staff, youth and community.

In Solidarity,  
Cece Flanagan







We are all holding so much. The heartbreak and grief we are experiencing as a collective and as individuals is a heavy weight. Often people and organizations will acknowledge the heartbreak, and in the same breath try to move past it, for the sake of moving forward. At FEEST, something we learned this year was the importance of **acknowledging the harm** and taking a pause. Pause to breathe. Pause to cry. Pause to sleep. Sitting in this well of grief is not easy. That's why it's essential to grieve, cry, laugh, and scream, in community.

This year our students struggled. COVID safety being a top concern for our team and our families, FEEST continued with online programming. Some days that meant we lay in bed with our cameras off, but are still present with each other in our online rooms. Some days that means a self-care day, days that all Student Organizers (Formerly Known As FEEST Youth) have each month to log off, go outside, take a walk, or a nap, or even an ice cream break.

Some days that meant prepping to speak to the school board, to tell them the importance of having mental health counselors that look like the students at the school. Some days it meant just laughing and listening to BTS, or Beyoncé.

Regardless of how we showed up this year, we all tried our best, with what we had to give in that moment. **The powerful thing about community organizing is that if one person needs to rest, they can! They can rest well, knowing that the goals and strategy around our work will still continue.** They can rest well knowing that the next time someone else needs a break, they will be able to step in and step up to the plate.

Our youth and our communities continue to be disproportionately impacted by the health and economic crisis that is the COVID-19 pandemic, climate catastrophes including heat waves and dangerous air quality due to smoke, attacks on our reproductive rights and bodily autonomy, gun violence, food apartheid, and what feels like an ever-deepening economic downturn.



For many, this feels like our new normal, and that's not okay. We need change now, and that's why FEEST is committed to building youth organizing power. Youth organizing is a viable and necessary strategy to win. If we look back at major movements in our communities history, young people have always been at the forefront of organizing movements. **To truly shift power in the United States, we must support young people in shaping decisions that will impact them for generations to come.**



FEEST sees itself as part of a larger ecosystem of youth organizers across the country who are changing systems to actually serve our people. **At FEEST, we know it's crucial for us to train young people in organizing skills and strategic analysis so they can keep our movements for justice alive and growing so we make the change we want to see in our lifetimes.**

**Our region needs strong training grounds and health equity leadership from low-income youth of color to shape policies that will determine the survival of generations to come.** FEEST is critically positioned to train youth organizers and activate the base we need to move towards justice in the next 5 years.

All of these reasons and more are why we strive to train youth to be powerful organizers to help ensure the well-being of our students now and in perpetuity. **And we can only do that by building systems that actually serve them, their families, and our communities.**



# Our Organizing Strategy



## What We Did

From February to October 2021, 10 Student Organizers, 9 staff, and 3 board members came together for 4 Strategy Retreats, 5 Pre Retreats, and 19 working group sessions to figure out how to build enough power to win our campaigns. With guidance from organizing experts [Eric Zachary](#) and [James Lopez](#), we assessed our strengths, the extent of the problem with school food, and the gaps between our strengths and the problem.

We uncovered two fundamental challenges in our organizing work that limit our ability to build enough power to win - our narrow focus on improving food in schools, and our current practice of youth advocacy, rather than youth organizing.

## Our Solution

The first solution we identified is expanding our campaigns beyond school food to encompass school systems change in schools. The second solution is to concretely shift our practices from advocacy to organizing.

This is for two main reasons: **we want to be responsive to youth needs, and we need more power to win our campaigns.** In order to build a larger base with enough people power to win, we need to work on issues that are widely and deeply felt by youth.





## Why We Did It

We made a collective commitment to overhauling our organizing strategy because we don't have time to waste. With the increase of climate catastrophes, political violence towards our communities, police murders of Black people, COVID-19, and more, we understand that we are at a choice point.

What we do in the next 5 years will be critical for our planet's and our communities survival. **We need powerful youth leading the way towards a more just future, right now.**

## How We Get There

To fully shift to organizing, we identified key practices in 5 areas:

- Base Building,
- Leadership Development,
- Running Campaigns with Clear Solutions Directed at Decision Makers
- Building the Organization
- Building the Movement

We also created a youth leadership scale and took a deep dive into how youth decision-making operates at every level of our organizing strategy, organizational structure, and board structure.

*Where We Were!*



# Advocacy

ad·vo·ca·cy

Publicly supporting a cause or policy  
and trying to persuade decision-  
makers to adopt it.

# Organizing

or·guh·nai·zuhng

When those **impacted by injustice** take **collective action** to build power, challenge existing structures, and implement solutions for meaningful change.





In 2022 FEEST officially changed our mission statement and collectively wrote our visions for society and our vision for schools. Our mission statement gives us a clear path to our vision and the futures we deserve.

That's why in 2022 FEEST collaborated with [Micheal B. Maine](#), a Seattle-based artist & filmmaker, to create a new video!



In this video, we share the story of how we got here to dream up our new mission, our shift to holistic wellness, and the importance of focusing on Organizing instead of Advocacy.

You can check it out in the video above!

# Our Mission

*FEEST trains youth of color and working-class youth to build collective power and organize for transformative and systemic change in their schools.*

# Our Vision For Schools

*We envision a **today** where youth of color and working-class youth exercise their power to change systems that serve them so that they can thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally. In our vision, schools are vibrant learning centers that reflect the students they serve and support the long-term growth and holistic wellness of students and our communities.*

# Our Vision For Society

*We envision a society where working-class youth and families of color are thriving in vibrant, politically powerful communities. We see this society built on values that include, but are not limited to:*

## **Transformative Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice:**

*Eliminating oppression at its roots, prioritizing equity, and ensuring that everyone can live a healthy life on a sustainable planet.*

## **Interdependence and Collective Liberation:**

*Recognizing that our struggles are linked and that we need to build trust with each other and work together to achieve liberation for all people.*

## **Self-Determination:**

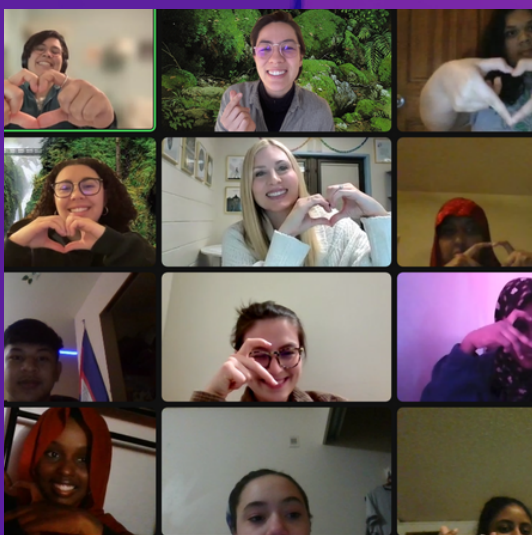
*Those most impacted by injustice should be the primary decision-makers on how to address it.*

## **Creativity and Radical Joy!**

*We embrace our natural impulses for happiness and creativity to connect with each other, build community, and energize our movements.*



# The Mental Health Campaign



We are focusing on all of the ways students can be nourished, supported, and successful at school, and the systems that can make this possible. This past year, Student Organizers surveyed their peers and discovered that the most pressing issue on campus, across school districts, was the state of our student's mental health.

Responding to this, FEEST has started a new youth-led campaign to improve mental health support systems in schools. We worked with our students to fully understand their thoughts on how the mental health crisis could be solved.

This wasn't easy! As students were facing a mental health crisis our teachers and districts were also facing staffing shortages, budget cuts, COVID-19 uncertainty, and much more, preventing our teachers from doing what they do and love most – teaching the next generation of leaders.

This past spring, Student Organizers spoke with school board members, counselors, Social Emotional Learning experts, students, parents, and teachers about what they see happening, the biggest barriers, and what solutions they need to see to get their needs met. (Check out our [Mental Health Panel Recap](#) to learn more!)

From this, Student Organizers at FEEST drafted 6 campaign goals and demands for our newly emerging Mental Health Campaign. Those campaign goals have guided us this year and led us to the next revelations about how FEEST can better support students and their families. Check them out on the next page!



**Bigger Budget for Mental Health  
in Next Year's School Budget**

**Mandatory Social Emotional  
Learning in all schools**

**Mandatory SEL and crisis  
support trainings for teachers**

**Full-Time Counselors & Therapists  
with similar lived experiences**

**Wellness Rooms/Centers in  
each school (HSD, We Won!)**

# **Our Campaign Goals**



Don't take our word for it, hear directly from Student Organizers themselves as they share about our Mental Health Campaign!

First up is Imani, who recorded a powerful speech for our Spring Event, [Fresh Flavor, Fresh Vision!](#)



**Imani (she/they)**

FEEST Student Organizer & Senior at Franklin HS

[Click Here to Watch!](#)

Next are two powerful quotes from our Youth Spotlight Interviews with Amelie and Emily!

Mental Health has to be valued more because it's not seen as a priority. Mental Health is at the beginning of everything, it's at the start of everything...If you yourself are not good, then you can't help others, and because of that mental health needs to be prioritized.

**Amelie, FEEST Youth Leader**

[Read the Full Interview Here!](#)



I come from an Asian family and in the Asian community, we don't really go to therapy and mental health isn't really a thing you know? It wasn't recognized as an issue until recently and there's still a lot of stigma around it. It's important to organize around [Mental Health] for me because it affects your mood every day, it affects your motivations in life, and it affects how you feel about yourself, and how you treat others.

That's why it's very important.

**Emily, FEEST Youth Leader**

[Read the Full Interview Here!](#)



This year was filled with radical joy, relationship-building, and fun moments for our students. We were thrilled to complete our first full year of organizing with five high schools, after welcoming students from Franklin in alongside their peers at Chief Sealth, Evergreen, Rainier Beach, and Tyee.

Youth leaders spoke at school board meetings, hosted events with their peers to deepen relationships, and even hosted a panel at the end of the school year to talk about the mental health campaign.

We spoke with several decision-makers around the mental health campaign, including school board representatives [Aaron Garcia](#), [Brandon Hersey](#), [Carrie Howell](#), Liza Rankin, Chandra Hampson, and many more. These discussions were foundational to building our campaign.

After speaking to Kisa Hendrickson and other Highline School District staff, they were even able to organize a pilot program for our Wellness Rooms goals!

We also hit a new record for the number of donations (over 110!) given during GiveBig, which is a major accomplishment to keep sustaining our work!

## FEEST In Community:

[Youth Tell All: Youth  
Development in King  
County](#)

The Wing Luke -  
[Changing of the Tides  
Exhibit](#)

South Seattle Emerald -  
[Empowering Students  
to Take Action Across  
Seattle](#)



We are dedicated to embodying the vision we have for our students and our community inside of our own organization. All team members at FEEST are seen as collaborators in this! At FEEST, we offer several Holistic Wellness Benefits to our team, alongside intentionally building a workplace culture that values and uplifts joy, rest, healthy boundaries, and safety.

## Our Offerings at FEEST:

### A Rising Wage Floor

FEEST is committed to the health and wellness of our employees, as we are our community.

Because of that, we are making investments to raise the pay of our employees to ensure pay equity and address the rising cost of living.

### Wellness Reimbursements

In addition to a robust benefits package the FEEST team has access to, we also offer monthly stipends each month to staff for Wellness Reimbursements.

This can be used for any and all wellness expenses outside of what our insurance covers. This includes the cost of co-pays, therapy, air purifiers, gym membership, and more!

### Increased Paid Time Off

All FEEST team members get Sick/Self-Care Days, which we can use to tend to ourselves, our families, or community.

In 2022 FEEST's Executive Director and Board increased the number of Sick/Self-Care Days for staff, with the hope that staff could take more time off to rest.

### Continued Conversations

At the center of our Holistic Wellness Approach, are the people.

We are dedicated to getting better and receiving feedback from the team on how to make our work sustainable, and prevent the classic organizer burnout, so that we can continue organizing for just futures for years to come.



What's next for FEEST is to dig deeper into our relationship and base building, and work to reach the goals we set for ourselves in our strategic plan. All of our work at FEEST is youth-led, and everyday we commit to authentic youth leadership. This commitment requires us to strengthen our political analysis and organizing skills alongside our students. This is crucial to building strong and sustainable movements for change. We are creating a new culture of organizing, rooted in transformative justice and accountability.

### In the powerful words of Cece:

“My favorite part about organizing with FEEST is that we center the vision, by living it. If we are going to fight for our school systems to center our health and wellness, then we are going to center Black and Brown Health and Wellness in our org. If the solutions students are identifying are the need for deeper care and community, then our staff models what it would look like to be a part of a world where we are accepted and valued for our wholeness. FEEST is a powerful place where transformation, love, and abundance is at our core. **Without love, care, or connection, movement work is not possible. We win, not by knowing what is wrong, but more importantly, by knowing what we want and holding a strong commitment to each other to move forward until we get it.**”

Led by our young people, we will continue to infuse radical joy into our work as we build power to create transformative change for our youth and our community, and move closer to collective liberation.



# Your support means so much to us!

We'd like to thank our youth leaders, families, teachers, our dedicated Board of Directors, our committed staff, and generous funders. We wouldn't be able to do this without you!

## Thank You!

- Best Starts for Kids: Healthy & Safe Environments
- City of Seattle's Environmental Justice Fund, The Bullitt Foundation
- City of Seattle Human Services Department
- City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods
- City of Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning
- Communities of Opportunity: Racial Equity, Systems, and Policy Change
- Communities of Opportunity: White Center
- United Way of King County
- City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, Equitable Communities Initiative
- Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing
- Impact 100
- Magic Cabinet
- MultiCare Community Partnership Fund
- Seattle Peoples Fund
- Youth Development Executive of King County, Thriving Leaders of Color Fund
- And More!

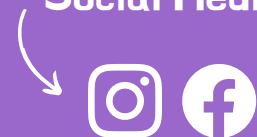
**How to get involved with FEEST:**

**Donate**

**Subscribe to Our Newsletter**

**Attend an Event!**

**Follow us on Social Media!**







**FEEST**

