



FEEST x OSE: SPS Snack Pilot Project Proposal

Who We Are

FEEST (Food Empowerment Education & Sustainability Team) works at the nexus of healthy food access, racial justice, and youth empowerment to create food justice in low income communities of color and develop leadership for lasting change in South King County. We set the table for young people to change the landscape around health and equity in their families, schools, and neighborhoods while simultaneously advocating for systems and policy changes that increase access to healthy food and win youth voice with decision makers.

FEEST began in 2008 as part of the King County Food and Fitness Initiative, seeking a community-driven approach to reversing health inequities in low income, racially diverse neighborhoods. Since then, FEEST youth have been changing the way school districts run lunch programs and systematizing an information pipeline from students to school food policy makers. FEEST's Student Advisory Council in Highline School District gives youth the opportunity to work directly with School District Nutrition Services to address improvements in school food, including healthier, fresher, better tasting food; more culturally relevant meals; more food made from scratch; and breakfast after the bell. FEEST youth leaders serve as emissaries between school policymakers and the student body, raising the concerns of the student collective and likewise gaining support for the changes from the entire school.

FEEST's long-term vision for school food is that every student has access to a free, nutritious, culturally relevant, fresh food whenever they need it.

OSE's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

The OSE's (Office of Sustainability and Environment) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) provides all children in participating Seattle Public Elementary schools with a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school day. It is an effective and creative way of introducing fresh fruits and vegetables as healthy snack options.

The goals of the program are to create healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices, expand the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience, increase children's fruit and vegetable consumption, and make a difference in children's diets to impact their present and future health.

Mission Alignment:

Both organizations seek to increase student consumption of healthy fruits and vegetables. As OSE moves towards creating snack programs for Seattle Public Schools high school students, FEEST leaders were recognized as an authority on student needs around school food, and were contracted to run focus groups with youth to generate 2-3 viable snack program ideas.

FEEST gathered robust student input at Chief Sealth International High School (1173 students) and Rainier Beach High School (671 students) and generated 3 pilot project ideas for snack programs to increase student consumption of fruits and vegetables.



Methods:

FEEST hosted a total of three focus groups at Rainier Beach and Chief Sealth. We engaged 12 youth leaders who are deeply connected to the student population through extra curricular activities such as associated student body, after school sports, the Rainier Beach farmstand, dance team, etc. These youth leaders are deeply connected to the needs and desires of their peers, and have a critical understanding of what types of programs and marketing students at their schools will (and won't) engage with.

In our focus groups, we gathered student feedback on barriers to healthy eating at school, the time of day students are most in need of a snack, distribution methods that works best for their school, and the types of fruits, veggies, and healthy snacks students enjoy.

FEEST staff collected the data using a host of different activities. Youth began their snack brainstorming with a creative game called "This is not a ____" where students are asked to "transform" an unhealthy snack by passing along an object and renaming it with a healthier alternative they would eat. (Example: This is not a bag of hot cheetos, this is a bag of dried mangos). Students also answered questions like "What does fresh food mean to you?," and "What type of variety would you like to see in your snacks?" in roaming gallery walks. We played several other games to gather student input about common barriers to healthy eating during the school day, preferred snack distribution styles, and times of day students feel hunger affecting their ability to learn, and most need a snack.

Our Findings:

From the data we collected in our focus groups, we discovered several significant barriers to healthy eating at Rainier Beach and Chief Sealth and we discuss the impact these barriers have on students' ability to learn at school, and overall life outcomes.

Major Barriers to Accessing Healthy Food:

- Students are not allowed to eat in class
 - Students are disciplined if they leave class to get a snack
- Schools have rat and pest problems
 - This discourages teachers from allowing students to eat in class
- Students don't have access to healthy snacks, only unhealthy vending machines. Healthy snacks are expensive and hard to get to.
 - At Rainier Beach High School, the primary access to snacks that students have are the vending machines that are located in the cafeteria. The vending machine is only accessible to students during the thirty-minute lunch times. Students are not allowed to access the cafeteria outside of lunch time and students report that the machines do not operate during classes. When the machines are operating, the students do not utilize them due to contents being "super unhealthy" and "too expensive".
 - Students say if they wanted to obtain a healthy snack, they would have to go off campus to the nearest Safeway which isn't a feasible option due to students being prohibited from leaving campus during class and are often punished for leaving.
- Students often leave school to get food and don't come back. After a certain number to absences, they are sent to truancy court.
 - Students from Chief Sealth report similar obstacles to accessing snacks on campus with the unhealthy, overpriced, and underutilized vending machines. Students only option outside of the vending machines is leaving campus during lunch to buy snacks at the grocery stores at Westwood Village, a shopping center that is a fifteen minute walk to and from the location. Students who choose to travel to Westwood for lunch often return late



or remain absent from school which results in them missing lessons and after too many absences, being sent to Truancy court.

Impact on Student Learning:

We know that eating nutritious, fresh food each day is critical for young people's success in school and influences many predictors of outcomes in life - from scoring higher on tests, to attending better colleges, to securing meaningful work, to overall life expectancy. In South Seattle, these barriers make it increasingly difficult for young people to achieve their full potential with inadequate nutrition. When students do not have enough food to eat at school, they report feeling "super hungry leading up to lunch time" and have trouble learning as a result. Thus, access to healthy food is an issue of health equity for Rainier Beach and Chief Sealth High School students, as both schools have high populations of low-income students of color.

Pilot Project Solutions:

The following pilot project proposals have been designed by youth leaders to increase student consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, while solving the barriers outlined above.

Option #1: Seasonal Fruit and Protein Box

This snack box will be packaged similarly to an [Alaska Airlines fruit and cheese platter](#). Inside the box will be seasonal fruits, vegetables, and proteins. In the fall, students would like to see apples, cantaloupes, grapes, persimmons, plums, apricots, and watermelon. In the winter, students would like to see a rotation of pears, apples, cranberries, dates, figs, grapefruit, orange, and papaya. In the spring, students suggested a rotation of blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries. Each box will also include a protein option such as halal beef or turkey jerky, nuts, or cottage cheese.

Student Buy In: Students who favored the Seasonal Fruit and Protein Box option identified the freshness of their food as a key components to their academic success and ability to learn. The emphasis on a rotation of seasonal fruits and vegetables will not only ensure that snack boxes are made with fresh ingredients - it will also ensure the snack boxes remain enticing and interesting to students by providing a robust variety of fruits and vegetables.

Feasibility & Resources Needed*:

- **Materials:** seasonal fruit and veggies, halal protein options, snack box containers, disinfectant wipes
 - Fall fruits: apples, cantaloupes, grapes, persimmons, plums, apricots, and watermelon
 - Fall vegetables: beets, artichoke hearts, carrots, cucumber with Tajin, cherry tomatoes
 - Winter fruits: pears, apples, cranberries, dates, figs, grapefruit, orange, and papaya
 - Winter vegetables: squash, pumpkin, celery
 - Spring fruits: blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries
 - Spring vegetables: snap peas, arugula, kale, lettuce (salads with toppings)
- **Operations:** staff (OSE or school), admin, or volunteers time to package the boxes, transportation from vendors
- **Potential Partners:** Rainier Beach Farm Stand, (Rainier Beach), Lee's Produce (White Center), MacPherson's Fruit and Produce (Beacon Hill), Fou Lee Market (Beacon Hill)
 - Lee's Produce estimates between .25-.50 cents per piece of produce



*The cost of each project will vary largely depending on the vendors OSE chooses. Because of this, we have not included a total cost breakdown for each pilot project, but have included line items for OSE to consider in their calculations.

Option #2: Culturally Relevant Snack Box

This snack box will have 3-5 compartments similar to a bento box containing culturally relevant food from around the world. One student suggested piloting a box of Ethiopian food that includes injera, sambusas, shiro (chickpeas), and other vegetarian and halal meat options in separate compartments. Other snack box suggestions included pita and hummus with olives and salad, mini banh mi sandwiches and salad, and sushi.

Student Buy In:

Both Chief Sealth International High School and Rainier Beach High School are known for their diverse student populations, however students identified a serious lack of representation in the food they eat at school. Students at both schools reported wanting to see a robust variety of meals provided on campus with an emphasis on foods that are representative of the many cultures of the student body.

In our focus groups, students shared the joys of eating authentic cultural foods at home. Several participants identified spices used at home (like cardamom, berbere, cayenne pepper, tajin) that they wish were present in school meals and shared that they feel energized after eating food from their culture. Students in favor of this snack box option say that culturally relevant snack boxes not only provide an opportunity for students to see themselves represented in the food they eat, it also provides an opportunity for student to culturally connect with their peers through food.

Feasibility & Resources Needed:

- Materials: culturally relevant snacks with vegetarian and halal meat options, snack box containers, disinfectant wipes
- Operations: transportation from vendors
- Potential Partners: Meskel (Central District), Tana Market (Central District), Castillos Market (White Center), Seattle Market (Beacon Hill), Bananas Grill (Rainier Vista)
- Estimated Costs: dependant on vendor

Option #3: Dried Fruit and Veggie Snack Box

This snack box will include 3-5 shelf-stable snacks that students can easily take on the go. It would include healthy bars (fig bars, granola bars) nuts, dried fruit and vegetables (dried mangoes, banana chips, veggie chips, shelf-stable fresh fruit and vegetables (clementines, snap peas, carrots), a protein (string cheese, halal beef or turkey jerky), and coconut water packs.

Student Buy In: One barrier to students accessing healthy snacks is that vending machines with unhealthy food options are the only place for a quick snack. This shelf-stable snack box would serve as an alternative to unhealthy vending machine snacks with all the convenience of shelf stable items that can be easily transported in backpacks. Additionally, these dried fruits and veggie snack packs would need minimal clean up and decrease the likelihood of pest problems.

Feasibility & Resources Needed:

- Materials: dried fruit and vegetable chips, shelf stable fruit and vegetables, healthy bars, halal protein options, coconut water packs, snack box containers, disinfectant wipes
- Operations: staff (OSE or school), admin, or volunteers to package the boxes, transportation from vendors



- Potential Partners: Fou Lee Market, Hilltop Red Apple, Viet Wah, Winco Foods, Costco Wholesale
- Estimated Costs: dependent on vendor

Distribution:

In our focus groups, we explored the idea of having a central “grab and go” snack pickup location, but students let us know that having a central location would be challenging, because students who arrive first would get more snack packs than students who arrived later. Our fellows have given us two distribution methods that solve this issue.

Option #1: Hot Spots

The “hot spot” style of distribution will mimic a Grab-n-Go station. Students will be able to walk by a station and pick up a snack box between classes during passing period. There will be several “hot spot” locations in different wings of each school to increase accessibility and ensure equitable distribution.

At Rainier Beach, hot spot locations would include:

- First Floor: outside the cafeteria, student activities classroom
- Second Floor: outside the library, Success City (staff in this homework help classroom have been informally providing snacks).

At Chief Sealth, hot spot locations would include:

- Main Floor: main entrance foyer, outside the library, outside the cafeteria

Each location would be staffed during the passing period between 2nd and 3rd period and again between the passing periods of 6th and 7th period. For Wednesday early dismissal, Advisory period and 5th period are ideal options.

Student Buy In: Students report feeling a need to receive snacks in a timely manner. The “hot spot” method will not only decrease hallway congestion around a central distribution site, it will also ensure that all students can access snacks efficiently, regardless of the location of their classes.

Feasibility & Resources Needed:

- Materials: cardboard boxes, folding tables, signage, disinfectant wipes
- Operations: staff (OSE or school), admin, or volunteers to set up stations and distribute boxes
- Potential Partners: WA-BLOC, paraeducators, college access staff

Option #2: Classroom Distribution

With this option, snack boxes will be delivered to clusters of classrooms throughout the school. Each classroom roster would provide information on how many snacks to provide for each class period. Snack boxes will also include cleaning wipes for students to ensure classroom space stays in a state of cleanliness.

Students identified times when lack of food severely impacts their ability to learn. The most critical times students are in need of snack boxes is in the morning during 2nd and 3rd period, and after lunch during 5th period. Morning distribution provides energy for students who need nourishment early in the day. 5th period distribution will support students in remaining energized through the end of their lessons.



Student Buy In: Students highly favored the classroom delivery method of distribution because it ensures that all students have an equal access to fresh and healthy snacks. Students do not have to choose between staying in class for the whole lesson and going hungry, or missing a portion of their lessons to get a snack from the vending machine. Classroom distribution is the most direct and accessible form of distribution.

Feasibility & Resources Needed:

- Materials: cardboard boxes to transport snack boxes, disinfectant wipes
- Operations: staff (OSE or school), admin, or volunteers to set up stations and distribute boxes
- Potential Partners: WA-BLOC, paraeducators, college access staff, teachers

Advertising and Promotion:

For all snack box options, students recommended creating bright, colorful posters to advertise the boxes around schools. For the “hot spot” distribution style, posters would also include distribution times as well as a list of hotspot locations. Students also suggested making small, bright posters with directional arrows leading to each snack hotspot location. These directional posters will allow students to plan out their route between classes to include the “hot spot” location.

At each school, students also identified daily announcements with fun slogans, and peer to peer outreach as effective ways to raise awareness about the snack boxes.

Timeline:

Phase 1 of our Scope of Work is complete. To continue onto Phase 2, we propose the following timeline:

- May 3: OSE chooses pilot project
- May 6-10: FEEST fellows outreach to students
- May 13-17: Pilot Project runs, FEEST fellows survey students on youth impressions, likelihood of use, impact on consumption of fruits and vegetables
- May 30: Phase 2 Meeting: FEEST presents learnings and revised recommendations
- July 1: FEEST submits final recommendations for project, including youth buy in, feasibility, effectiveness in increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, and a summary memo of work completed to inform the recommendations



II. SCOPE OF WORK

Phase 1: Research & Idea Generation		
Timeline	Estimated Hours	Deliverables
April 1, 2019	10	Facilitate and plan for 2 meetings with SPS youth leaders to outline goals and timeline of project. Create workplan for outreach and idea generation
April <u>30</u>	15	Conduct outreach and focus groups of high school youth in SPS
April <u>30</u>	6	Synthesize data and choose top 2-3 projects prioritizing youth buy-in, feasibility, and effectiveness in increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables
April <u>30</u>	3	Meeting with City's Food Policy Advisor and relevant staff to present and discuss recommendations
Phase 2: Testing & Outreach		
Timeline	Estimated Hours	Deliverables
May <u>31</u>	10	Outreach to at least 100 students at both Rainier Beach and Chief Sealth High School to pilot project
May <u>31</u>	15	Create and collect surveys of youth on impressions, likelihood of use, and impact on consumption of fruits and vegetables
May <u>31</u>	8	Synthesize and summarize data
May <u>31</u>	3	Meeting with City's Food Policy Advisor and relevant staff to present and discuss learnings and revised recommendations
Phase 3: Final Recommendations		
Timeline	Estimated Hours	Deliverables
July 1, 2019	10	Submit a final recommendation and how it meets the above criteria of youth buy-in, feasibility, and effectiveness in increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables as well as a summary memo that contains a summary of the work completed to inform the recommendations. This summary should include the purpose of the project, research methods, process-related outcomes such as focus group results or survey results, and recommendations considered and eliminated.