

**Food Education Fund****Resolution 422 Statement of Support**

Good Morning, my name is Dr. Danielle Beam and I am the executive director of the Food Education Fund. FEF was founded 15 years ago in conjunction with the charter for Food and Finance High School, a CTE culinary school in Hell's Kitchen. FEF along with Food and Finance High School serves students, 98% identifying as ethnically diverse and 85% qualifying as Title 1, most of whom travel 1.5 hours each way to attend school.

FEF provides experiential learning and industry access to students throughout their high school career. Now supporting nearly a dozen schools in a variety of ways, we offer a suite of year-long programming leading up to our workforce development training and career placement. High School seniors are enrolled in a 6-week course of intensive workforce development prior to FEF assessing and pairing the students with our industry partners - made up of more than 60 restaurant and hospitality groups in NYC - as paid interns. 4 out of 5 interns are offered an opportunity to extend their role at the conclusion of their internship.

We firmly believe that students should be prepared to make informed postsecondary decisions that are the right fit for them. The emphasis Food and Finance HS has placed on access to the holistic development of their student through experiential learning, specifically outsourcing access through FEF to enhance the curriculum in place, has been crucial to the overall success of their student population. 98% of FFHS students graduate within 4 years with nearly 200 paid hours of meaningful internship experiences and up to 500 hours of total FEF programming throughout their 4 years of high school.

It takes a village to support student success which is why partnerships like Food and Finance x Food Education Fund are essential. The school systems can provide ample enrichment during the school day, and the added benefit of immersive after-school programs, tied into the classroom curriculum, provides a stronger student support network and improves like likelihood of student success, especially as students consider how to navigate postsecondary decisions.

Food Education Fund endorses Resolution 422 because we have seen, firsthand, how access to industry leaders and intentional programming in and after school better prepares students for college and career readiness, amplifying their leadership potential and increasing their social and economic mobility.