In a recent survey about our school funding, 83% of SCS school leaders either agreed or strongly agreed that they understood how positions and dollars were allocated to their schools. Yet, 45% of SCS school leaders either agreed or strongly agreed that positions and dollars were allocated fairly based on their schools’ needs.

A healthy budgeting system fosters greater equity, transparency and flexibility around resources. Student-based budgeting (SBB) is a strategy that strives to create these conditions by ensuring resources follow students based on need. SBB works when it is part of the district overall strategy to help school leaders more strategically organize school-level resources in support of high-quality instruction and ultimately, higher levels of student achievement.

With the SBB effort, there will be winners and losers. SCS is committed to mitigate any adverse impact on schools and classroom learning. This may include, but not limit to, a hold harmless period, a discretionary pool of funds for identified needs by the Superintendent, and timely and appropriate professional development and support for school leaders and Central Office staff. Also, an annual report of progress will be shared with the Shelby County Board of Education.

SCS is embarking on a transition to a student-based budgeting system in order to increase transparency, equity, and flexibility for our schools and students. The launch of SBB will be a three-year engagement with the partnership of Education Resources Strategies. Yet, the overall SBB effort will be an on-going process that may require model adjustments, timeline changes and additional support to school leaders based on continuous feedback.

This resolution affirms the District’s commitment to use student-based budgeting as one of key strategies to provide greater transparency, equity and flexibility around how resources can be allocated and used to address specific students’ needs.