

November 16, 2011

William R. Hite, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Parents and Community Members,

Last school year, we laid the foundation to enhance equity in funding decisions by piloting a system called Student Based Budgeting (SBB) at eight schools. SBB allocates dollars directly to schools based on the number of students enrolled and the specific needs of those students. Certain student needs and characteristics, such as grade levels or English language learners, will be given a predetermined weight that translates to real dollar amounts. This formula is gaining momentum in large school districts across the country, including Boston, Philadelphia, San Diego and Baltimore. After listening to principals in that pilot group and working through their concerns, we are rolling out SBB this year system-wide with the exception of early childhood centers, alternative schools, charter schools and regional centers.

Prince George's County, like many school systems, has traditionally given dollars to schools based on factors such as the number of students and staffing ratios. That formula did little to address students' and schools' diverse needs. It's a simple fact that every school is not the same. For too long, however, our funding system suggested otherwise.

In short, this means that now you and your child's school can have greater confidence that money is following students. What this means for Prince George's County Public Schools is that we are literally putting dollars behind our stated goals to empower school leaders, shift central office to better support schools, and balance accountability with increased autonomy.

To address your questions and concerns, we have created an in-depth budget section on the PGCPS website that includes Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about Student Based Budgeting and a list of important dates in the budget process. A copy of the FAQs is included with this letter. Your child's principal will also contact you in the coming weeks to explain how you can be engaged and involved throughout this process.

Prince George's County Public Schools is committed to making transparent budget decisions that work in the best interests of all children regardless of zip code. We hope that you will be an active participant in this process.

Cordially,



William R. Hite
Superintendent of Schools