

SHELBY 101



PARTNERS IN THE JOURNEY

Introductions



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Public Relations and
Community Education Supervisor



Dr. Lewis Brooks
Superintendent



Brief Background

- Originally Heard Presentation at National School Public Relations Association Seminar
- Modeled **Shelby 101** after Tuscaloosa County Schools – TCSS University, Mobile County’s – Learning Leading U, and Francis Howell School District (MO) – Citizens in Our Schools



Previous/Ongoing Engagement Efforts

VOICE

VISION – Hope in the future

OPENNESS – Building transparency

INSIGHT – Information to intellegence

COMMUNICATION – Create meaningful interactions

ENGAGEMENT – What matters most

Held once a year in each of our seven high school zones

Focused on parents and teachers



The Problem to Address

NSPRA Report: FROM DISTORTION TO CLARITY: Empowering School Districts to Overcome False Information

- 96% of NSPRA members consider **the spread of false information a problem for school districts**, up from 81% since the last survey on the topic in 2020.
- 90% of respondents report that the spread of false information is **affecting their district's reputation in the community**
- 76% report it is **eroding confidence in district leaders**.



The Solution

Develop a program to inform citizens and create advocates for public education.



What is **SHELBY 101**?

- A Community outreach initiative designed to engage community members who are:
 - Passionate about public education
 - Interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the school district, its 31 schools, and various programs
 - Want to become advocates for our school district

SHELBY 101 Goals

Increase participants' knowledge and trust

- Demonstrate district needs
- Share factual information
- Correct misinformation
- Influence participants' actions
 - Advocate on behalf of the district
 - Correct misinformation
- Gather input
- Strengthen connections / promote unity among the seven high school zones

SHELBY 101 Structure

- Cohort Model of 40 participants
- 6 monthly sessions of in-depth learning

Transparency is key!





2025-2026 Schedule

SEPT	09	Shelby County Overview Finance and Federal Programs Location: Shelby County BOE Time: 8:30-12:00
OCT	14	Operations Child Nutrition, Maintenance, & Transportation Location: Shelby County BOE Time: 8:30-12:00
NOV	12	Human Resources Leadership Development Location: Shelby County Instructional Services Center Time: 8:30-12:00
JAN	20	Curriculum & Instruction Special Education, Gifted Education, Fine Arts Location: Shelby County Instructional Services Center Time: 8:30-12:00
FEB	10	Curriculum & Instruction Career Tech, Technology, ESL, Counseling/Assessment Location: Shelby County Instructional Services Center Time: 8:30-12:00
MAR	10	Student & Pupil Services Safety & Security, Shelby Cares, Health Services Location: TBD Time: 8:30-12:00

Shelby County Board of Education
410 East College Street
Columbiana, AL 35051

Shelby County Instructional Services Center
601 1st St. South
Alabaster, AL 35007

First Semester

District Overview, Finance, and Federal Programs
Operations (CNP, Maintenance, and Transportation)
Human Resources and Leadership Development

Second Semester

Curriculum and Instruction
(Special Education, Gifted Education, and Fine Arts)
Curriculum and Instruction
(Career Tech, Technology, ESL, and Counseling & Assessment)
Student Services
(Safety & Security, Shelby Cares, Health Services)



Application Process

- Google Form emailed to all parents and shared on social media
- Press releases to local media asking for public participation
- Form asked the following questions:
 - Please describe two significant issues in the school district and your ideas for resolving or mitigating those issues.
 - Are you involved with Shelby County Schools as a parent or volunteer? If so, please describe your interaction with the school district.
 - Why are you interested in attending Shelby 101? What do you hope to gain by being selected as a participant?

Selection Process

- Analyzed applicants responses
- Narrowed the list from 101 applicants to 40 participants
- Selected a diverse representation from seven high school zones
 - Race, Gender, Age
 - Parents & Future Parents
 - Business & Community Leaders
- Selected from candidates who expressed concerns/highlighted issues, but also gave their ideas for resolutions
- Didn't select candidates who seemed to be singularly focused on one issue, had an "ax to grind", or offered no feedback for solutions



Applicant Feedback

- Categorized ALL applicants' feedback on concerns and issues to address during SHELBY 101 presentations.
- **Key Categories Included:**
 - **School Funding** – General understanding and equitable allocation of funds
 - **Personnel and Staffing** – Teacher recruitment & retention, burnout & morale, and PD
 - **Student Wellness and Support** – Mental health & wellness, absenteeism, bullying & student behavior, and special education concerns
 - **Communication and Community Involvement** – Parent & community involvement and communication gaps
 - **Curriculum and Instruction** – Learning gaps, disparity in extracurricular activities and resources, CTEC, and technology
 - **School Operations and Logistics** – Transportation, school growth & zoning, and CNP

Logistics

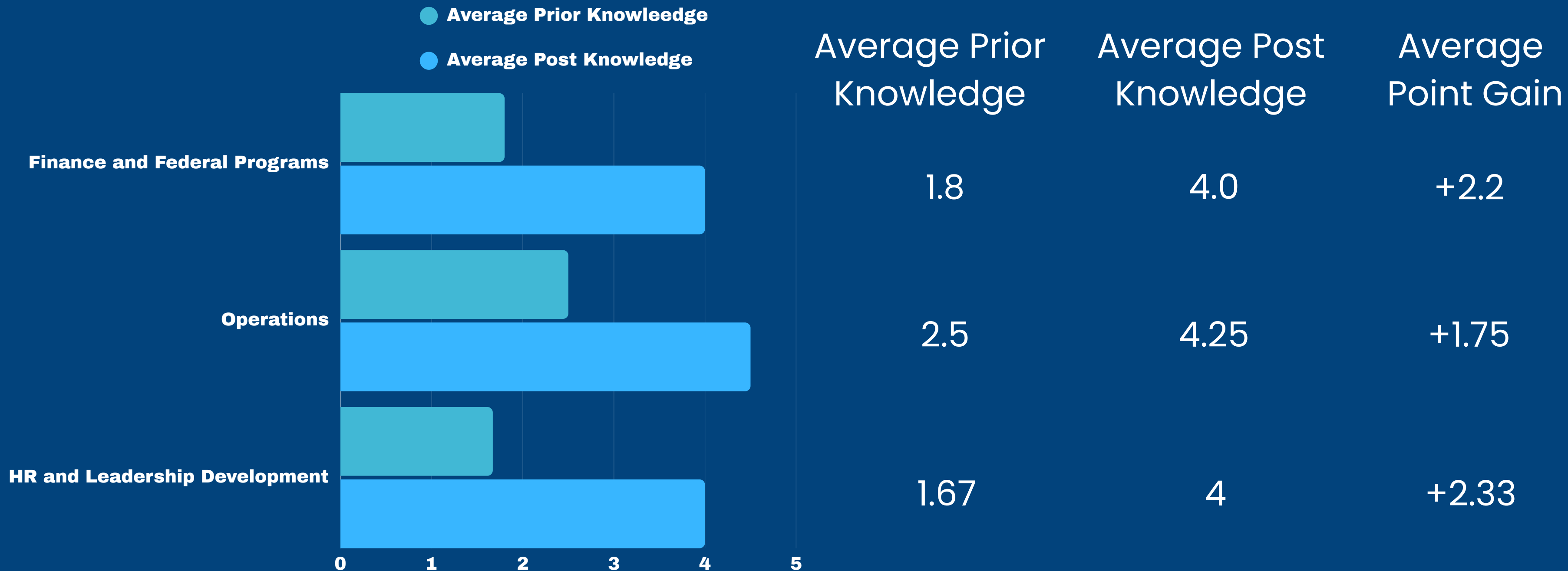
- Determine Best Meeting Time (Day or Night Meetings)
- Determine Meeting Structure
- Determine Meeting Locations
- Secure Sponsors for Lunch
- Provide Branded Slides for Leaders to Collaborate on Presentations



Measuring Impact

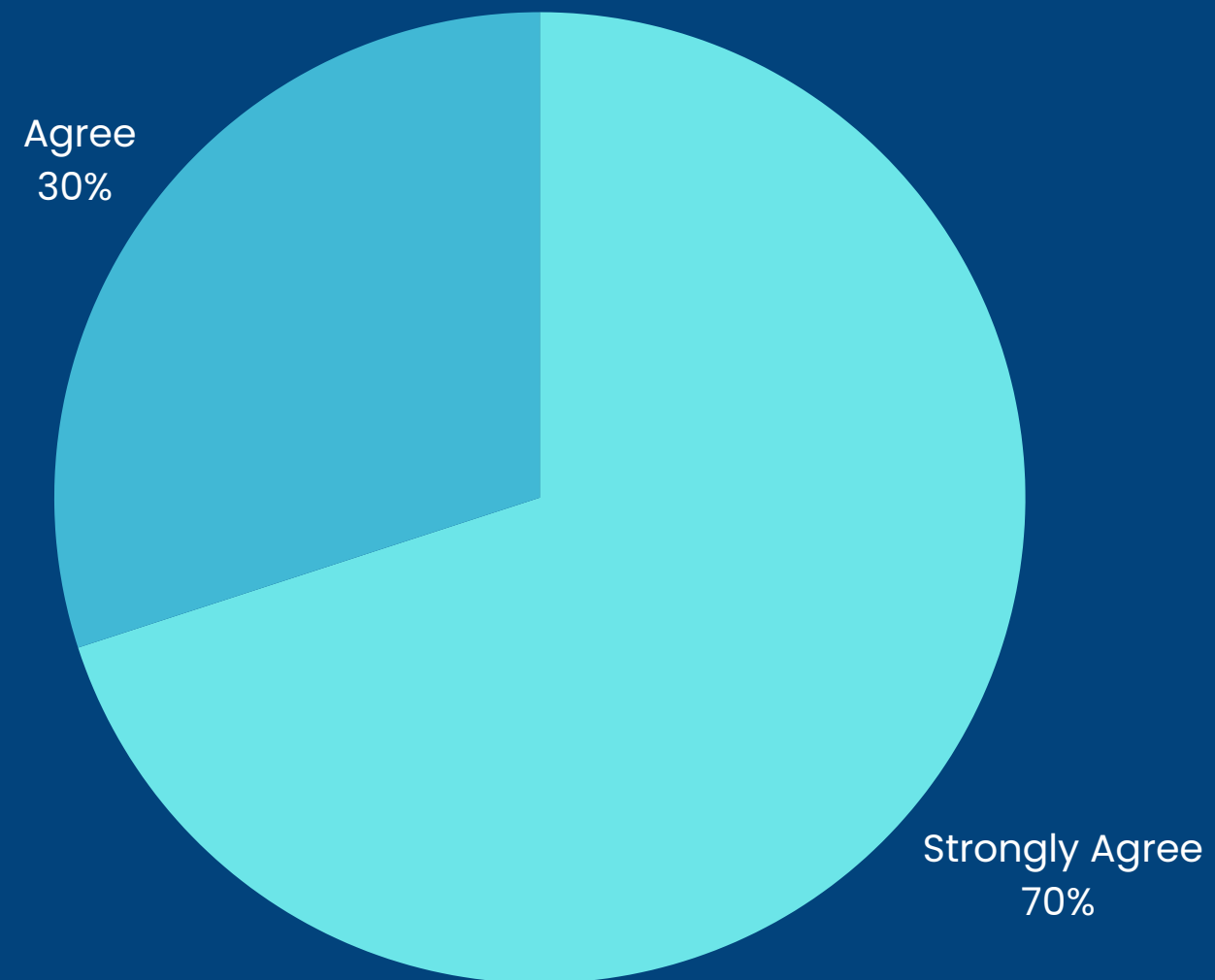
- Administered a First Semester evaluation to assess:
 - Program effectiveness
 - Participant satisfaction with the district
 - Participant knowledge gain
 - Alignment with the stated goals
- Key Findings: Significant knowledge gain across all subject areas, with agreement on the positive impact of the program and intent to advocate on behalf of the district.

Measuring Impact

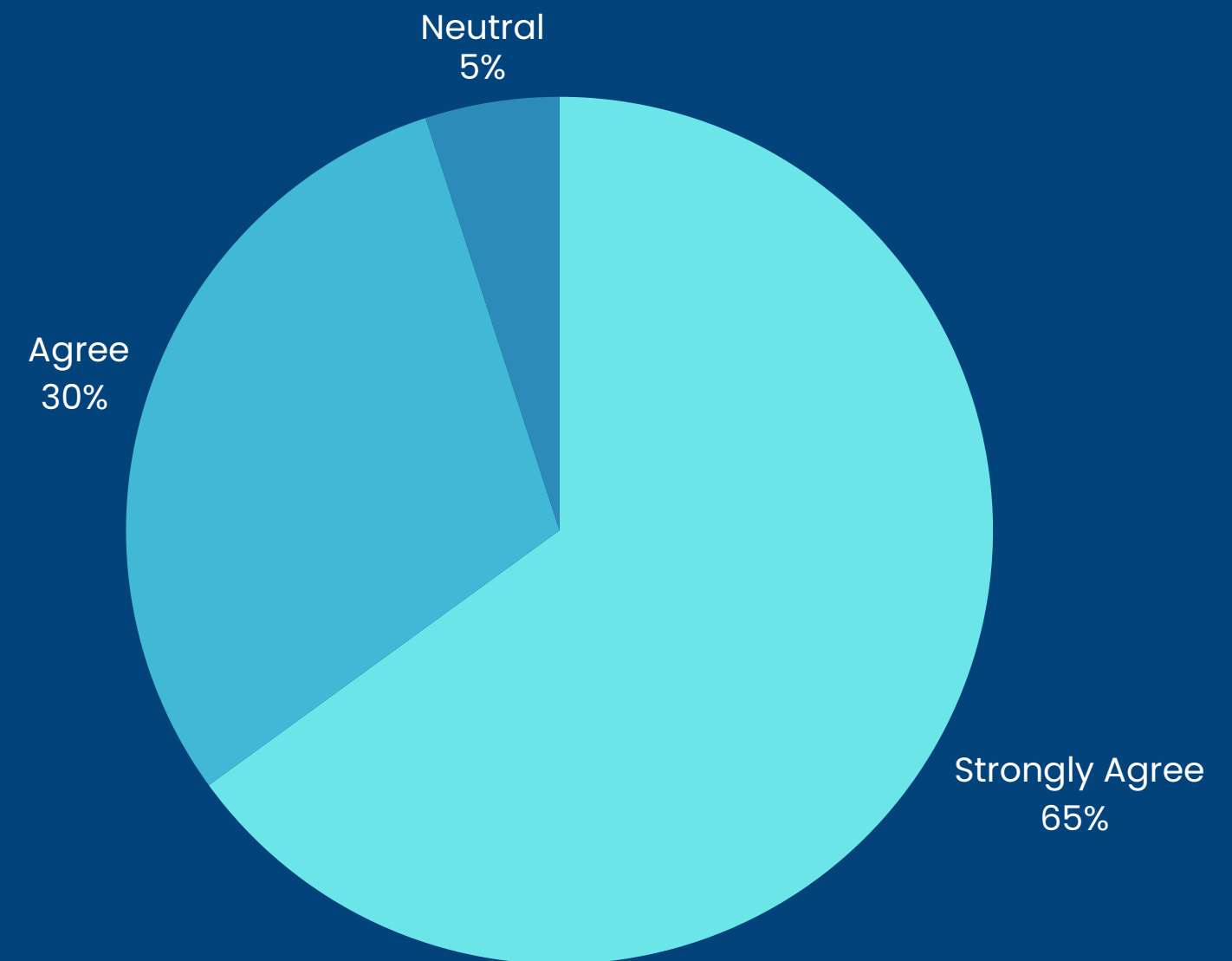


Measuring Impact

Shelby County Schools offers a high-quality education.

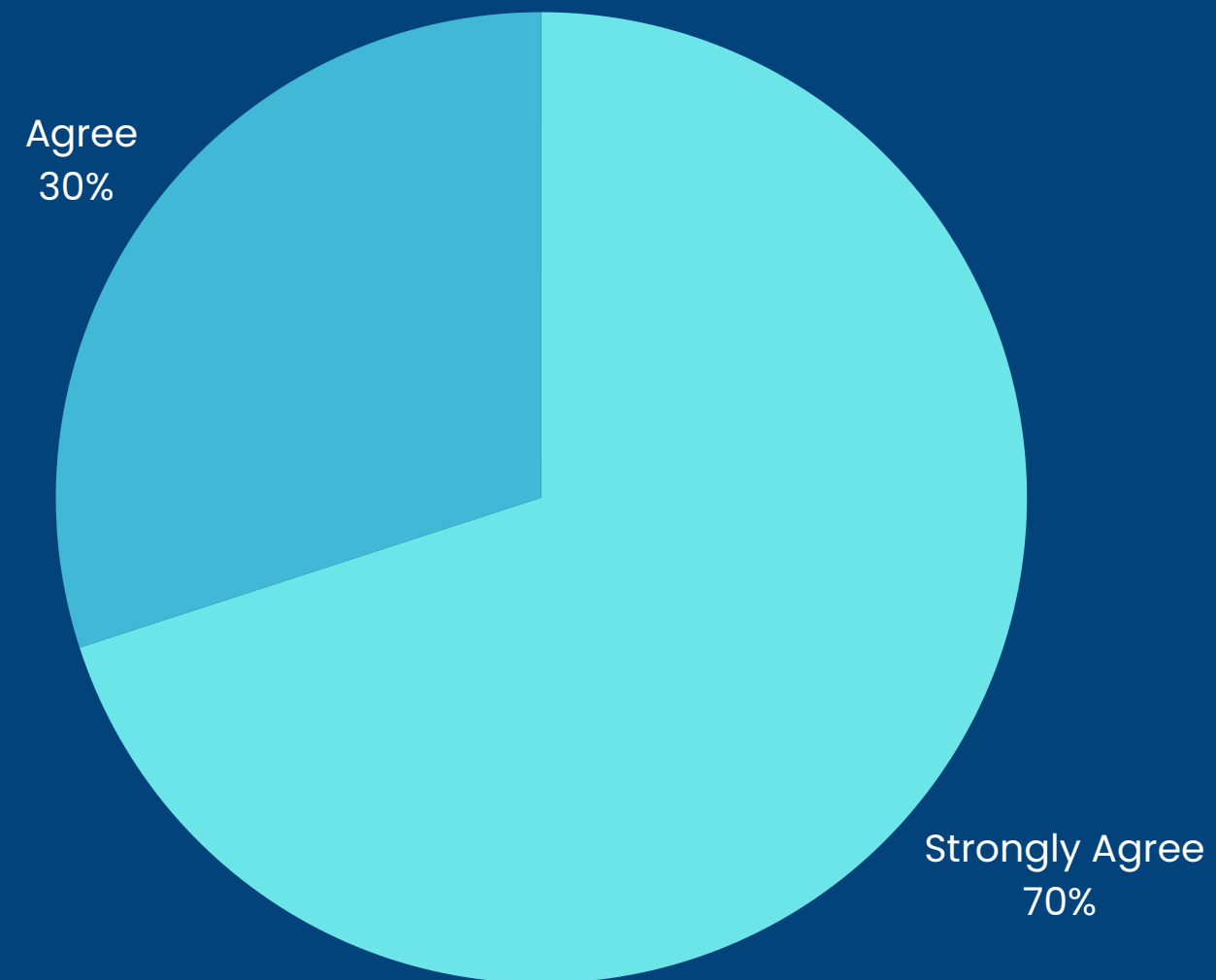


I trust SCS leaders to make good decisions.

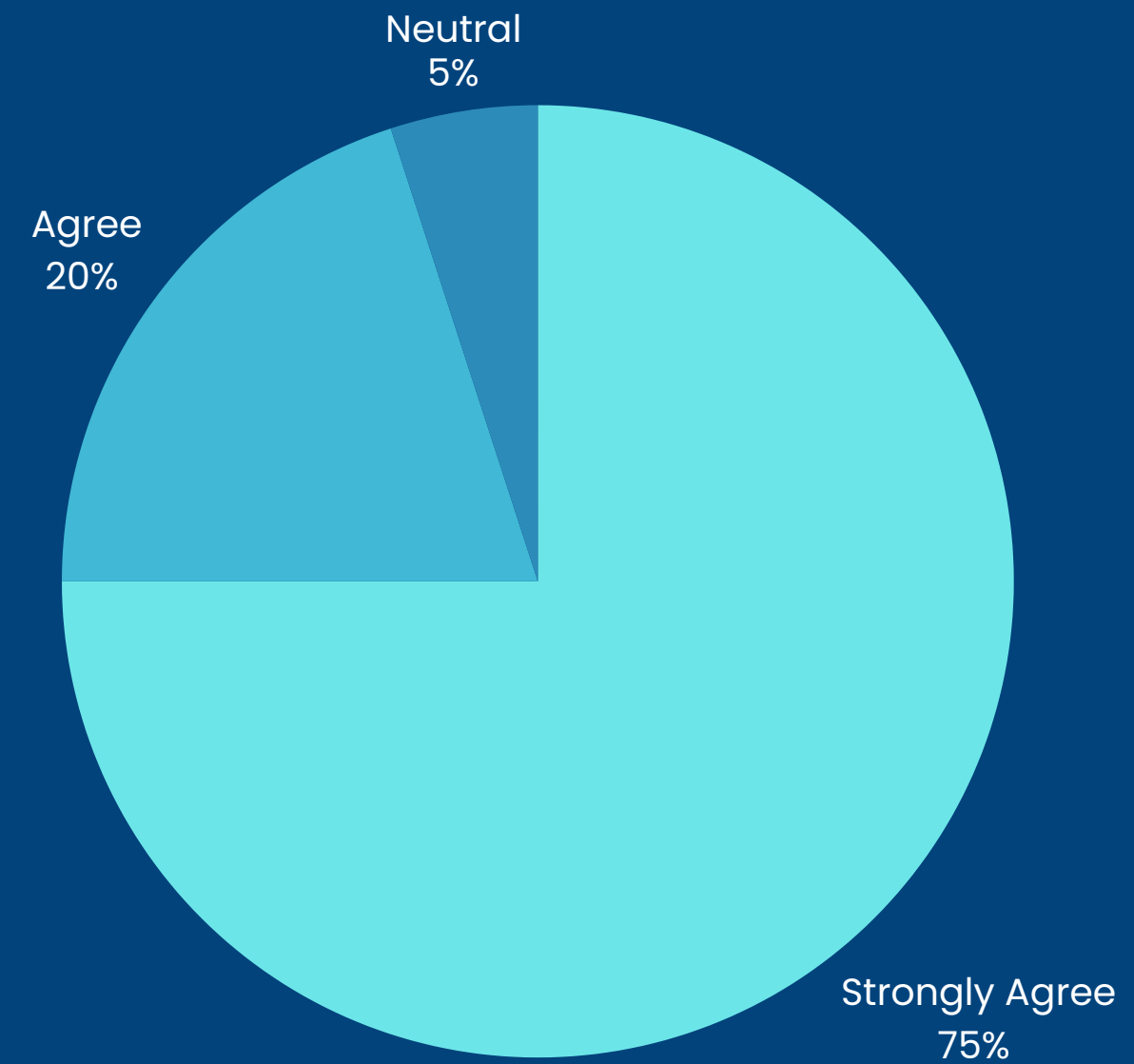


Measuring Impact

I better understand where district funds come from

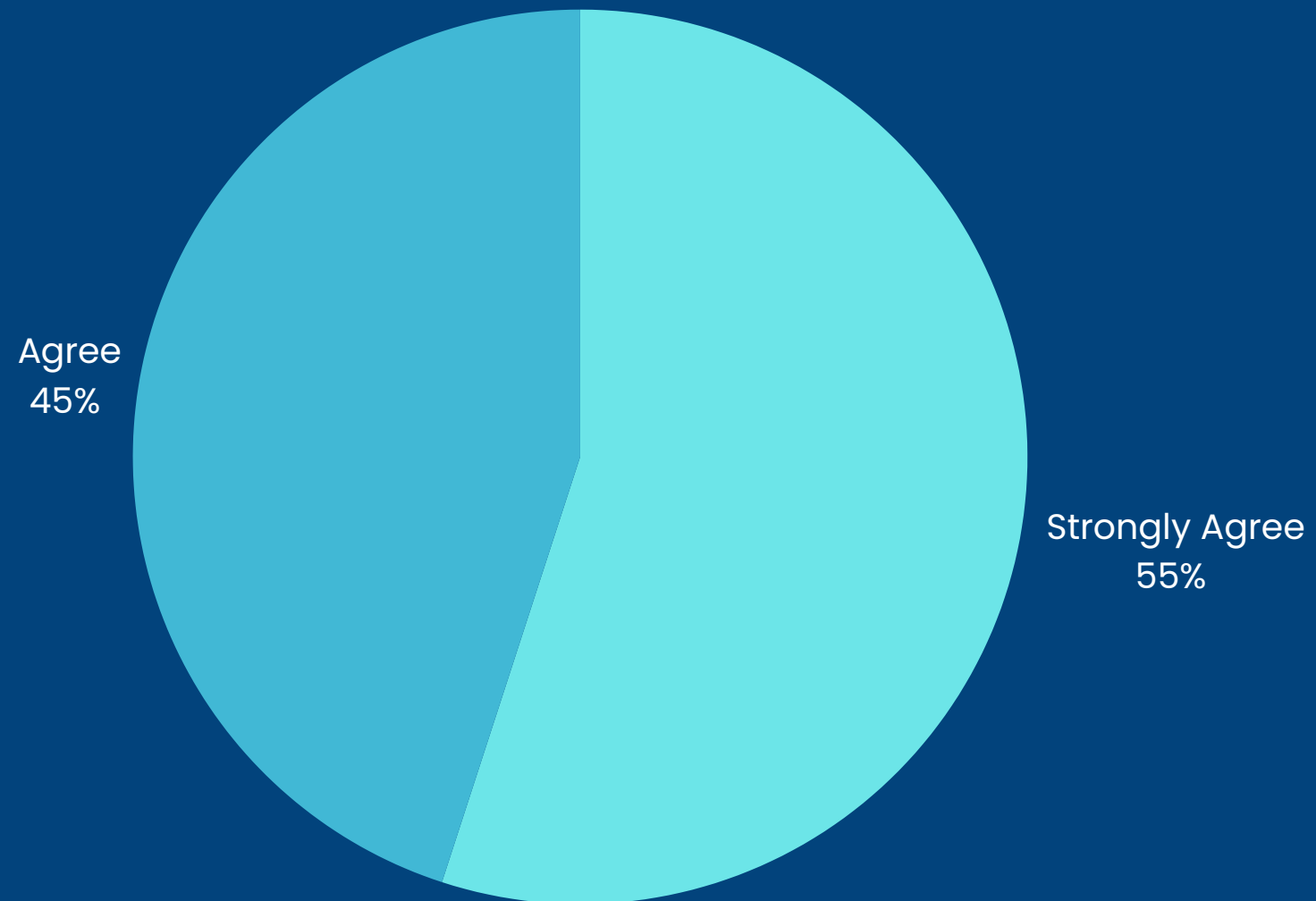


The district spends taxpayer funds effectively and efficiently

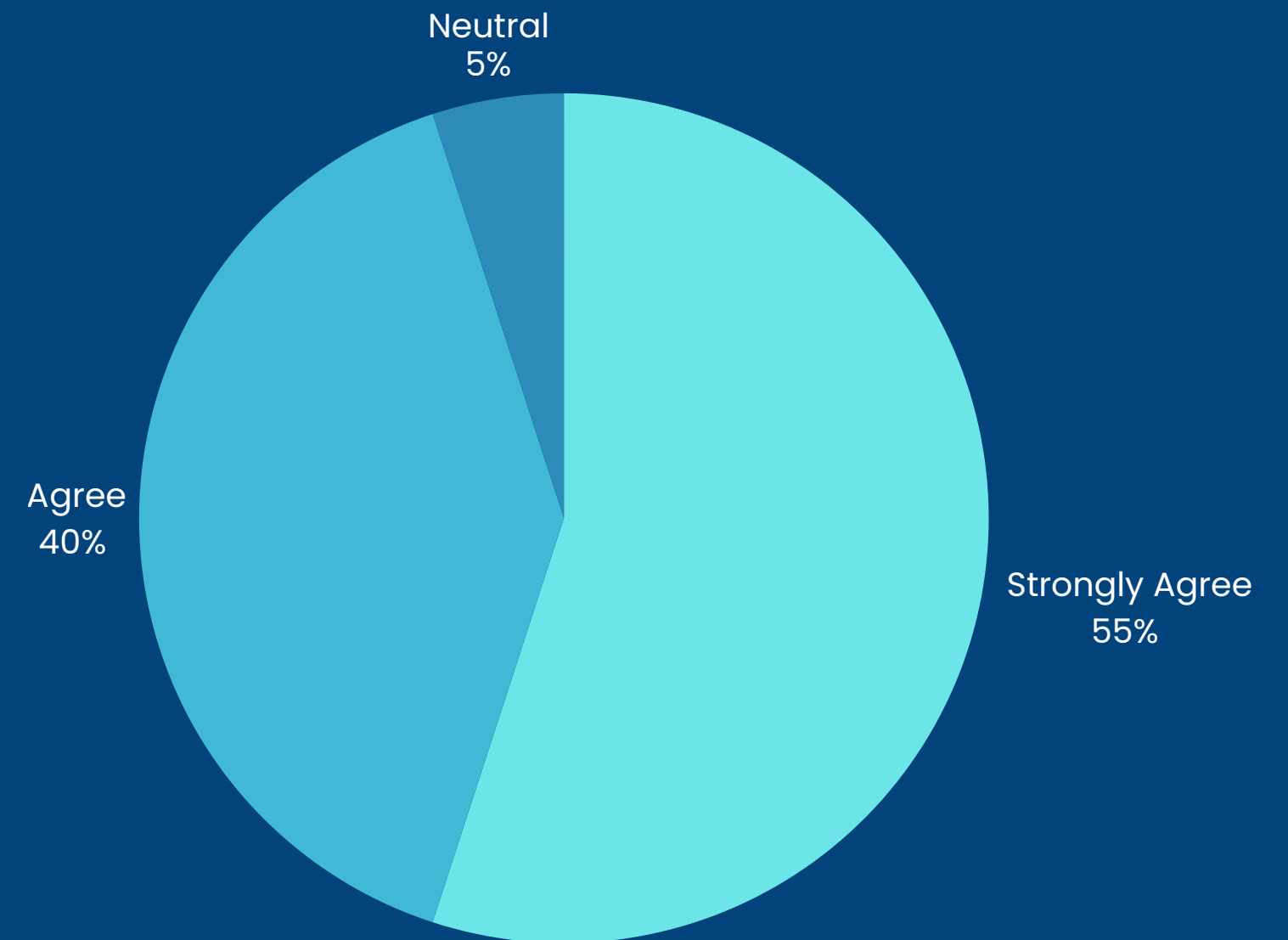


Measuring Impact

I better understand how district funds are allocated

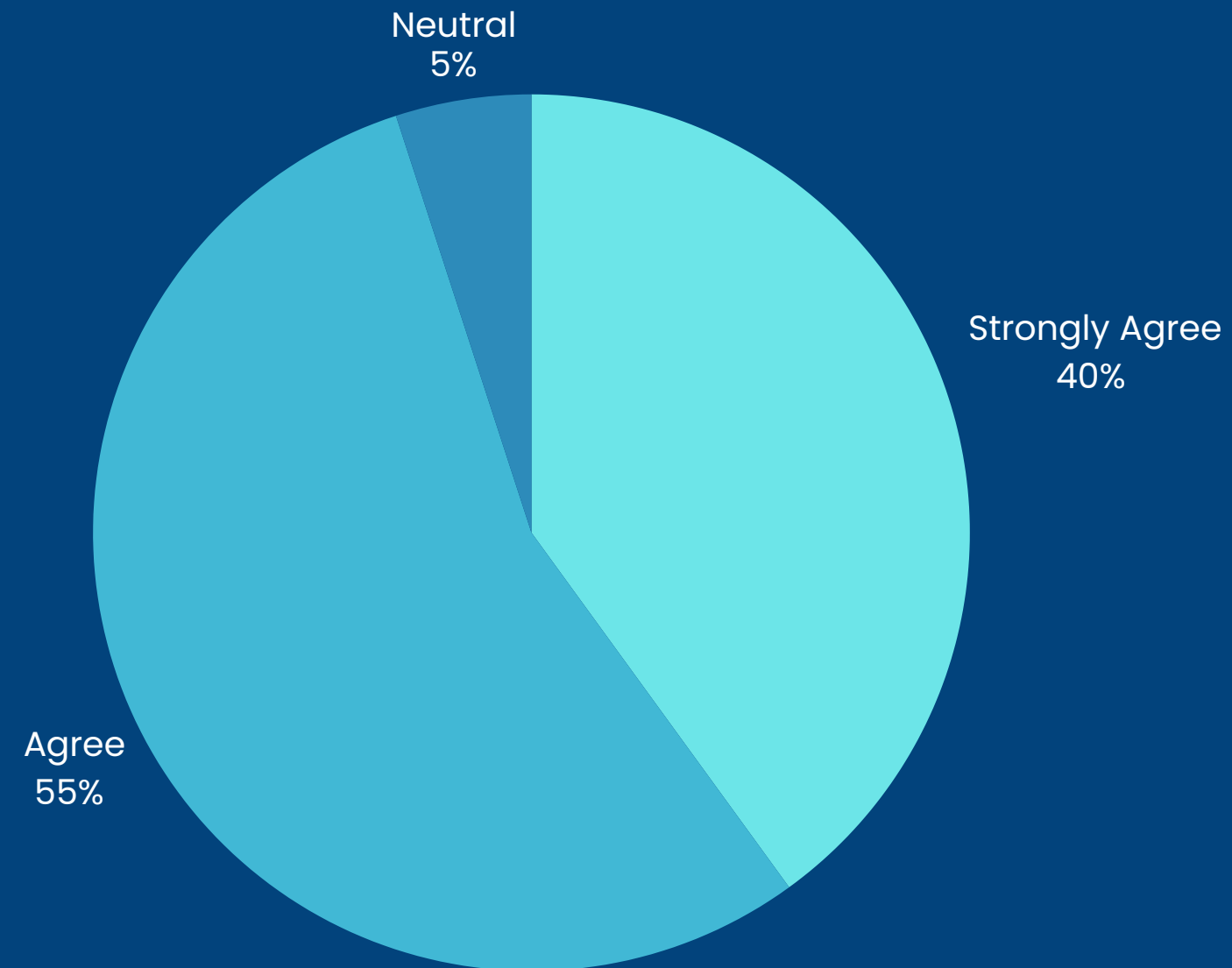


I understand how decisions are made

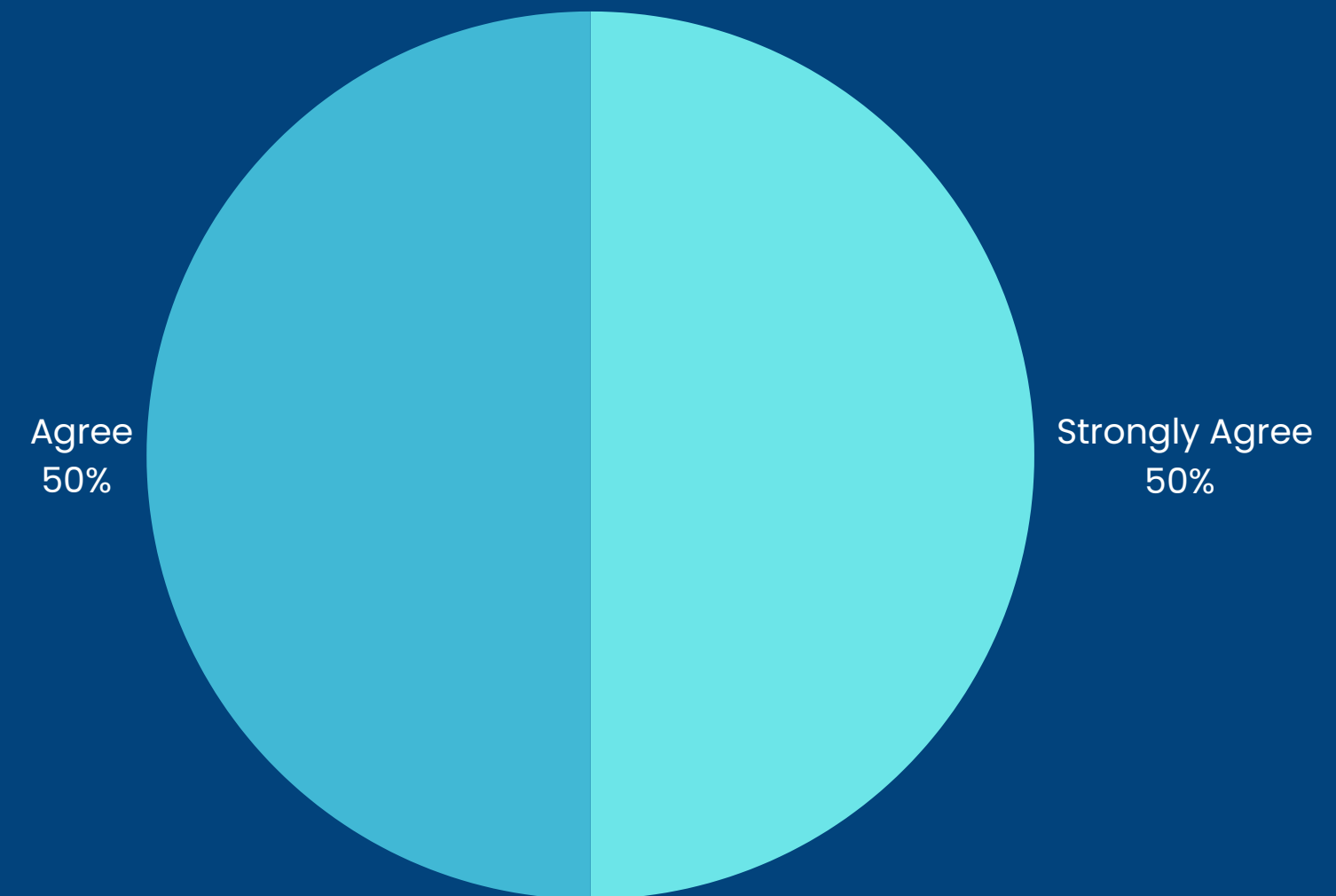


Measuring Impact

I understand how the district is addressing critical issues that impact the district

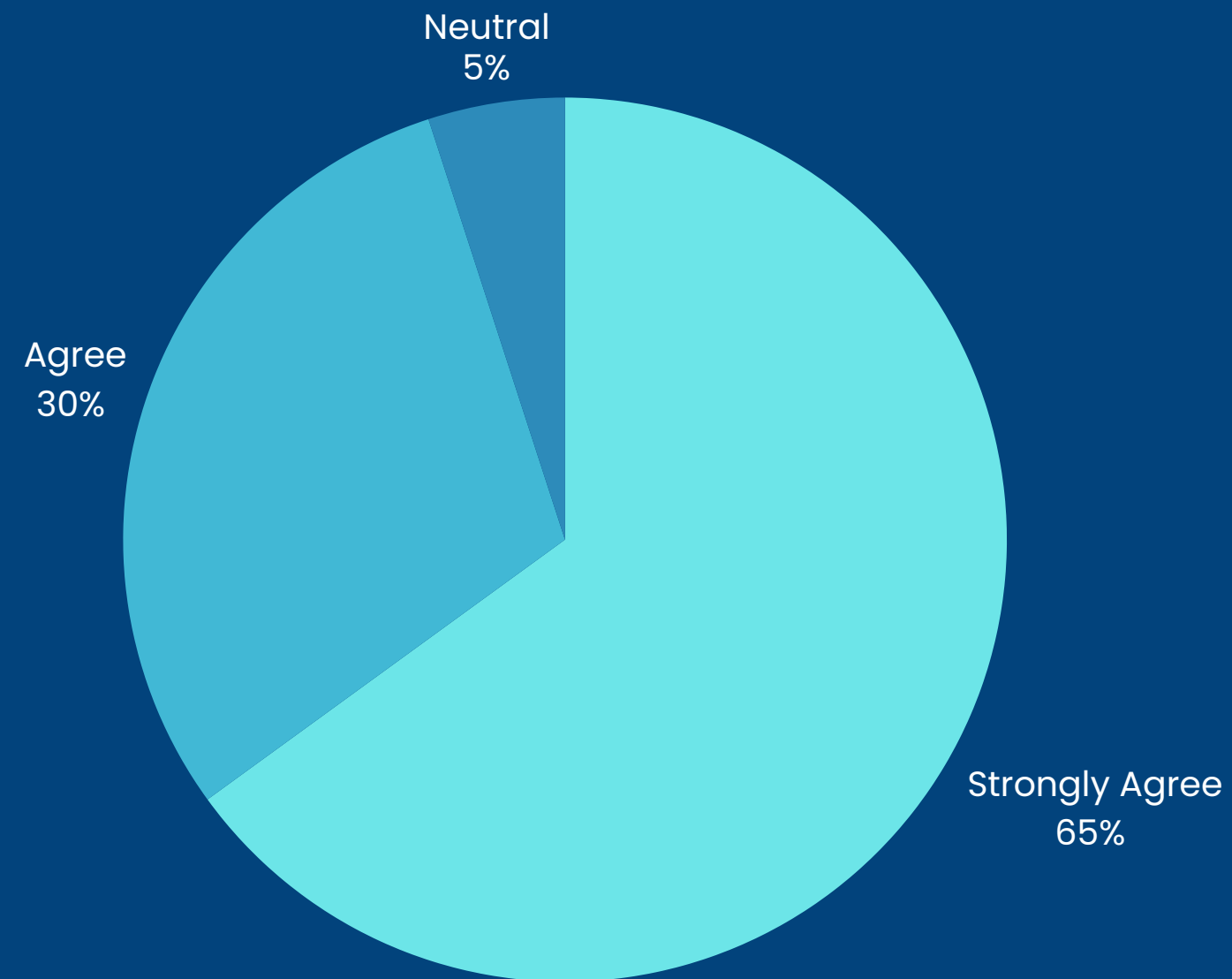


I can engage in conversations about the topics so far in Shelby 101. I can provide factual information and clear up misinformation.



Measuring Impact

I plan to be a strong advocate for Shelby County Schools and for public education once Shelby 101 is completed.



Measuring Impact

What I have enjoyed the most about Shelby 101 is plain and simple:
DETAILED COMMUNICATION!

The transparency of the system and its leaders.

This has been very eye opening! Especially with the free lunches in other counties, I personally have told people why Shelby county cannot, and it makes sense! This has been great!



Measuring Impact

I personally enjoy the casual dialogue directly from Dr. Brooks. I liked hearing his perspective on the various topics and his insight into why certain decisions have been made. It truly allowed me to see and witness his personal passion and commitment to Shelby County Schools.

This definitely helps us as parents – I am also a community partner and PTO member – to advocate for the district. And to determine what our cities can also do to help.

Meeting decision makers for the county. It is great to hear that EACH choice is important.

Measuring Impact

Learning more about the schools and how things operate and what is outside of Shelby County's control

Meeting and hearing from SCS employees and BOE members. There's a ton on the website, and I'm glad it's there; however, there is no comparison to meeting people face-to-face and hearing how they view education and their role in creating an outstanding system for the county's youth.

Meeting the administrators, board members, and the resulting networking opportunities.



Measuring Impact

Areas for Improvement Based on Evaluation

- Allow more time for Q&A
- More engagement/networking opportunities for the participants
 - Field trips
 - Opportunities to meet school administrators and more district leaders
 - Time for participants to network and collaborate

Lessons Learned

- Choose more participants than you need
- Stress that attendance is important, but be flexible
- Have a planning committee
- Get applications out sooner to properly screen and vet candidates



“Advocacy begins with knowledge. You can’t stand up for what you don’t understand.”

- Dr. John King Jr.