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**From:** Mark Burroughs <mark.burroughs@sanpasqualunion.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 25, 2026 7:10 AM  
**To:** FGG, Public Comment  
**Cc:** Anderson, Joel; Lawson-Remer, Terra; MontgomerySteppe, Monica; Desmond, Jim; Potter, Andrew; BOS, District1Community  
**Subject:** [External] San Pasqual Academy (SPA)  
**Attachments:** SPUSD Governing Board Letter to SD County Board of Supervisors 4-14-26.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Chair and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of the San Pasqual Union School District Governing Board, I am writing to share the attached correspondence regarding the future of San Pasqual Academy for your review and consideration. A hard copy of this letter was also delivered to your office on Friday.

We appreciate your time and thoughtful attention to this matter and respectfully request that this correspondence be included in the official record. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please feel free to contact me directly.

Thank you for your continued service to our community.

Sincerely,



*Mark Burroughs*

*Superintendent/Principal*

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April 14, 2026

Dear Members of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors,

The Governing Board of the San Pasqual Union School District writes to express our serious concerns regarding San Pasqual Academy (SPA) and the outcomes we are observing for the foster youth placed there.

Our district has been a longstanding partner with SPA, and we remain deeply committed to ensuring that foster youth receive the stability, educational access, and supportive environments necessary for success. However, based on our direct experience serving students residing at SPA, we believe it is imperative that the County reassess whether the current model is effectively meeting the needs of the youth placed there.

SPA was originally designed as a residential program for high school students. Over time, it has expanded to include middle school students without the corresponding staffing, programmatic supports, or educational structures required to serve younger adolescents. As a result, middle school students residing at SPA are experiencing disproportionately high rates of absenteeism, academic failure, and disciplinary incidents.

We are also increasingly concerned about student safety. Reports from both students and staff indicate inconsistent supervision, limited oversight of electronic device use, and concerning communication between youth and individuals outside of the facility. Additionally, there have been reports of substance use, sexual misconduct, and a troubling increase in incidents involving threats of self-harm among middle school residents. In several instances, students have been returned to school following such incidents without prior notification to school personnel, limiting our ability to provide appropriate support and raising safety concerns for both the student and the school community.

More broadly, the continued use of a large congregate care campus, particularly for middle school students, raises significant policy concerns. Over the past two decades, both federal and state child welfare systems have increasingly shifted away from large residential placements, as research consistently shows that youth achieve better outcomes in smaller, family-based settings that allow them to remain connected to their schools and communities.

Equally concerning is the continued placement of students into a system that is demonstrably unable to meet their needs. While we recognize the complexities of placement decisions, the County is aware of our district's size, capacity, and funding limitations. Despite this, out-of-county placements into the Short-Term Residential Treatment Program (STRTP) continue without the necessary infrastructure or support to ensure student success.

To be clear, this is not about prioritizing cost over students. As a Governing Board, we have consistently and unanimously supported funding for off-site placements for high-needs foster youth. However, these placements have not yielded measurable improvements in student outcomes. At the same time, the fiscal and programmatic impacts of continuing this approach are unsustainable. San Pasqual Union is one of the smallest and lowest-funded districts in the county, and funding dedicated to supporting foster youth has declined by more than 95% in recent years. Meanwhile, off-campus placement costs have surged, at times exceeding \$100,000 per student. Absorbing these costs necessitates staffing and program reductions that ultimately impact all students we serve, including those residing at SPA.

For these reasons, if the County elects to continue SPA operations, the San Pasqual Union School District Governing Board respectfully urges the immediate discontinuation of middle school placements at SPA, as the current environment is neither safe nor developmentally appropriate for this age group. Should middle school placements continue, the County must ensure that a fully developed, appropriately staffed, and adequately funded educational program is provided on the SPA campus to guarantee equitable access to services for all students.

Our Board remains committed to working collaboratively with the County to ensure that foster youth receive the education, stability, and opportunities they deserve. We appreciate your leadership and attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

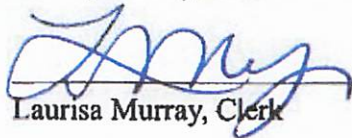
San Pasqual Union School District Governing Board



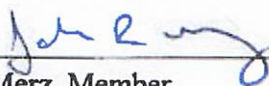
Kami Goe, President



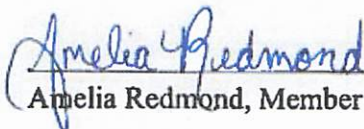
Christy Gourly, Vice President



Laurisa Murray, Clerk



John Merz, Member



Amelia Redmond, Member