

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 35

**SUBJECT: INITIATE TRANSITION OF SAN PASQUAL ACADEMY (ACADEMY) AND
CONTINUE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO IDENTIFY FEASIBLE AND
SUSTAINABLE OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE ACADEMY
(DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

San Pasqual Academy (Academy) was built on 238 acres of land and opened its doors in 2001, as one of the most innovative child welfare and education partnerships in the nation at the time. It was designed to serve as an alternative placement option for dependents of the Juvenile Court, ages 12-17 and non-minor dependents up to age 19.

Over the years, State and federal reforms have redefined how youth are served in care. These reforms reduce reliance on residential care and have steadily moved the system toward prevention, family reunification, and community-based services. This, in turn, has led to a steady reduction in residential placements statewide and in San Diego County. These evolving system reforms and modern requirements have created an opportunity to reimagine the Academy campus in ways that center youth well-being while exploring how it can serve and benefit the broader community.

In recent years, the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Child and Family Well-Being Department (CFWB) has responded to this evolution by engaging in strategic planning with current and former foster youth, key stakeholders, and the community in a collective effort to sustain the Academy's original vision and goals. This included exploring future campus uses that align with the changing statutory framework and community needs. While the Academy underwent early restructuring in 2021 to align with evolving child welfare policies and population needs, demand for this level of care continued to decline as systems increasingly prioritized prevention-focused, in-home, and family-strengthening supports.

On November 18, 2025 (5), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to conduct stakeholder engagement and develop recommendations for best serving foster youth while maximizing the use of the Academy campus and ensuring fiscal sustainability of foster youth programming. Additionally, the Board directed the CAO to return in 180 days with recommendations for consideration.

In response, CFWB, in partnership with the Children's Initiative, initiated a broad and diverse communication and engagement effort. The engagement process brought forward thoughtful, community-driven ideas to support sustainable future uses of the Academy campus that reflect current community needs.

Today's item requests the Board direct the initiation of a planned, phased wind-down of the Academy, including the development of thoughtful, trauma-informed, individualized transition plans for each youth at the academy. In addition, today's item requests the Board direct the CAO to continue a broad, collaborative, and inclusive community engagement process to identify future uses of the Academy campus that reflect community needs and maximize public benefit, report back with a status update in 12 months and return in 18 months with recommendations for consideration.

This item supports the County vision of a just, sustainable, and resilient future for all, specifically those communities and populations in San Diego County that have been historically left behind, as well as our ongoing commitment to the regional *Live Well San Diego* vision of healthy, safe, and thriving communities. This new effort reflects a commitment to align with Board priorities and the current needs of youth in foster care as well as other needs that may exist for the broader community.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to initiate a transition of the San Pasqual Academy (Academy) through a planned and phased wind-down; and develop thoughtful, trauma-informed, individualized transition plans with each youth at the Academy.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to continue a broad, collaborative, and inclusive community engagement process to identify feasible and sustainable options for the future of the Academy campus that reflect community needs and maximize benefit to all residents to inform campus reuse decision.
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to report back to the Board within 12 months with a status update on the overall transition of the Academy and viable and sustainable use scenarios for the campus to inform development of actionable options; and to return to the Board within 18 months, or sooner if appropriate, with recommendations for consideration.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

San Pasqual Academy (Academy) provides a multipurpose continuum of care to meet the diverse needs of youth. This includes comprehensive resources to provide foster youth ages 12 to 19 with a stable and caring home, quality individualized education, and the skills needed for independent living. Additionally, the Academy provides strong linkages to permanent connections, transitional housing, and post-emancipation services. Its innovative vision and pioneering model have touched many lives and inspired strong advocacy from alumni, supporters, and community partners who have seen its impact firsthand.

As State and federal policies evolve, there is a stronger focus on helping youth grow up in family settings, and fewer youth are placed at the Academy. This creates an opportunity to reimagine the Academy campus in ways that center youth well-being while exploring how it can serve and benefit the broader community. The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, Child and Family Well-Being Department, in partnership with the Children's Initiative, initiated a cross-sector engagement effort to ensure broad, inclusive, and equitable participation and input from foster youth, individuals with lived experience, key stakeholders, and community partners. Feedback gathered through these efforts will guide next steps and planning, helping to shape approaches that promote equitable access, responsiveness to community needs, and continuity of support for youth and families.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today's item supports the County of San Diego (County) sustainability goals #1 to engage communities and #2 to ensure just and equitable access to services. Through broad engagement and a participatory process, the County will commit to including those most impacted to identify service gaps and help shape a trauma-informed, culturally responsive system. This effort aligns with broader goals to expand

system capacity and provide foster youth with equitable access to high-quality placements in the least restrictive settings. A community-centered approach, grounded in expanded outreach and inclusive engagement, will remain central throughout this process.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with today's action. There may be future fiscal impacts, and those impacts will be considered upon return to the Board. There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years.

The planned wind-down of San Pasqual Academy (Academy) will generate both near-term costs and longer-term fiscal benefits. In the short term, the County will continue to incur expenses to support youth transitions, adjust contracted services, and operate a large campus at reduced capacity. The costs associated with the transition are anticipated to be fully accommodated within the existing Academy budgeted appropriations. These transitional costs occur in the context of significant State and federal policy changes including Continuum of Care Reform and the Family First Prevention Services Act, which have reduced the use of congregate care and rendered the Academy's educational-based residential model ineligible for foster care funding. As a result, the Academy operations have become primarily supported by existing one-time General Purpose Revenue each year in preparation for anticipated transition of the Academy. There is limited federal funding leveraged only for salaries and benefits.

Over time, discontinuing residential operations is expected to generate substantial local savings by ending an expensive and under-utilized program that is no longer aligned with modern funding structures. However, fiscal responsibilities will continue beyond the program's closure and the County must secure and maintain the 238-acre campus until future uses are determined and may need to fund capital improvements required to repurpose the site. These ongoing obligations are partially offset by expected savings but remain significantly lower than the costs of continuing the current residential program. These financial impacts will be assessed and included in future return backs.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ACTION:

Noting for the record that this item was heard on May 20, 2026; ON MOTION of Supervisor Desmond, seconded by Supervisor Anderson, the Board of Supervisors took the following action:

1. Directed the Chief Administrative Officer to return to the Board with a high level plan for the future of the campus. This plan should also include an initial vision for proposed uses, services, and programs on the campus, including transitional age housing for former foster youth.
2. Directed the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to continue a broad, collaborative, and inclusive engagement process to identify trauma informed, thoughtful, and sustainable options for the future of current youth at San Pasqual Academy that includes input and feedback from each youth at the Academy and their advocates, including Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer advocates.
 - a. The potential for closure of the Academy must be included in these discussions.
 - b. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to report back to the Board within 90 days with recommendations based on feedback gathered in Recommendation #1 and feedback already gathered.

3. Directed the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to report back to the Board within 12 months with a status update on the overall transition of the Academy and viable and sustainable use scenarios for the campus to inform development of actionable options; and to return to the Board within 18 months, or sooner if appropriate, with recommendations for consideration.

AYES: Aguirre, Anderson, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

ABSENT: Lawson Remer

State of California)
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter