

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2025**

**MINUTE ORDER NO. 24**

**SUBJECT: INITIATE EFFORTS TO MAXIMIZE RESOURCES AT THE SAN PASQUAL ACADEMY (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

**OVERVIEW**

San Pasqual Academy (Academy), developed on 238 acres of land, opened in 2001 as the first residential education campus in the United States designed for foster youth. Licensed by California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the Academy and property are managed by the County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Child and Family Well-Being (CFWB) Department. The campus was designed to provide an alternative placement option for Juvenile Court dependents ages 12-17 and Non-Minor Dependents up to age 19. When the Academy was established, the County provided services to help more than 8,000 youth in out-of-home care, which included over 2,000 youth ages 12-17. At that time, due to high demand for campus-based environments for youth and with CDSS supporting congregate care, the rural all-services approach was considered visionary in designing a resource in support of foster youth.

Within the last decade, federal and State legislation has shifted the statutory requirements for keeping children safely in family settings and reducing reliance on congregate care. On October 11, 2015, Assembly Bill 403, also known as the Continuum of Care Reform Act (CCR), was signed into law. CCR identifies home-based settings with resource families as the best placement option for youth, reduces the use of congregate care, and eliminates the use of licensed group homes as a placement option. A core tenet of CCR, and the foundation of CFWB's Kin-First culture, is the belief that foster youth experience better outcomes when placed with relatives or trusted adults, reducing the need for congregate care and ensuring they remain connected to family, culture and community. Additionally, the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) enacted in 2018, reformed CFWB policy to prioritize keeping children safely with their families and reducing unnecessary placement into foster care.

Among CFWB efforts to place children in homelike settings, the department partnered with families and communities to strengthen preventive services and expanded efforts in creating a Kin-First culture. Subsequently, the number of children in care and use of congregate care settings has been reduced significantly. As recent legislative shifts emphasize prevention and family-based care, it is time to reengage advocates, youth, educators and other experts in health and social services to maximize the utilization and impact of the resources at the Academy. The Academy was originally created during a time when youth were entering foster care at higher rates than home-based placements could accommodate, resulting in the prevalent and necessary use of congregate care settings. It was also during a time when educational supports and resources for youth transitioning out of foster care were very limited. The continued changing landscape today provides an opportunity to revisit the current model and usage of the Academy Campus.

Today's actions will authorize an in-depth and broad engagement with experts, advocates and community leaders on best options for serving the needs of foster youth housed at the Academy.

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 effort reflects a commitment to aligning with the Board of Supervisors' priorities and the current needs of youth in 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 conduct stakeholder engagement including current and former foster youth, Child and Family Well-Being staff, Juvenile Court partners, education partners, Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board, community organizations that support foster youth, and other key stakeholders that support foster youth and San Pasqual Academy (Academy), to develop recommendations for best serving foster youth, maximizing the use of the Academy campus, and ensuring fiscal sustainability of foster youth programming.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to return to the Board in 180 days with recommendations for consideration to ensure the Academy campus can benefit individuals and families in the region to the greatest extent possible while also ensuring sustainable programs.

## **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The County of San Diego (County) Health and Human Services Agency, Child Family Well-Being (CFWB) partners with families and the community to prevent, reduce, and respond to child abuse and maltreatment and enhance family strengthening efforts. Youth who enter foster care because they cannot safely remain with their biological families often have histories of severe, complex trauma and face significant mental and behavioral health challenges that require intensive, specialized care and interventions. On average, CFWB has 1,400 children ages 0-17 in out-of-home care receiving services, supports, and interventions designed to align with each child's level of need.

Historically, San Pasqual Academy (Academy) has served as a unique placement option within the continuum of care, specifically designed for older foster youth. In Fiscal Year 2024-25, the Academy served 49 youth. Over the past decade, the Academy has consistently achieved a graduation rate of 97%, with 100% of senior students graduating in June 2025. However, within the last decade, federal and State legislation has shifted the statutory requirements for keeping children safely with families and reducing reliance on congregate care.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Today's actions support the County of San Diego (County) sustainability Goal #1, to engage communities in meaningful ways and sustainability Goal #2, to provide just and equitable access to County 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. By investing in the resilience of these youth, the County is not only strengthening them as individuals but also empowering them to become future leaders within their families and communities. A community-centered approach, grounded in expanded outreach and inclusive engagement, will remain central throughout this process.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no new fiscal impact associated with this 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.

## **BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

### **ACTION:**

ON MOTION of Supervisor Desmond, seconded by Supervisor Aguirre, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended.

AYES: Aguirre, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

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