

From: Ron Smith <ronsred12@cox.net>
Date: February 25, 2021 at 9:21:57 AM PST
To: terra.lawsonremer@sdcountry.ca.gov
Subject: San Pasqual Academy

Good morning,

My name is Ron Smith and I am a resident of Escondido.

I write this message because I am extremely concerned about the proposed closing of the San Pasqual Academy. I believe that the closing would be a huge mistake.

As a member of the Rotary Club of Escondido, I have been an occasional volunteer at the academy for over 10 years. My involvement has been both as a donor and as a hands on, in person volunteer. My professional background includes 33 years of service in the Escondido Union School District (I am now retired). Twenty two of those years involved service as an elementary school principal. I mention this so that my next comments might have more weight, as they come from a pretty well informed background.

The SPA has always shown to be an extremely well run organization. I happen to have been a professional colleague of the founding principal of the academy, Bobbi Plough. We had many conversations about the need and efficacy of what they set out to do. Their vision did not waiver, and the program has been outstanding ever since. There is no doubt that students who attend there are thriving and that the staff and volunteers make a huge difference in the student's lives.

Closing the academy makes no sense. The students assigned there literally had no other suitable place to go. The foster system, as versatile and flexible as it has to be, did not work for them. And, with the amazing success rate of San Pasqual, it is hard to imagine why the County would entertain having them go any where else.

These are not "Throw Away" kids. They are significantly challenged young people who deserve our love and support through the academy. They are worth the amount required to run the school and shouldn't ever be looked at otherwise.

If anything, I believe that the County should make it a priority to maximize the enrollment there and give more students the advantages and support that San Pasqual Academy can offer.

Further, I would hope that the County would take steps necessary to remove the "Pilot Program" designation and make this a long term commitment to properly serve some of most vulnerable, fragile, and yet wonderfully promising students of San Diego County.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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