February 28, 2021

Dear San Pasqual Academy Students, Alumni, and Supporters:

While the County of San Diego had no role in the loss of state license to operate San Pasqual Academy (SPA), I know how devastating this news has been on SPA students, alumni and supporters. I fully support requesting a 9 month extension to the ordered October 2021 closure. This would allow time for two more graduating classes and more than a full year to plan for a smooth transition. We can all work together to find solutions that meet the requirements of state and federal law and ensure we are protecting and nurturing the youth who are in our foster care system.

It is clear from the California Department of Social Services recent letter that SPA cannot continue in its current format. While shocking, this has been coming since federal and state law started changing many years ago. There are multiple public convenings planned to receive feedback and recommendations on next steps, which will be reviewed for compliance with the state and federal laws and then presented to the full County Board of Supervisors to chart the best path forward. I encourage you to provide constructive input at these public meetings. Please know that we will ensure that every youth has an individualized plan that ensures they are fully supported. Also know that my great frustration with those who are inflaming this situation with false statements and wild accusations will not deter us from working tirelessly to fight for our foster kids.

I want to acknowledge all of the communication I have received about your concerns and recommendations as it relates to you individually and the future of SPA. Please know that your voice and opinions are being heard. I commit to you that I will use my role as the Chair of the Board of Supervisors to secure the proper resources and time needed to carefully review all options for transitioning the SPA model and that you and the trusted adults in your life will be engaged in creating an individualized plan once we know next steps. You will hear similar messages in the coming months from your social worker, Court Appointed Special Advocate, lawyer and dependency judges involved in your case.
I am a proud parent of two adopted children and have watched my Mom dedicate her life to helping women and children impacted by instability and abuse. It is a personal issue for her and I. I understand the system intimately and have made it a priority as a policy maker to improve the child welfare system and ensure the resources are in place to strengthen families that are struggling and help repair, and guide families to be safe and nurturing. In the rare cases when we have to protect children by removing them from their parents, we know it must be a priority to keep youth in their neighborhoods, schools, with trusted loved one and being provided the support needed. There are many efforts underway and more to bring this vision to fruition.

I am guided by best practice research, experts that are passionate about children and my heart. My one and only aim in this process is to support you in ensuring you are in the most nurturing setting that provides you with all the support and resources you need to live a fulfilled life.

Please stay in touch with me and my office in the coming months. We will get through this together.

Sincerely,

NATHAN FLETCHER
Chair
Fourth District, Supervisor