

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY**

Subject

San Pasqual Academy

**Policy
Number**

E-15

Page

1 of 2

Purpose

To establish a policy for the on-going services provided at San Pasqual Academy, a unique residential education program designed as an alternative, voluntary placement option for adolescents in the foster care system ages 12-18.

Background

San Pasqual Academy opened in October 2001 as a placement for adolescents in the foster care system. Too often in the past, foster youth have experienced multiple moves in placement which disrupts their academic progress, impacts their ability to develop long-term relationships and detracts from their sense of community. The intent of the Academy is to provide a safe, stable home where youth can focus on acquiring and developing the skills needed to be self-sufficient individuals when exiting foster care.

Through a long-term placement and comprehensive supportive services, the Academy was designed to meet the following needs of teenagers in the foster care system:

1. Increased foster care placement stability
2. High school completion
3. Preparation for independent living
4. Post-secondary education assistance
5. Work readiness training
6. A permanency, or life-long, connection with a committed adult or adults
7. Normalized adolescent activities
8. Aftercare services for youth exiting the foster care system

Youth appropriate for the Academy are dependents of the Juvenile Court between the ages of 12 to 18 years old and may be referred by assigned social workers or collaterals such as Court personnel. For many teenage foster youth, the Academy affords opportunities to reside on campus with their siblings.

The Academy has the capacity to serve up to 184 youth. At the Academy, up to eight youth live in family-homes. Houseparents, as well as residential staff, provide guidance and serve as role models. Additional support is offered by surrogate grandparent volunteers who reside on campus.

Academy youth are afforded an individualized education to ensure that they are able to complete high school upon exiting the foster care system. The on-site high school is administered by San Diego County Office of Education. Youth attend subject specific classes based on their grade level, and receive support services such as resource classes led by a special education instructor and tutoring from campus staff and volunteers. In addition to academics, extra-curricular activities are an important part of the Academy youth's experience.

Independent living skills are woven throughout the Academy program by each of the campus partners, who complement one another with the services they offer. The Academy helps prepare the youth for the world of

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**Policy
Number**

E-15

Page

2 of 2

work, as well as their post-secondary education career, and provides work readiness training, career exploration, internships and financial literacy via staff and community partnerships. Through support from all campus partners, approximately 170 former Academy youth have attended college with a dozen completing a four year degree or Master's degree.

Campus staff continually assess what services can best meet the needs of the youth both while placed at the Academy and after they leave the foster care system. As the Academy becomes "home" for many youth while in foster care system, it continues to be a place to turn to for on-going support and guidance once they leave.

Since its inception, over 600 youth have been served by the Academy. While consideration for youth appropriate for Academy placement has evolved slightly over the years to accommodate the changing needs of our foster care population, the primary vision to provide placement stability, a quality education, preparation for independent living skills, lifelong connections and normalized adolescent activities and opportunities has not wavered. San Pasqual Academy remains a critical placement option for adolescent foster youth to experience stability and receive support for future success.

Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors to support efforts to sustain and bolster the successful service provisions offered by San Pasqual Academy, and preserve San Pasqual Academy as an alternative, long-term, voluntary placement option for adolescent foster youth.

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by 12-31-2019.

References

Board Action 03/13/12 (5)
06/26/12 (12)

CAO Reference

Health and Human Services Agency