

City and County of
San Francisco



President, Board of
Supervisors

AARON PESKIN
市參事佩斯金

For Immediate Release
October 10, 2024

Contact: Calvin Yan
415.448.6880

Board President Peskin, District 3 Community Members call on SFUSD to Immediately Halt School Closures

San Francisco - Today, at the entrance to Spring Valley Science Elementary School, [Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin, Supervisor Connie Chan, and Democratic Party leader Christine Pelosi](#) were joined by parents, educators, former principals and community supporters to protest SFUSD's ill-considered announcement of school closures and call for SFUSD to halt its poorly-executed process. The proposed closures stand to disproportionately impact communities of color, especially long-established Chinese and immigrant communities. Spring Valley is one of three District 3 elementary schools targeted for closure by SFUSD, along with Yick Wo and Jean Parker Elementary Schools, of eleven total schools targeted for closure across the city.

The SFUSD's decision rips apart tight-knit communities that have relied on community schools to reinforce the historic and cultural fabric of their neighborhoods. These school sites have long served as multi-purpose spaces shared by afterschool programs, food pantries, churches, and other community-serving organizations.

"SFUSD must stop this process right now until we have the appropriate level of community engagement and transparency," said **Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin**. "We must not allow this to turn into a death spiral when enrollment rates have frankly gone down in part because of the loss of public trust in our SFUSD administration. Just a year ago, the State told us we must close down Laguna Honda Hospital due to poor management, as well – but we fought to get back to caring for our seniors by taking a hard look at accountable management reform. We must focus the same level of tenacity, will power, leadership and City resources on our public schools. I do believe we can find a path forward without ripping school communities apart."

"I am here as a fifteen-year public school mom and a believer that good public schools are the backbone of a healthy democracy," said **Christine Pelosi**. "I know firsthand that even the loss of one beloved teacher or one coach can be devastating to the entire community. That is why we fight so hard for raises for our teachers and support staff. Remember that SFUSD lost \$40 million over its failed payroll system. Now they want to shut down schools to save \$22 million – but there's additional cost to community. SFUSD is ignoring the social cost of shutting down schools."

Parents and children made homemade signs in English, Chinese and Spanish which they hung outside the historic Spring Valley schoolyard.

“I get emotional hearing the kids behind me chanting ‘don’t close our school’. Our kids and our parents love our school, which is our community – to take Yick Wo and split it into two or three communities does not help our children,” **said Christy Samson, Co-President, Yick Wo Elementary School PTA.** “The vast majority of our families, who are working people, walk to our school. We are an integral part of this city and this school district. We should not be pitted against each other. We can and must work to keep communities together, instead of breaking communities apart.”

“Spring Valley Elementary was founded by a Black man named William Leidesdorff, and is the oldest public school in California. San Francisco is one of the richest cities on the planet, with more billionaires per capita than anywhere else, and yet our public school system is in shambles. It does not have to be that way,” **said Kevin Robinson, Yick Wo Elementary parent and former SFUSD educator.** “The City and SFUSD must keep communities, families, students and their education front and center.”

“What this School District needs to work on is improving enrollment by strengthening and establishing programs that serve the diverse student population with a range of learning abilities, including those who need supplemental instructions and kids who may be gifted,” **said Lonnie Chin, former Principal of Spring Valley Elementary.** “The School District should stop wasting time and resources on closing schools, and shift their attention on regaining trust in public education and bolstering enrollment.”

“Small community schools are more than just a place where kids learn about math, writing and science. They are community placemaking spaces that allow kids, families and educators to grow together as a community,” **said Queena Chen, Spring Valley Elementary School Alumni and Co-Chair of Chinatown Transportation Research Improvement Project (TRIP).** “Spring Valley was the legal battle ground in 1884 where Mamie Tape challenged in court – and won – the rights for Chinese-Americans to equally access public education. When you close down schools without a plan, you break the community apart and erase a critical part of our history, the school’s namesake, and community spaces that we fought hard to build.”

President Peskin admonished the City Administration for not intervening soon enough to support a clearly flailing SFUSD Central Office, in the wake of multiple departures and ongoing operations issues with payroll and spending. He pledged to continue to work with parents and teachers citywide to keep schools open, while implementing reforms at SFUSD, including those based on receipt of city funds.

###