

# START HERE: Why We're Standing for Norte



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## Why Now

Update 9/5/25

- This is still the *proposal stage*. No final decision until December. That means there is time for families and community members to act.
- By raising our voices, we can:
  - Encourage the Governing Board to take Kyrene del Norte off the closure list.
  - Secure more intentional planning that doesn't rush a decision.
  - Show the district that families and community members are deeply invested in dual language education in Tempe.

### How to Act

- **Sign the Petition:**  
<https://www.change.org/p/stop-the-closure-of-kyrene-del-norte-dual-language-school>
- **Send a Letter:** Email the Governing Board: [governingboard@kyrene.org](mailto:governingboard@kyrene.org)
- **Show Up:** Next Governing Board Planning Meeting: *September 16, 2025*
  - Attend and make a public comment, or submit electronically here:  
<https://www.k12insight.com/Form/Dialogue/DialogueFormDefault?k=PR9K9YY6B1Z7LT@WY6B1Z7LT@DY2Z5F1LT>

## Dual Language Path FAQ

In the district's FAQ, the Board clarified what a dual language path is. This makes advocacy even more important, because we can highlight the difference between a path and *true immersion*, and push for logistics that protect immersion if any program is combined.

Link:

<https://www.kyrene.org/about-kyrene/governing-board/long-range-planning-committee#faqs>

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## Show Up & Be Heard

The Governing Board holds both general meetings and planning/committee meetings where decisions are shaped.

As a parent or community member, you are welcome to:

- Attend any meeting and sign up for public comment.
- Share your story in the setting that feels right to you.
- Remember: there is no single “right” way to advocate, anywhere you raise your voice — whether by letter, email, or comment — it matters.
  - Comment here:  
<https://www.k12insight.com/Form/Dialogue/DialogueFormDefault?k=PR9K9YY6B1Z7LT@WY6B1Z7LT@DY2Z5F1LT>
  - General information:  
<https://www.kyrene.org/about-kyrene/governing-board/long-range-planning-committee>
  - Next planning meeting: September 16

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8/29/25

Dear Parents, Families, and Neighbors,

There are moments in a community's life where we must decide: will we protect what is working, what is just, and what is aligned with our values, or will we allow it to be redefined in ways that weaken its impact?

Kyrene del Norte Dual Language Academy is one of those moments.

This school is more than classrooms and walls. It is the embodiment of Kyrene's mission: excellence, equity, inclusivity, community, and preparing children for a global society. Every morning when our kids walk through Norte's doors, they step into a vision of education that honors both heritage and future, true dual language immersion where students learn content in both Spanish and English every day.

Norte is thriving. With nearly 500 students, it reflects the heart of the communities it serves. Moreover, its central location and easy access to the 60 & 101, makes it accessible for surrounding families to open-enroll and future fiscal opportunities for Kyrene. Research shows immersion programs boost achievement, strengthen executive function, and prepare students for a workforce that increasingly demands bilingual skills.

The current proposal would close Kyrene del Norte and move students two miles away to Waggoner, where a dual language *pathway* has been suggested. Waggoner offers tremendous resources and a strong, welcoming community, and we recognize the value it brings to Kyrene families. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that a pathway is not the same as immersion. Immersion requires a carefully structured 50/50 model, equal exposure and equal opportunity, while a pathway, however well-intentioned, risks being partial or secondary. Immersion weaves language into every aspect of learning; a pathway may provide access without the same depth.

Norte's model, environment, and identity have been built intentionally around immersion. To merge programs, even into a school as strong as Waggoner, risks eroding what makes immersion powerful: identity, consistency, and academic rigor in two languages. It also risks out-of-boundary families leaving the district altogether, families who sought Kyrene specifically for its promise of true immersion.

We understand the district's concerns about facilities and resources. But resources can be addressed with time, planning, and creativity. What cannot be so easily restored is trust, community identity, and the integrity of a program that has been built over years. Facilities can be repaired; immersion programs, once diluted, are difficult to rebuild.

That is why we are asking the Board to either protect Kyrene del Norte as a dual language anchor in Tempe, or at the very least extend the decision by two years. This extension would give families and staff stability, allow results from the November 2025 override election to be incorporated, and provide space for a transparent comparison of costs between repairing Norte and reconfiguring Waggoner.

This toolkit will equip you with what you need: [sample letters](#), [talking points](#), facts, and resources. Whether you send one email, make one public comment, or share one story, ***your voice matters***. Together, we can remind the Governing Board that Kyrene del Norte is not just a school. It is a mission fulfilled, a community reflected, and a promise we must keep.

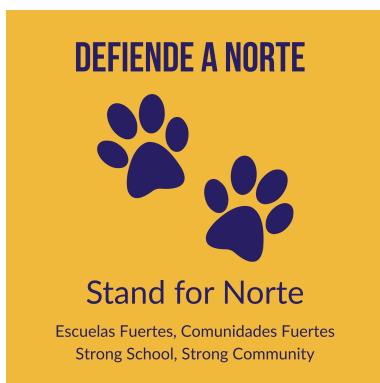
With conviction and hope,

Kourtney Walker,  
Mother to Three Norte Students  
[kourtneyjowalker@gmail.com](mailto:kourtneyjowalker@gmail.com)

Where to go to next:

<a href="#">Sample Letters Intro</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Fill in the blank template</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Formal &amp; Data Driven Template</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Short and heartfelt Template</a></li></ul>	<a href="#">Attend Board Meetings &amp; Talking Points Intro</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Talking Points for board meeting</a></li></ul>	<a href="#">About Nov 2025 Ballot &amp; Why it Matters</a>	<a href="#">Norte at a Glance</a>
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# Sample letters



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## Sample Letters & How to Use

**Anyone can contribute.** You can be a parent, family member, community member...Also, you don't have to be a writer or public speaker, just share your voice & support. Here's how:

1. **Pick a template** below that fits your time or comfort level.
2. **Copy it into an email.**
3. **Personalize one or two lines** with your child's grade or your connection to Kyrene del Norte.
4. **Send it to the Governing Board** at the dedicated email [governingboard@kyrene.org](mailto:governingboard@kyrene.org).

**Every message matters.** Short, long, polished, or plain. *Your voice adds to the chorus.*

## Governing Board Contact

To reach every member of the board *and* the superintendent in one go, use:

[governingboard@kyrene.org](mailto:governingboard@kyrene.org)

Emails sent here go to the full board and the superintendent.

## Meet Your Board Members

Below are the members of the Kyrene Governing Board each elected to represent all of us. You're always welcome to mention them by name if you prefer to personalize further:

- **Kevin Walsh** – Board President
- **Triné Nelson** – Vice President
- **Amy Satre** – Member
- **Bunny (Ruth) Davis** – Member
- **Cedric Collins** – Member

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## Option: Fill-in-the-Blank Template

*Subject: [Parent/Community Member] Advocating for Kyrene del Norte*

Dear Governing Board,

My name is [NAME], and I am the [parent/grandparent/community supporter] of a [GRADE] student at Kyrene del Norte.

Our family chose Kyrene del Norte because \_\_\_\_\_. This school has made a difference for my child by \_\_\_\_\_.

I am deeply concerned about the proposal to close Norte. While I respect the process, immersion is not the same as a pathway. Kyrene del Norte offers a unique model that reflects the diversity of 85283 and prepares our kids to succeed in both languages and in life.

Please consider keeping Kyrene del Norte open, or at the very least granting a two-year extension to allow thoughtful planning and financial clarity after the November 2025 override.

Thank you for your time and leadership.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

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Option: Formal & Data Rich Letter

*Subject: Protect Kyrene del Norte Dual Language Academy*

Dear Members of the Governing Board,

Kyrene del Norte embodies the district's mission: excellence, equity, inclusivity, and preparing students for a global society. With 512 students and a location in the heart of 85283, Norte reflects both the spirit of the community and the future of Kyrene.

Research shows dual language immersion increases academic achievement, strengthens executive function, and prepares students for Arizona's bilingual workforce. Families across Tempe and beyond have chosen Norte for its true immersion model.

We recognize the district's challenges, but with the November 2025 override election determining \$14.6M in funding, it is fiscally responsible to pause. Facilities can be repaired; programs and communities, once dismantled, are not easily rebuilt.

For these reasons, I ask that you preserve Kyrene del Norte as Tempe's dual language anchor. Doing so affirms Kyrene's mission, supports equity, and provides stability to families deeply invested in this program.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

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Option: Short & Heartfelt Letter

*Subject: Please Keep Kyrene del Norte Open*

Dear Board Members,

As a [parent/community member], I am asking you to protect Kyrene del Norte Dual Language Academy.

This school reflects Kyrene's mission of equity, community, and preparing students for a global society. Dual language immersion is more than access to Spanish, it is daily exposure, equal opportunity, and an education that helps our children thrive academically and culturally.

Please consider preserving Norte or delaying the decision until after the November override so families and staff have stability.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

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# Attend Meeting & Talking Points



## Join Facebook Group Sign Petition Raise your hand to volunteer

Speaking at a school board meeting can feel scary, but it doesn't have to be. You don't need fancy words, just your voice and your story. (scroll to next page for upcoming meetings & information)

Here's what you need to know:

- You'll get about 2 minutes to talk (this could be less if there is a large turnout).
- You can read straight from the paper if you want.
- Even if many people repeat the same message, that shows the board how important it is.

Below you'll find sample talking points. Pick the one that feels right to you, or mix and match. You can also use the short "soundbite" versions if you only want to say a sentence or two.

The most powerful thing is showing up. Every voice makes a difference.

For more information about previous meetings and the link to view on youtube go here:

<https://www.kyrene.org/about-kyrene/governing-board/long-range-planning-committee>

Link to calendar:

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1754686242/kyreneorg/qm8hzlkybdsotb6ebqcz/BoardMeetingCalendar2025-26SY.pdf>



## 2025/2026 Regular Board Meeting Calendar

### MEETING LOCATION

Boardroom at the Ben Furlong Education Center, 8700 South Kyrene Road, Tempe.

### MEETING TIME

Regular Board meetings will begin at 6:00 PM unless noted otherwise on the agenda.

#### July 2025

July 8  
July 22 (virtual)

#### August 2025

August 5  
August 19

#### September 2025

September 2  
September 16

#### October 2025

October 14  
October 28

#### November 2025

November 18

#### December 2025

December 2  
December 16

#### January 2026

January 13  
January 20 Board Retreat Only  
January 27

#### February 2026

February 10  
February 24

#### March 2026

March 24

#### April 2026

April 14  
April 28

#### May 2026

May 12  
May 26

#### June 2026

June 9  
June 23

### Meeting Times

Regular Board Meetings: Begin at 6:00 PM

Study Sessions: Begin at 5:00 PM

Executive Session & Retreats: Times to be determined

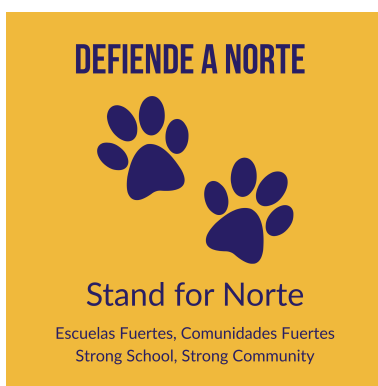
04/02/2025

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# Talking points



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### Enrollment & Access

- Norte serves 512 students, larger than many Kyrene schools.
- After proposed closures, East Tempe would have only 103 open seats, leaving almost no room for growth.
- Even with lower birthrates overall, *demand for dual language is rising*. Centralized access keeps families in Kyrene rather than pushing them out.

### Mission Alignment

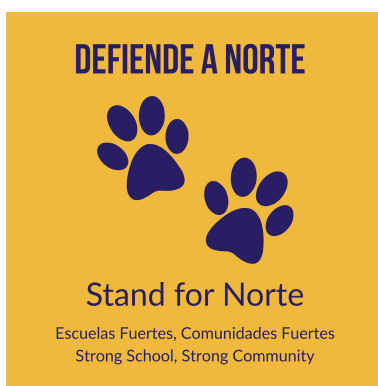
- “Kyrene recites its pillars at every meeting: excellence, equity, inclusivity, community, and preparing students for a global society. Kyrene del Norte already lives these values every single day.”
- Closing Norte and shifting to a pathway risks weakening the clearest expression of Kyrene’s mission.

### Equity & Community

- 57% of Norte students are Hispanic, the school reflects Tempe’s diversity and provides equity in action.
- Removing Tempe’s only dual-language immersion site makes access less equitable, especially for families who depend on a neighborhood program.

### Immersion vs. Pathway

- Waggoner is a strong, welcoming school, but immersion ≠ pathway.
- Immersion = equal Spanish and English every day, whole school identity, consistent rigor.
- A pathway risks being partial or secondary, and merging programs risks losing identity, consistency, and rigor.



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### Stability & Fiscal Responsibility

- With a \$14.6M override on the ballot this November, it is fiscally prudent to align decisions with clear funding outcomes.
- Facilities can be repaired. Programs and communities, once dismantled, are nearly impossible to rebuild.

### Student Outcomes & Future Workforce

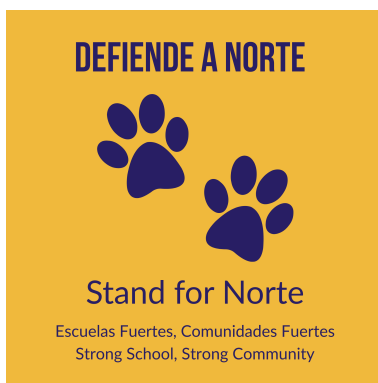
- Research shows dual-language immersion students often outperform peers in reading and math and develop stronger executive function.
- Arizona employers increasingly demand bilingual talent. Norte graduates will be ready for that future.

### Quick Comment Lines (1–2 sentences)

- “Norte reflects Kyrene’s mission of equity and preparing students for a global society. Please protect true dual-language immersion in Tempe.”
- “Facilities can be repaired, but immersion programs cannot be rebuilt the same way. Protecting Norte protects Kyrene’s values and future.”



# Nov 2025 Ballot & Why it matters



## Join Facebook Group Sign Petition Raise your hand to volunteer

What is on the ballot in November 2025 & why it matters:

The M&O Override on November 4, 2025, will determine whether Kyrene retains \$14 million+ in annual funding, enough to sustain 200 teacher positions and critical supports like small class sizes and special area instruction. Without it, massive cuts are slated for 2027–28. That’s why asking for a two-year extension on the Norte decision, not just for planning, but to align with actual budget realities, is both prudent and caring.

This isn’t about delay. It’s about budgeting with honesty. Facilities can wait; we need to know what’s financially possible before we uproot communities or programs that reflect our mission.

## What the M&O Override Is & Why It Matters

- What is it?

The Maintenance & Operations (M&O) Override allows Kyrene to raise 15% extra funding beyond the state cap to cover essential operational costs—like teacher salaries, small class sizes, student support services, and special area instruction (art, music, etc.)

- Why now?

Kyrene voters approved the current override in 2021. It’s a seven-year measure, if not renewed early, it begins a steep phase-out: one-third reduction in year six, another in year seven, and full expiration in year eight

- Renewal timing is strategic.

The board has opted to place a renewal measure on the November 4, 2025 ballot, during year four, to prevent any funding gaps

- Funding impact.

If renewed, Kyrene would retain about \$14.6 million in annual operational funding, equivalent to 200 teaching positions or 20% of all district teachers

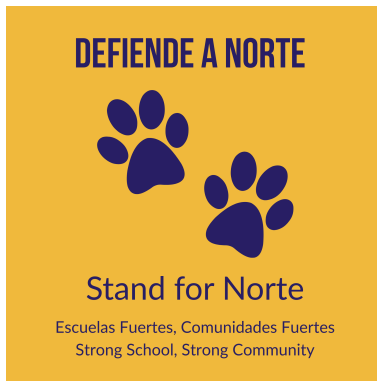
## Why This Matters for Advocacy Now

- Budget clarity: Without renewal, Kyrene faces sharp cuts in 2027–28 and beyond, timing this decision now is critical for planning. Waiting two years for closure decisions (for Norte) aligns with knowing whether that funding will continue.
- Direct ask: When speaking or writing to the board, asking them to delay major moves (like closing Norte) until after the override results are in is powerful. It grounds shifts in financial certainty.
- Public participation: The election is official and being publicly promoted, community voices can influence not only the override outcome but also fiscal decisions tied to it.

Where to go to next:

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# Norte at a Glance



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### Quick Stats

- **Students:** ~482 (K–5)
- **Student–Teacher Ratio:** ~19:1
- **Demographics:** 57% Hispanic, 30% White, remainder multiracial/other
- **Location:** Tempe, 85283, minutes to the 101 & 60
- **Rankings:** Top third of AZ elementary schools; 8th of 19 Kyrene elementaries

### Why Dual Language Immersion Matters

- Students learn **half the day in Spanish, half in English** leads equal exposure, equal opportunity.
- Research shows immersion students often **outperform peers in reading and math**.
- Builds **executive function skills** (attention, memory, problem-solving).
- Prepares children for jobs and Arizona employers are asking for more **bilingual workers every year**.

### Why Norte's Location Matters

- **Central to Tempe:** Easy access for families across 85283 and surrounding zip codes.

- **Equity in Action:** Local access for a large Hispanic population (1 in 3 residents).
- **Enrollment Magnet:** Families from outside boundaries choose Kyrene for immersion. Losing central access risks losing them altogether.

## Fiscal Context

- **November 2025 Override Election:** If renewed, Kyrene keeps \$14.6M in annual funding (equivalent to 200 teaching positions).
- Aligning decisions about school closures with this vote = fiscally responsible and fair.

## Immersion vs. Pathway

Dual Language Immersion (Norte)	Dual Language Pathway (Proposed at Waggoner)
50/50 model: equal Spanish + English daily	Language may be part-time or optional
Whole school built around immersion mission	Added onto a school with a different mission
Creates consistency and identity	Risks being partial or secondary
Strong magnet for out-of-boundary families	May not attract same enrollment draw

*Both schools have strong communities. The difference is in the depth of the model.*

## Key Message

Facilities can be repaired. Communities and immersion programs, once dismantled, are nearly impossible to rebuild. Protecting Kyrene del Norte protects equity, access, and Kyrene's own mission.

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