



SAMPLE LETTERS & PUBLIC COMMENT TALKING POINTS

Addressed to Individual Board Members Based on Their Areas of Focus

1-minute or less with different options focused on each board member's expertise/focus

For President Kevin Walsh (legal/policy background, emphasizes fairness & transparency)

"President Walsh, Kyrene families respect the difficult position you and the Board are in. Our concern is that the closure proposals rely almost entirely on one demographer's model, without independent review or consideration of open enrollment trends. Families no longer pick schools by boundary maps alone. Mirada, for example, is chosen by 60% of its families from outside its zone, including 20% from outside Kyrene. That choice keeps enrollment and state funding in Kyrene. Without factoring in community impact and retention, we risk closing schools that actually stabilize the district. We're simply asking the Board to ensure the process is transparent, balanced, and grounded in the reality of how families choose schools today."

For VP Triné Nelson (equity & community engagement focus)

"Vice President Nelson, you have been a consistent voice for equity. That's why we want to highlight a troubling outcome of the closure plan: schools east of I-10 will be pushed far above the district's own recommended 75–85% capacity range, while west-side schools remain aligned. That's inequitable. Mirada, which serves Chandler, Tempe, and Ahwatukee families, would close—even though it is an A+ school, a Lighthouse leader in student empowerment, and a magnet for families who would otherwise leave Kyrene. Closing Mirada hurts not only one neighborhood, but multiple communities that depend on it. Equity means ensuring all parts of the district share resources fairly and that high-impact schools are preserved."

For Member Amy Satre (education & student experience lens)

"Member Satre, as someone who champions the student experience, I urge you to look closely at what Mirada offers that can't easily be replicated. It is the only Leader in Me Lighthouse school in Chandler, with documented benefits like higher attendance and fewer behavioral incidents. It has a self-contained gifted program, a diverse student body, and teachers with average tenure of more than 10 years. Families bypass closer schools to enroll here—40% from other Kyrene boundaries, 20% from outside the district. If Mirada closes, those students may not stay in Kyrene at all. That undermines student experience across the district. Let's make sure quality and uniqueness are part of the decision-making, not just population projections."

For Member Bunny Davis (finance & stewardship focus)

"Member Davis, as someone who values fiscal responsibility, I want to highlight a key financial risk. Mirada brings in roughly \$650,000 a year in additional state funding from out-of-district families—money Kyrene wouldn't otherwise have. If Mirada closes, many of those families will leave the district, and that revenue goes with them. National studies show single-school closures often produce modest or even negative net savings once transition costs and lost enrollment are factored in. Closing Mirada could cost more than it saves. Fiscal stewardship requires looking not just at short-term building utilization, but at the net revenue impact and the long-term sustainability of Kyrene's enrollment base."

For Member Cedric Collins (community leadership & equity focus)

"Member Collins, you've spoken about Kyrene's role as a community leader. Mirada embodies that role—it connects families across Chandler, Tempe, and Ahwatukee. It's the district's largest contributor to the Kyrene Family Resource Center, supports local businesses through fundraising events, and partners with Intel and Scheels to strengthen community ties. It is also one of the few Kyrene schools where demand consistently outpaces its own boundaries. If Mirada closes, the ripple effects hit multiple neighborhoods and undermine Kyrene's role as a hub of stability. We ask that the Board consider not only buildings and maps, but also the schools that anchor Kyrene's relationship with the wider community."

Student Testimony (60 seconds)

"Good evening, members of the Board, my name is [Student Name], and I'm a student at Kyrene de la Mirada.

At Mirada, we're not just students; we're leaders. We're part of the **Leader in Me Lighthouse program** - Mirada is the only school and Chandler that is Lighthouse certified. This means every student learns how to set goals, take responsibility, and work together. These are skills I know I'll use for the rest of my life.

Mirada is also unique because students come from all over—Tempe, Chandler, Ahwatukee, even outside Kyrene. That diversity makes our school stronger and teaches us how to learn from people with different backgrounds.

In the current proposal, Mirada's tight-knit community would be split at least in thirds. So if Mirada closes, many of my friends won't just go to another Kyrene school. They'll likely leave the district. That means we lose classmates, teachers lose students, and Kyrene loses part of what makes it special.

Please keep Mirada open. It's not just our school—it's our community."

Sample Letter Template

Dear Members of the Kyrene Governing Board,

I am writing as a proud member of the Kyrene community to urge you to reconsider the proposal to close Kyrene de la Mirada. While I understand the district must make difficult decisions in light of declining enrollment, closing Mirada would be a mistake with lasting consequences for students, families, and the district as a whole.

Kyrene de la Mirada is one of the district's highest-performing schools. It has been recognized as an *A+ School of Excellence*, ranked among the top elementary schools in Arizona by *U.S. News*, and is the only *Leader in Me Lighthouse School* in Chandler. Its staff has an average tenure of more than 10 years, and more than 60% of families actively choose Mirada from outside its boundaries—bringing in over **\$650,000 in annual funding** to Kyrene.

Closing Mirada would displace thriving programs, overburden neighboring schools that are already near or above capacity, and weaken Kyrene's ability to compete with surrounding districts. Mirada is also one of the district's newer buildings, with modern facilities and fewer maintenance issues than many schools slated to remain open.

I believe the board should adopt a solution that preserves excellence, equity, and choice for Kyrene families. Mirada is not just a school; it is a community anchor that consistently delivers outstanding outcomes for students and strong partnerships with local businesses and organizations.

Please protect this vital resource and vote to keep Kyrene de la Mirada open.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[Your Connection to Mirada – parent, alumni, community member, etc.]

Families can direct their letters or emails to the Governing Board—it reaches all board members **and the superintendent**:

Email address: governingboard@kyrene.org

You can also submit them here:

<https://www.k12insight.com/Form/Dialogue/DialogueFormDefault?k=PR9K9YY6B1Z7LT@WY6B1Z7LT@DY2Z5F1LT>

Alternatively, handwritten or printed letters can be mailed or delivered to:

Kyrene Governing Board

Ben Furlong Education Center

8700 S. Kyrene Road

Tempe, AZ 85284

District Office Phone (optional): (480) 541-1000