

**Lone Cone Legacy Trust Bond Statement**  
**(As Published in the Norwood Post)**

Education is not a cost but an investment in the future of our community. In 2024 the bonding capacity for the Norwood school district is \$10 million dollars. Had the vote passed last year, the state of Colorado would have granted \$2 million dollars towards that bond. The latest bond for the Norwood School District was paid off early, so is currently not part of your tax profile. If the school district does not qualify for the BEST grant, taxes will be deferred until the BEST grant passes. The bonding capacity for the district will continue to increase year by year so now is the time to secure the bond amount. The location and scope of the school project is still to be determined with community input. The current high school was build in 1958 and has several significant hazards associated with its continued use. The Lone Cone Legacy Trust believes strong schools are key to the economic vitality of Norwood and Wrights Mesa.



October 9, 2024

Norwood School Board  
PO Box 448  
Norwood, CO 81423

Dear Norwood School Board and Superintendent Bissell:

From the Apple Core Project's viewpoint, many new families and teachers, including those who recently moved to Norwood come to our festival and other events to buy heirloom apple trees for their backyards. They seem highly vested in the community they reside in or have recently moved to. They show high intention to make this community thrive because they buy apple trees to root down. To plant, water, and nurse these trees takes time and dedication year in and year out knowing that they may not sit in the shade of these trees in their lifetime. They do it for their community and future generations.

Certainly, we too should invest in these children, the families, and our community as our ancestors did so long ago by planting the trees that we sit in the shade of today. Furthermore, the Apple Core Project supports the Norwood School Bond 5B.

Best regards,

*Melanie Eggers & Bodie Johansson*

Apple Core Project  
Co-Founders

Dear Norwood Public School Board and Superintendent Bissell:

It goes without saying that our kids are our future. If we want to give the children of Norwood a chance for a good education, they need a new school. Actually, they needed a new school years ago. The present school plant is beset with problems, including leaky roofs, mold and a hodge-podge of structures that are difficult to secure. When a Denver TV station sends a news crew to Norwood to film a school that represents one of the most dilapidated in the state, you know the problem is critical.

Proposition 5B will give the School District a chance to request \$10 million worth of bonds, provided the district secures a "Building Excellent Schools Today" (BEST) grant. If Norwood gets that grant, the State of Colorado would pick up just over 85% of the estimated \$69.8 million dollar cost of the project. Local taxpayers would only need to cover 14.32%. No bonds will be sold and no taxes will be increased if the grant doesn't go through.

This is an important investment for us. The economic future of Norwood and Wright's Mesa depends on attracting young families to live here, something that will only happen if parents are assured that the community is strongly behind good schools.

Norwood has earned "Accredited with Distinction" two years in a row, and standardized test scores and college readiness have exceeded expectations. The teachers and students deserve a school befitting a growing academic reputation.

Let's not short change our children. We urge a "YES" vote on Proposition 5B.

George Lewis  
Judy Muller  
Norwood, Co.

Dear Norwood School Board and Interim Superintendent Bissell,

When our first son was born 8 years ago, we honored his arrival by planting an apple tree in our orchard. This tree was grafted from Wright's Mesa heritage rootstock, hearty and resilient. As we dug the hole, my husband commented "The best time to plant a tree was yesterday, but at least we are taking the time to do it today". After years of tending to this tree, watering deep, and providing fertile soil, it bore fruit this summer. The apples are sweet and nourishing. I believe this tree is symbolic of how we might approach sustaining our civic infrastructure.

It is important to recognize that investing in our community does not come without a hefty cost. We have some big tax increase proposals on the ballot this November. We are being asked to sustain our Fire Protection and Emergency Response in ballot measure 7a and help fund new school facilities through 5b. If passed, these ballot measures will absolutely affect property owners, and I do not take these tax burdens lightly. Food, insurance, childcare, gas, utilities, and cost of living are all going up. Life is expensive and making ends meet can be a struggle. Even in the face of these clear challenges, it is our duty to uphold and restore the foundations that support our community. What we invest in today will have a direct impact on what flourishes in the future.

If we commit to investing in our school by voting yes for the 5b bond proposal, we will give Norwood Public Schools the chance to qualify for the Building Excellent Schools Today ("BEST") grant. If awarded, this grant would fund 85% of the total cost of the projected \$68 million dollar project. With a bond request of \$10 million dollars, local taxpayers would cover 14.32% of the total project cost. The bonding capacity will increase each year, making this the right time to secure the bond. We have an opportunity to come together and qualify for state funds that will build a school that lasts for generations. If we seize this moment, we can develop a comprehensive plan for our schools, as a community.

Proposition 5B has raised concerns among citizens who feel that a clear, detailed plan accompanying the bond measure is lacking. Many have questioned the future of the current school facilities and how they will be managed. A \$10 million bond is a significant investment for a small, rural community, and residents want assurances that their contributions will be responsibly and effectively utilized.

At this pivotal moment, we must ask ourselves: Are we prepared to actively engage in enhancing the educational environment within our school system? Are we committed to participating in the planning process, working toward effective solutions, and bringing a vibrant school to life? Are we willing to invest in the future of a flourishing economy? I think the answer is yes. Our rural community stands at a crossroads, and the decisions we make now will undoubtedly shape what lies ahead. We can wait for tomorrow to sustain our civic infrastructure, but this procrastination may come with consequences.

Not only do the students, teachers, and staff deserve to learn and work in a safe and healthy facility, but our economic future hinges on the wellbeing of our school system. Strong schools reflect the stability of our society; when school systems flourish so do the businesses, non-profits, and community services. At this moment we have a unique opportunity to enhance Norwood Schools and leverage available state funding. Like planting fruit trees, there is no time like today to say yes to investing in the nourishment and vitality of our community.

-Galena Gleason

Norwood

**Fresh Foundation**  
DBA Norwood Food Pantry  
and the Fresh Food Hub  
Po box 82 Norwood, CO 81423  
[norwoodcollective@gmail.com](mailto:norwoodcollective@gmail.com)  
510-205-4550



October 14th, 2024

Dear Norwood Public School Board and Superintendent Bissell,

We are writing today to express our support for the 5B Bond Proposal. The bond will commit the funds necessary to build a safe and secure environment to promote greater opportunities for learning, growth, and community engagement. Our organization is founded upon improving health outcomes for our most vulnerable community members and, certainly, this issue is of high importance to us and our mission. When we heard about the current building conditions and the danger it poses to our teachers and students alike we felt it was necessary for this project to move forward.

If the bond passes the contributions are set in place as the market stands now. If we try at a later date this max contribution could go up. If awarded the Building Excellent Schools Today ("BEST") grant, the State of Colorado would pick up just over 85% of the total cost of the project. If the BEST grant is not secured this year, taxes will be deferred until the BEST grant is secured in any subsequent year. The bonding capacity will continue to increase so now is the time to lock in the bond. This feels like the right time to act, invest and ensure the school has every opportunity to thrive and support our growing children.

With the school housing the Norwood Food Pantry, one of our program arms, it's in our best interests to support the facility and administration in what they feel is most appropriate and necessary for the future of the school and the health and safety of our students. We support the 5B Bond Proposal as an investment in the community's vitality.

Sincerely,  
The Fresh Foundation Board  
Galena Gleason, Hannah Rossman, Mel Eggers, Sam Andrews, Laura Fehrenbacher and  
Leila Seraphin

Dear Editor,

My name is Sara Rasmussen, and I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed bond to build a new school on a new site. I am writing as a member of the community and a parent/grandparent. Having lived in this area my entire life and working at Norwood School for over 20 years, I have a deep commitment to our community. Both of my sons graduated from Norwood Schools, and my grandchildren are currently part of the Maverick family.

I recognize that there are mixed feelings about building a new school, especially considering the impact on taxpayers, including our local business owners. I understand this firsthand as I contribute to the taxes funding the new school in the West End. However, I believe that a new school could attract more educators and community members, ultimately benefiting our local businesses. This is why I voted in support of the West End school, and I would do the same for ballot issue 5B this year.

As someone who has worked in our current school environment, I want the best learning conditions for our students. Our school has amazing kids and staff who do their best with what we have, but the challenges of our current facility are undeniable. Norwood Schools has been Accredited with Distinction for the past two years and even earned this honor in the two years prior to COVID. We are proud of this achievement, which demonstrates our ability to overcome obstacles, but the state of our facility cannot be ignored.

Some may ask, "If students are achieving, why is a new school necessary?" If you've spent time in our building, you know the reality: the facility is deteriorating. Issues such as falling bricks, water leaks causing mold, and inadequate security pose serious safety concerns. With weeds growing in classrooms and inadequate heating and cooling, it is clear that our school is in dire need of improvement and it could be argued it is not conducive to the best learning of our students. I want my grandchildren to feel safe and proud in a school that represents the Maverick spirit.

Safety must be our top priority. A new facility would create a safer learning environment for both students and staff. The current design poses challenges in securing the building, raising concerns for everyone who uses the facility daily. Since our school serves as a hub for community activities, it is vital to offer a reliable space for all. As the existing building continues to deteriorate, I worry that access to these essential resources could be jeopardized. One key resource is Primetime, which provides daycare for families and enables the school to offer full-day PreK. Unfortunately, Primetime's current facility is also in decline, putting this critical service at risk. With a new school, the board of education is committed to providing space for Primetime on campus, ensuring a safe and dependable environment for our youngest community members.

Moreover, investing in our school is an investment in our community. The proposed site for the new school is conveniently located near our public library, opening up exciting opportunities for collaboration. Imagine STEAM classes being offered at the library, enhancing educational resources for our students—all within walking distance. This proximity would enable our students to participate in these enriching activities more frequently, fostering a stronger connection between the school and the community.

As we approach election time, I urge everyone to consider the implications of ballot issue 5B. This is not just a vote for a new building; it's a vote for the future of Norwood Schools and a commitment to our children.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sara Rasmussen

The bond initiative represents the BEST available deal for the School District to replace its school facilities at the lowest cost to taxpayers. With a bond request of \$10 Million, this means local taxpayers would only need to cover 14.32% of the total project cost for the buildings, estimated to cost \$69.8 million. If awarded the Building Excellent Schools Today ("BEST") grant, the State of Colorado would pick up just over 85% of the cost of the project. This is a tremendous opportunity for our community and one that we can't pass up.

Even if bonding capacity was available to cover the entire \$69.8 Million project, and it is not, the cost to local residents would be \$631.46 annually for each \$100,000 of home value and \$2,594 annually for each \$100,000 of Business value. These are numbers that we can't afford and that is why the current bond proposal is so appealing. Approval of the \$10 Million bond would cost taxpayers \$101.83 annually per \$100,000 of home value and \$424 annually of business value.

In 2022, the Norwood School Board worked hard to design a building plan and presented it to the BEST board and sufficiently impressed them to be awarded one of the top backups. Through their diligent work we have solid estimates of costs which will improve our district ranking with the BEST board. We also have the protection that if the money is not available from BEST in 2025, we can apply again in 2026 and will hopefully have the bond approved going in that provides the required matching money funds as grant monies become available under the program. If for some reason, the BEST funds are not available, the bond authorization would not allow us to issue the bonds, protecting taxpayers.

I encourage you to vote yes for the Norwood School District R2-J Ballot Issue 5B

*Todd L Bissell*

10/27/2024

**Western Slope Dark Sky Coalition Supports Bond Measure 5B**

Dear Norwood Public School Board and Superintendent Bissell:

We are writing to express our support of Bond Measure 5B, which would procure funding for our local school district in order to improve the physical conditions of the school building, whether this is by repair or replacement.

Education is a key principle of our mission to maintain dark skies, and we support any effort to improve the conditions for all centers of learning in our region.

Along with our support, we also hope that the funds procured by this bond measure should, in part, be utilized to improve and upgrade lighting to adhere to the Smart Lighting Principles. This will help to preserve the ancient and natural heritage of our night sky.

We hope to partner with the school and its affiliates to help spread awareness about the importance of dark skies and educate students about light contamination. We believe that this will be best accomplished by supporting the school's efforts to improve conditions for all students.

Keeping you in the Dark,

Board of Directors Western Slope Dark Sky Coalition

October 14th, 2024

Dear Norwood Public School Board and Superintendent Bissell,

On behalf of Norwood Parks & Recreation (NPRD), we are writing to express our strong support for Norwood Public School District's upcoming bond measure, which will appear on the November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, ballot (Norwood School District R-2J Issue 5B). As a committed partner in supporting education and the well-being of our community, we believe that this bond is essential for addressing the pressing needs of our local school. The bond would ensure that students have access to a safe, modern, and high-quality learning environment that will promote greater opportunities for learning, growth, and community engagement.

NPRD has several collaborations with the Norwood School District and sees the benefit that the bond will have on citizens as well as the wider community. We provide the local community with diverse, year-round recreational opportunities through the creation and maintenance of high-quality parks, trails, facilities, and programs. NPRD works closely with the Norwood Public School District through enhancing the use of facilities with additional sports and arts programs for youth and adults alike, including soccer, climbing, pickleball, theater, and music instruction.

NPRD believes education is a top priority, and that supporting education is a valuable investment for this community. We support the 5B Bond Proposal as an investment in the community's long-term vitality.

Sincerely,



**Norwood Parks & Recreation (NPRD)**

Liza Tanguay, Board President

Krys Smith, Vice President

Kelvin Verity, Board Secretary/Treasurer

Matt Stanger, Director

Michelle Liljgren, Executive Administrator

Daiva Chesonis, Events & Program Manager (Staff)



**Lone Cone Library**  
1455 S. Pinon Street • P.O. Box 127  
Norwood, CO 81423  
Phone: 970-327-4833 • Fax: 970-327-4129  
Website: [www.loneconelibrary.org](http://www.loneconelibrary.org)

September 17, 2024

Dear Norwood Public School Board and Superintendent Bissell,

We are writing to express our keen interest in establishing a collaborative partnership between the Lone Cone Library District and the Norwood Public Schools. As the school district explores the possibility of a new school mere feet from the Lone Cone Library, we fully support the new construction for the long-term benefit of our youth and community. Such a partnership would significantly benefit our organizations and our community.

The Lone Cone Library District is committed to providing exceptional library services to the residents of our community. We offer a wide range of resources, programs, and services designed to support lifelong learning, foster creativity, and promote civic engagement.

The Norwood Public Schools share our commitment to education and community involvement. We recognize the vital role that libraries play in supporting student achievement and inspiring a love of learning.

We envision a partnership that would involve:

- **Shared library services:** Providing library cards to students and staff, allowing for easy access to our collections and resources.
- **Collaborative programming:** Developing and implementing joint programs and events that promote literacy, critical thinking, and digital citizenship.
- **Teacher training:** Offering professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their use of library resources and services.
- **Volunteer opportunities:** Providing opportunities for students to volunteer at the library and gain valuable experience.

We believe that this partnership would be mutually beneficial to both organizations. By working together, we can provide even greater opportunities for learning, growth, and community engagement.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We would be delighted to discuss this proposal further and explore the possibilities of a successful partnership.

Sincerely,

Todd Bittner, Director, Lone Cone Library District

Cleave Simpson  
Minority Whip  
State Senate  
Senate District 6  
Colorado State Capitol  
200 E. Colfax Ave, room 346  
Denver, CO 80203  
[cleave.simpson.senate@coleo.gov](mailto:cleave.simpson.senate@coleo.gov)  
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Committees:  
Ranking Member,  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Ranking Member,  
Transportation and Energy  
Member,  
Finance  
Capital Development  
Legislative Council

## COLORADO STATE SENATE

Norwood Public School Board  
Superintendent Bissell

I applaud the efforts of the Norwood community to improve the learning conditions and outcomes for students in the Norwood school district. It's a difficult time to ask constituents to contribute more to educational facilities, but the demands on school districts will just continue to grow. Please know that if the community comes together in support of the bond proposal and if I still have the honor of representing you at the Capitol, I will be championing your efforts to secure the bulk of the funding for these improvements through the Colorado Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program. There are numerous examples of how rural communities have come together and with assistance from the BEST grant program have transformed their learning environments. I can say from experience, growing up and living in the San Luis Valley, what impact the local school has on the vibrancy of our rural communities. These rural schools are the foundation and the fabric of what makes living in rural Colorado so special. It would be an honor to help you all achieve similar results for your community, good luck with the proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cleave Simpson".

Cleave Simpson  
Colorado State Senator District 06

Dear,

Members of the Colorado State Board of Education-

Senator Cleave Simpson, House Rep. Larry Suckla & Governor Jared Polis

I am writing to you as a resident of San Miguel County & of the Norwood, Colorado community to bring to your attention a pressing issue that affects our local school district's ability to apply and access funding through the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) Grant.

Norwood, CO, a lower to middle-class community, is classified as an underserved and underfunded rural area. Our community's financial constraints make it exceptionally challenging to comply with the bond requirement necessary for the BEST Grant. Relying on our tax-paying citizens to cover the costs of this bond is not feasible given our limited economic resources. The inability of Norwood voters to fund this bond is, in essence, a distress signal.

The Norwood School District urgently needs improvements to provide adequate educational programs, ensure the safety and security of our students, and maintain a healthy learning environment. Our schools are the bedrock of our community, and without these necessary upgrades, our children will be at a significant disadvantage.

I respectfully request that the Colorado State Board of Education take a more proactive role in assisting underfunded communities like Norwood in obtaining the BEST Grant.

Specifically, I urge the Colorado State Board of Education, Senator Cleave Simpson, House Rep Larry Suckla & Governor Jared Polis - to leverage their collective administrative and budgetary authorities to alleviate the financial burden on rural and underfunded areas, ensuring that all Colorado children have access to safe and effective educational facilities. It is highly important to note that the BEST Grant program is designed to support schools in need, and there have been instances where flexibility has been shown to assist underfunded districts in the past. A community's inability to post \$10m in funds for the bond required by the BEST Grant should not disqualify them – It should move them to the **TOP** of the list.

Additionally, the marijuana industry in Colorado has been a significant source of funding for the BEST Grant through the state's excise tax on marijuana sales. Since 2010 San Miguel County has been an active participant and Since 2014, Norwood has participated in the state's marijuana industry, and we believe that a portion of the tax revenue collected by the state should be allocated, specifically, to help our community meet the requirements of the BEST Grant. The State has collected more than it's share of the Marijuana Tax Dollars as outlined in Proposition AA. In fact, the State of Colorado has increased the amount of tax

collected on marijuana both on sales and excise tax since voters approved proposition AA in 2013. The state is not appropriately using these tax funds, as they are not making their way back to participating communities, in their time of need, as promised. The People of Town of Norwood, CO and residents of San Miguel County take issue with this. **In 2023, The State of Colorado Collected \$274,121,043 in Cannabis Tax Revenue alone.**

Your leadership and commitment to equitable education are vital for the future of our children and our community. I look forward to your positive and speedy response as the deadline for meeting the BEST Grant bond requirement is quickly approaching. Plan (A) is to get the money so the Norwood School District can gain access to the BEST Grant, we asked our tax paying citizens & voters - they can no longer afford to toe the line. Now we ask you to step up and do what needs to be done for our kids to be afforded the education, facilities and safety they deserve in this great State of Colorado.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Print: \_\_\_\_\_

Residential Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_