

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

GRAND RAPIDS LEARNING CENTER

Grand Rapids Learning Center



Wednesday, May 28, 2025 at 6:00 pm
Grand Rapids Community College
Spectrum Theater



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Dear Class of 2025,

This night represents a significant milestone -- one that marks not just the end of your high school journey, but the beginning of a new chapter filled with endless possibilities.

As you step into the world beyond high school, I want to leave you with a powerful reminder: Your voice matters.

In your time here, you've grown as leaders, teammates, artists, advocates, and friends. Along the way you've gained not just knowledge from the classroom, but the courage to ask tough questions, stand up for justice, and dream without limits. Now, more than ever, our world needs those voices -- your voice -- to shape a future that is more just, more compassionate, and more united.

No matter where your path leads you, don't underestimate the impact of speaking up. Your ideas, experiences, and perspectives can challenge the status quo. They can ignite change in your community and beyond.

We are proud of the legacy you leave behind and even more excited for the story you're about to write. The world is waiting for what only you can say.

Congratulations!

Leadriane Roby, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Commencement Ceremony

PROCESSIONAL MARCH

“Pomp and Circumstance” by Edward Elgar

NATIONAL ANTHEM

“Star Spangled Banner” performed by GRPS Staff Notes

WELCOME

Mr. Rodney Brown

SUPERINTENDENT REMARKS

Dr. Leadriane Roby

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REMARKS

Mr. Chad Nielsen

PRINCIPAL REMARKS

Mr. Rodney Brown

GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNER REMARKS

Mrs. Cheryl Garner

KEYNOTE SPEAKER REMARKS

Mrs. Lisa Freiburger

GRAND RAPIDS LEARNING CENTER SCHOLAR REMARKS

Miss Kaylie Padron-Garcia

PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS

Mrs. Renee Speed

CELEBRATION OF THE CLASS OF 2025

Grand Rapids Board of Education Trustee

RECESSIONAL

CONGRATULATIONS!

CLASS OF 2025!

Darnell Beane Whitfield, Jr.

John Battle, Jr.

Jayden Blahnik

Lino J. Calderon

Gabriel Colimapec

Justice O. Collier

Benjamin A. Curtis

Amiyah J. Glass

Araceli M. Godoy

Sebastian Grooters

Kyra N. Hoard

Danielle M. Huinil-Ramirez

Benjamin L. Kik

Alexis B. Kloet

Jonah R. Kruis

Niyla N. Long

Rochelle A. Miller

Heaven L. Murphy-Shingola

Kaylie Padron-Garcia

Christopher Regaladogodoy

Jorge R. Rodriguez

Jahaira Silva Morales

Isaiah J. Tillman

Carlos Vazquez-Bravo

Our Grand Rapids Learning Center graduates will serve as proud ambassadors of Grand Rapids Public Schools as they embark on their next chapters. They will make their mark in the workforce, in military service, and at several distinguished universities across the country. Their hard work, perseverance, and commitment to excellence have prepared them to thrive in a wide variety of fields and endeavors. We are incredibly proud of all they have accomplished and look forward to seeing the positive impact they will make in the world. We send them off with our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for continued success.

GRAND RAPIDS LEARNING CENTER

Administration & Staff

Rodney Brown, M.Ed.	Principal
Ricky Belton, B.A.	Transition Specialist
Linda Buford, B.A.	Support Teacher
Maria Cerda	Head Secretary Registrar
Ashley Covington, M.A.	Counselor
Terence Gaule, M.Ed.	Teacher
Yvette Orr	Social Worker
Kim Price, M.A.	Special Ed Teacher
Renee Speed, B.A.	Teacher

GRPS HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Brad Lundvick, M.S.	CA Frost Middle High School
Charlie VanderVliet, Ed.S.	City High Middle School
Kerri Reed, M.A.	Grand Rapids Montessori
Christopher Hanks, Ph.D.	Public Museum School
Kenyatta Hill Hall, M.Ed.	University Preparatory Academy
Derrick Martin, M.Ed.	Innovation Central High School
Timothy Mabin, Ph.D.	Ottawa Hills High School
Julian Ramires Torres	Southwest Middle High School
Aaron Roussey, M.A.	Union High School

Southeast Career Pathways

Administration & Staff

Troy Wilbon, M.Ed.	Principal
Wilford Aponte, B.A.	Spanish Teacher
Nicole Beukema, M.Ed.	History Teacher
Lisa Cook, M.S.	Head Counselor
Jeff Czyzyk, M.Ed.	Math Teacher
Bonnie Engebretsen, M.Ed.	English Teacher
Nicole Gonzales	Head Secretary
Donna McIntosh, B.A.	Instructional Parapro
Kim Price, M.A.	Resource Teacher
Kristen Strojny, B.A.	English Teacher

GRAND RAPIDS BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Richard Williamson

Trustee

Our Mission: To ensure that all scholars are educated,
self-directed and productive members of society.

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

District Leadership

Dr. Leadriane Roby, Superintendent of Schools

Mel Atkins, II

Executive Director of Community & Student Affairs

Dr. Mayda Bahamonde-Gunnell

Executive Director of PK-12 Instructional Leadership (Southwest Quadrant)

Matthew Beresford

Executive Director of PK-12 Instructional Leadership (Northeast Quadrant)

Maleika Brown

Ombudsperson

Bridget Cheney

Executive Director of PK-12 Instructional Leadership (Southeast Quadrant)

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Interim General Counsel

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Executive Director of Athletics & Dual Enrollment

Larry Johnson

Chief of Staff and Executive Director of Public Safety & School Security

Rhonda Kribs

Chief Financial Officer

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Deputy Superintendent of Preschool-12 Learning & Leadership

Jamie Masco

Executive Director of Professional Learning & Development

Chad Nielsen

Interim Executive Director of PK-12 Instructional Leadership (Northwest Quadrant)

Erin Purdy

Interim Executive Director of Special Education

Alex Smart

Executive Director of Facilities & Operations

Luke Stier

Director of Communications & Community Liaison

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

From Grand Rapids Community College

We honor the original people, the Ottawa, the Chippewa, also known as the Ojibwa and the Potawatomi.

We acknowledge that we gather as Grand Rapids Community College on the traditional land of the original people, past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations.

We acknowledge and recognize that when we host activities, these events take place on stolen and colonized land.

We recognize that “an acknowledgment by itself is a small gesture. It becomes meaningful when coupled with authentic relationships and informed action ... acknowledgment is a simple way of showing respect and correcting the stories and practices that erase Indigenous people’s history and culture ...”

~U.S. Department of Arts and Culture



THANK YOU

We would like to extend our gratitude to the Management Information Systems, Facilities and Operations, Public Safety & School Security, and Communications teams, and our GRCC partners for their invaluable contributions in making this graduation ceremony a success. Their hard work and dedication behind the scenes ensured this special day was memorable for all.

DISCLAIMER REGARDING SCHOLAR MESSAGES AT GRADUATION

The Board of Education, administration, or any school employee has not directed nor endorsed any prayer or religious message of any kind. The student graduation speech/message is given by a student volunteer without review or influence by the Board of Education, by the administration, or by any school employee or school official. The Board of Education, the administration, or school employees exercised no control over who drafted the message or content of the message, or the selection of the student volunteer. The decision as to the content of the speech/message rests solely with the selected student speaker.

GRAND RAPIDS LEARNING CENTER SENIOR SPOTLIGHT VIDEO



COMMENCEMENT PHOTOGRAPHS

Your graduate is being
professionally photographed by
GradPix.

You can register and find your
photographs at: GRPSGrad.com.



Don't wait, enroll now! If you have younger children still in school, now's the time to enroll for the 2025-26 school year. Visit enroll.grps.org today.