

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

# **SOUTHWEST MIDDLE HIGH ACADEMIA BILINGUE**



Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at 5:00 pm  
Houseman Field | Grand Rapids, MI



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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

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## Honors & Recognitions

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### **VALEDICTORIAN**

Danielis Rivera Candelaria

### **SALUTATORIAN**

Esmeralda Falfan-Gabriel

### **ACADEMIC TOP TEN**

Danielis Rivera Candelaria

Esmeralda Falfan-Gabriel

Roberto Hernandez-Lugo

Marlen Orozco

Tayvon Streets

Denzell Vazquez

Juliet Aguilar-Lucas

Mariatnney Valoy

Richard Angarita Amaya

Isabela Velasquez-Ventura

### **SENIOR CLASS ADVISOR**

Alyssa Bunton

## Honors & Recognitions

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### **SEAL OF BILITERACY RECIPIENTS**

Brayden Aguilar-Lucas  
Juliet Aguilar-Lucas  
Richard Angarita  
Karla Arriaga  
Emily Barrios-Perez  
Viviano Braulio-Lopez  
Yuliana Dardon-Santos  
Lydia Diego-Lucas  
Daniel Esquivel Landero  
Esmeralda Falfan-Gabriel  
Gary Gabriel-Ramirez  
Miriam Gonzalez Hernandez  
Alexander Flores  
Shanny Hernandez-Santizo  
Luis Hernandez Cisneros  
Roberto Hernandez-Lugo  
Marcos Hernandez-Mateo  
Eric Loarca  
Yasmin Loarca Loarca  
Jose Lopez  
Jesus Lopez Escobar

Fernando Lopez Garcia  
Ivan Martinez  
Jaquelin Martinez Trochez  
Yasmeeen Martinez Chaparro  
John Matias Perez  
Marilyn Morales Hernandez  
Marlen Orozco  
Rodolfo Padron-Montalvo  
Kevin Perez-Abac  
Jonny Puente  
Miguel Ramirez  
Ricardo Reyna Morales  
Danielis Rivera-Candelaria  
Tayvon Streets  
Nestor Sosa-Garcia  
Ivan Vailmencho  
Mariatnney Valoy  
Denzell Vazquez  
Juana Velasquez-Lucas  
Isabel Velasquz-Ventura  
Pedro Zacarias-Felix

# Honors & Recognitions

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## TRANSLATION CERTIFICATION

Juliet Aguilar-Lucas

Richard Angarita Amaya

Yuliana Dardon

Lydia Diego-Lucas

Daniel Esquivel Landero

Esmeralda Falfan-Gabriel

Shanny Hernandez-Santizo

Ivan Martinez

Yasmeen Martinez Chapparo

Jaquelin Martinez Trochez

Marlen Orozco

Rodolfo Padron-Montalvo

Ricardo Reyna Morales

Danielis Rivera Candelaria

Juana Velasquez-Lucas

Denzell Vazquez

Congratulations to the Class of 2025, our second graduating class of Southwest Middle High School. We are so proud of the hard work and dedication that you put in to get to this point. Every single one of you has made an impact on our school community in your own unique way. It has been an honor to be part of this journey with you all.

Graduating from high school will be a cherished milestone for the rest of your life. Enjoy this achievement and know that this is only the beginning of everything that you will achieve in life.

My charge to you is to be great and don't stop until you are done.

Julian Ramirez Torres  
Principal

# Commencement Ceremony

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## **PROCESSIONAL MARCH**

“Pomp and Circumstance” by Edward Elgar

## **NATIONAL ANTHEM**

Colors presented by Innovation Central High School JROTC Color Guard

“Star Spangled Banner” performed by Southwest Middle High School Choir

## **WELCOME**

Miss Esmeralda Falfan-Gabriel

## **SUPERINTENDENT REMARKS**

Dr. Leadriane Roby

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REMARKS**

Dr. Mayda Bahamonde Gunnell

## **PRINCIPAL REMARKS**

Mr. Julian Ramirez Torres

## **VALEDICTORIAN REMARKS**

Miss Danielis Rivera-Candelaria

## **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Mr. Jose Marquez

## **PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS**

Ms. Madison Stanley

## **CELEBRATION OF THE CLASS OF 2025**

Grand Rapids Board of Education Trustee

## **RECESSIONAL**

“Vivir Mi Vida” by Marc Anthony

CONGRATULATIONS!

# CLASS OF 2025!

Brayden Aguilar-Lucas  
Juliet Aguilar-Lucas  
Richard Angarita Amaya  
Karla Arriaga  
Emily Barrios-Perez  
Viviano Braulio Lopez  
Yuliana Dardon-Santos  
Lydia Diego-Lucas  
Daniel Esquivel-Landero  
Jordan Estrada Garcia  
Esmeralda Falfan-Gabriel  
Alexander Flores  
Gary Gabriel-Ramirez  
Miriam Gonzalez-Hernandez  
Shanny Hernandez-Santizo  
Luiz Hernandez Cisneros  
Roberto Hernandez-Lugo  
Marcos Hernandez-Mateo  
Eric Loarca Reynoso  
Yasmin Loarca Loarca

Jose Lopez-Daniel  
Jesus Lopez Escobar  
Fernando Lopez Garcia  
Isaias Lucas  
Ivan Martinez  
Yasmeen Martinez-Chaparro  
Jaquelin Martinez Trochez  
John Matias Perez  
Marilyn Morales Hernandez  
La'Nijah Moore  
Marlen Orozco  
Jose Ovalle-Lopez  
Rodolfo Padron-Montalvo  
Dani Pablo  
Carlos Pena Reyes  
Kevin Perez-Abac  
Jonny Puente  
Miguel Ramirez  
Ricardo Reyna Morales  
Danielis Rivera-Candelaria



CONGRATULATIONS!

# CLASS OF 2025!

Estreita Rodas Reyes

Gabriela Rodriguez-Duran

Elias Rubio

Asusena Ruiz Corona

Nestor Sosa-Garcia

Tayvon Streets

Ivan Vailmencho

Mariatnney Valoy

Denzell Vazquez

Juana Velasquez-Lucas

Isabel Velazquez Ventura

Pedro Zacarias-Felix

Our Southwest Middle High School graduates will serve as ambassadors for Grand Rapids Public Schools in various avenues, including the workforce, military service, and at the following institutions of higher education: Aquinas College, Culinary Institute of America, Ferris State University, Grand Rapids Community College, GRCC M-TEC, Grand Valley State University, Michigan State University, and University of Michigan.

# SOUTHWEST MIDDLE HIGH

## Administration

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Julian Ramirez Torres, M.Ed.

Principal

Scott Rusticus, M.Ed.

Assistant Principal

Jose Marquez, M.Ed.

Dean of Students

## Instructional & Support Staff

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Angela Arias, B.A.

Paraprofessional

Elias Barrios, B.A.

Student Advocate

Alyssa Bunton, M.A.

Head Counselor

Charlotte Cabello, M.A.

Science Teacher

Jackline Carillo, M.A.

Math Teacher

Fernando Davis, M.A.

Mental Health Therapist

Amelia Garcia, A.A.

Head Secretary

Rebecca Groenveld, M.S.

Math Teacher

Emily Hollingsworth, B.A.

Science/STEM Teacher

Laura Jensen, B.A.

English Teacher

Noah Kellogg, B.A.

History/Social Studies Teacher

Matthew Palmieri, M.M.

Band Teacher

Betty Portillo, B.A.

Librarian

## Instructional & Support Staff

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Rosa Raygoza, M.A.	Paraprofessional
Jeff Readwin, M.A.	Resource Teacher
Gully Rodriguez, A.A.	Paraprofessional
Flor Santiago Vega, M.A.	Spanish Teacher
Brad Sharp, B.S.	Science Teacher
Michael Smith, B.A.	PE/Health Teacher
Madison Stanley, B.A.	Spanish/Interpretation Teacher
Flor Suarez, A.A.	Attendance Secretary
Haley Sulisz, M.A.	Choir Teacher
Andy Valley, B.A.	AP English Teacher
Benjamin VanAllen, B.A.	US History Teacher
Michelle Vankaulker, B.A.	Visual Arts Teacher
Rachel Vanslooten, B.A.	English Teacher
Alex Wall, B.A.	English Teacher
Christopher Woods, B.S.	Math/STEM Teacher

# Grand Rapids Learning Center

## Administration & Staff

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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

# Southeast Career Pathways

## Administration & Staff

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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

2025 Officers & Trustees

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**Kymberlie Davis**

President

**Aarie Wade**

Vice President

**José Rodriguez**

Secretary

**Kimberley Williams**

Treasurer

**Arick Davis**

Trustee

**Amber Kilpatrick**

Trustee

**Sara Melton**

Trustee

**Eleanor Moreno**

Trustee

**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

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### **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)

#### **Thomas Cottle**

Interim General Counsel

#### **Michelle Dexter**

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

#### **Kurt Johnson**

Executive Director of Athletics & Dual Enrollment

#### **Larry Johnson**

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

#### **Rhonda Kribs**

Chief Financial Officer

#### **Dr. Brandy Lovelady Mitchell**

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**

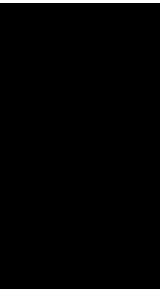
Interim Executive Director of Special Education

#### **Alex Smart**

Executive Director of Facilities & Operations

#### **Luke Stier**

Director of Communications & Community Liaison



# THANK YOU

We would like to extend our gratitude to the Management Information Systems, Facilities and Operations, Public Safety & School Security, and Communications teams 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.

# **SOUTHWEST MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR SPOTLIGHT VIDEO**



## **COMMENCEMENT PHOTOGRAPHS**

Your graduate is being  
professionally photographed by  
GradPix.

You can register and find your  
photographs at: [GRPSGrad.com](https://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](https://enroll.grps.org) today.**