

# GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Class of 2024

Grand Rapids Learning Center



Wednesday, May 29, 2024 at 6:00 pm

Grand Rapids Community College | Spectrum Theater

160 Fountain Street NE

Grand Rapids, Michigan

[grps.org](https://grps.org)



*Escanea el Código QR para ver el programa de graduación en español.*

*Sikana QR Code kugirango urebe gahunda yo gutanga impamyabumenyi muri Kinyarwanda.*

*Changanua Msimbo wa QR ili kuona programu ya kuhitimu kwa Kiswahil.*



## Dear Graduating Seniors of Grand Rapids Learning Center,

Congratulations on reaching this remarkable milestone! On behalf of the entire Grand Rapids Public Schools community, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to each and every one of you.

Take a moment to pause and look around you right now. You are surrounded by community. Everyone is here to honor the dedication, hard work, and perseverance you and your classmates have invested in reaching this milestone. We are all here for you.

I want to express my profound gratitude to all who have supported you along the way. From your families and friends to your teachers, mentors, and the entire GRPS community, their unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement have been invaluable in shaping the individual you are today.

During your academic journey, you have faced challenges, celebrated triumphs, and experienced personal growth. Your resilience, determination, and grit have been evident throughout this journey, and they will undoubtedly continue to serve you well as you embark on the next phase of your life.

No matter where you go from here, remember that the GRPS community stands behind you, cheering you on every step of the way. I have no doubt that each of you will go on to achieve incredible things, and we eagerly anticipate celebrating your future successes.

Sincerely,

Leadriane Roby, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

# WELCOME

TO THE CLASS OF 2024 COMMENCEMENT

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Grand Rapids Learning Center



# 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’S REMARKS

Dr. Leadriane Roby

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REMARKS

Dr. Karl Nelson

## PRINCIPAL’S REMARKS

Mr. Rodney Brown

## GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNER REMARKS

Ms. Robin Sterk

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Mr. Tyrell Jackson

## GRAND RAPIDS LEARNING CENTER STUDENT REMARKS

Mr. Isaac R. Graveling

Miss Sheila Musa

## PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS

Mr. Terence Gaule

## CERTIFICATION OF DIPLOMAS/TASSEL CEREMONY

Grand Rapids Board of Education Trustee

## RECESSIONAL

# CLASS OF 2024

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!

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Navon Carter  
Mekhi M. Copes  
Lester E. DeLeon-Pacheco  
Isaac R. Graveling  
Iyana B. Gray  
Meshell L. Haliburton  
Nihdrea Hall  
Iyonti Johnson  
Mi'ara Johnson  
Tyler E. Leeball  
Sarah F. Moyer  
Sheila Musa  
Rebecca Nava-Lemus  
James M. Noor  
Evan Rader  
Vivian Roberts  
Bennie L. Sowell, Jr.  
Carlos Vazquez-Bravo  
Elizabeth J. Wilson  
Kalob Zavala

Our Grand Rapids Learning Center graduates will serve as ambassadors for Grand Rapids Public Schools in various avenues including the workforce, military service and at institutions of higher education.

**GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
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.	Grand Rapids Public Museum High
Kenyatta Hill Hall, M.Ed.	Grand Rapids University Prep Academy
Jason McGhee, Ed.D.	Innovation Central High School
Timothy Mabin, Ph.D.	Ottawa Hills High School
Julian Ramirez Torres	Southwest Middle High School
Aaron Roussey, M.A.	Union High School

## **GRAND RAPIDS LEARNING CENTER ADMINISTRATION & STAFF**

Rodney Brown, M.Ed.	Principal
Wilfred Aponte, B.A.	Teacher
Ricky Belton, B.A.	Transition Specialist
Linda Buford, B.A.	Teacher
Maria Cerda	Head Secretary/Registrar
Ashley Covington, M.A.	Counselor
Terence Gaule, M.Ed.	Teacher
Karen Jackson	Instructional Paraprofessional
Kim Price, M.A.	Special Education Teacher

## **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



## GRAND RAPIDS BOARD OF EDUCATION

Ms. Kimberley Williams, President  
Ms. Kymberlie Davis, Vice President  
Ms. Katherine Downes Lewis, Secretary  
Ms. Jen Schottke, Treasurer  
Mr. Jordoun Eatman  
Ms. Sara Melton  
Mr. José Rodriguez  
Mr. Raynard Ross  
Ms. Aarie Wade

## SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Leadriane Roby

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mr. Melvin Atkins II  
Executive Director of Community and Student Affairs

Dr. Mayda Bahamonde-Gunnell  
Executive Director of PK-12 Instructional Leadership  
(Southwest Quadrant)

Mr. Matthew Beresford  
Executive Director of PK-12 Instructional Leadership  
(Northeast Quadrant)

Ms. Bridget Cheney  
Executive Director of PK-12 Instructional Leadership  
(Southeast Quadrant)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (CONT.)

Mr. Erich Harmsen  
Executive Director of Professional Learning and Curriculum

Mr. Leon Hendrix  
Executive Director of Communications and External Affairs

Ms. Rukshana Ilahi  
Executive Director of Special Education, Section 504 and Early  
Intervention Services

Mr. Kurt Johnson  
Executive Director of Athletics and Dual Enrollment

Mr. Larry Johnson  
Chief of Staff and Executive Director of Public Safety and  
School Security

Ms. Rhonda Kribs  
Chief Financial Officer

Dr. Brandy Lovelady Mitchell  
Deputy Superintendent of Preschool-12 Learning & Leadership

Ms. Anya Lusk  
Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and General Counsel

Dr. Karl Nelson  
Executive Director of PK-12 Instructional Leadership  
(Northwest Quadrant)

Mr. Alex Smart  
Executive Director of Facilities and Operations

## 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 acknowledgement by itself is a small gesture. It becomes meaningful when coupled with authentic relationships and informed action ... acknowledgement 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

# **PUBLIC SAFETY**

A special thank you to Mr. Larry Johnson, Chief of Staff and Executive Director of Public Safety and School Security, and the Public Safety Officers, for their assistance in making this occasion possible.

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## **DISCLAIMER REGARDING STUDENT MESSAGES AT GRADUATION**

The Board of Education, administration, or any school employee has not directed nor endorses 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.

## **COMMENCEMENT PHOTOGRAPHS**

Your graduate is being professionally photographed by GradPix.

You can register and find your photographs at:  
[GRPSGrad.com](http://GRPSGrad.com)

