

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY  
**SOUTHWEST MIDDLE HIGH**  
**ACADEMIA BILINGÜE**

Class of 2024



Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 5:00 pm  
Houseman Field | Grand Rapids, Michigan

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

**GRPS**   
my choice®  
Grand Rapids Public Schools

## Dear Graduating Seniors of Southwest Middle High Academia Bilingüe,

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

## CLASS OF 2024 COMMENCEMENT

Congratulations to the Class of 2024 - our first ever graduating class at Southwest Middle High. 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 a 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.

The Class of 2024 will hold a special place in the heart of the entire Southwest Middle High Academia Bilingüe community.

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

Estamos super orgullosos de ustedes por ser nuestros primeros escorpiones al graduarse de SWMH-AB.

Julian Ramirez Torres  
Principal

# **SOUTHWEST MIDDLE HIGH ACADEMIA BILINGÜE**

Class of 2024

## **VALEDICTORIAN**

Maite Reyes DelaCruz

## **SALUTATORIAN**

Rosalinda Lopez-Garcia

## **ACADEMIC TOP TEN**

Maite Reyes DelaCruz

Maria Gonzalez Diego

Rosalinda Lopez-Garcia

Diane Vazquez

Sandra Lopez Lopez

Michelle Melo

Stefanie Lucas Bautista

Janaira Amoros

Alermy Carlo-Fuentes

Jeasy Rodas-Diaz

## **SEAL OF BILITERACY RECIPIENTS**

### **INTERPRETATION CERTIFICATE RECIPIENTS**

All graduates from Southwest Middle High Academie Bilingüe earned the Seal of Biliteracy distinction, along with their Interpretation certificate, marking a significant achievement in their academic journey.

## **SENIOR CLASS ADVISORS**

Alyssa Zahra

Flor Santiago-Vega

# COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

## **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**

Ms. Rosalinda Lopez-Garcia

## **SUPERINTENDENT’S REMARKS**

Dr. Leadriane Roby

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REMARKS**

Dr. Mayda Bahamonde Gunnell

## **PRINCIPAL’S REMARKS**

Mr. Julian Ramirez Torres

## **VALEDICTORIAN’S REMARKS**

Mr. Maite Reyes-DelaCruz

## **KEYNOTE SPEAKER’S REMARKS**

Mrs. Emily Hollingsworth

## **PRESENTATION OF THE DIPLOMAS**

Ms. Flor Santiago-Vega

## **CERTIFICATION OF DIPLOMAS/TASSEL CEREMONY**

Grand Rapids Board of Education Trustee

## **RECESSIONAL**

“Vivir Mi Vida” - Marc Anthony

# CLASS OF 2024

**CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!**

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Aaron Allen

Gabriel Amaya Rodriguez

Janaira Amoros

Cassandra Arcos Hernandez

Hector Barrios Monzon

Alonso Berduo Juarez

Yaresly Bravo Lopez

Bethanny Calderon Mazariegos

Cristian Carrillo-Lopez

Janelys Castillo

Alermy Carlo Fuentes

Daniela Carrasquillo Candelaria

Jazpe Cano-Quintero

Perla Cervantes

Luis Coronado Agustin

Eduardo Deleon-Magana

Joshua Espinoza

Yoseline Estrada

Fernando Figueroa Simons

Lucrecia Francisco Vargas

Nayeli Garcia

Gabriela Garcia Rodriguez

Deiber Garcia-Rodas

Maria Gonzalez-Diego

Christian Gonzalez Hernandez

Isabel Herrera

Precious Herrera

Danny Juarez Lorenzo

Johnny Juarez Lorenzo

Kenny Juarez Lorenzo

Pricila Juarez-Gabriel

Olga Lopez

Roselyn Lopez

Thalia Lopez

Sandra Lopez Lopez

Kelwin Lopez Mazariegos

Rosalinda Lopez-Garcia

Stefanie Lucas Bautista

Lizeth Martinez-Puente

Michelle Melo

Wesley Mencho  
Erick Pacheco-Marin  
Misael Parada  
Yarelis Perez  
Aris Ponce-Santizo  
Anthony Puente Aguilar  
Juana Rafael-Jacinto  
Carlos Reyes  
Maite Reyes-Delacruz

Joselyn Reyesvargas  
Jeasy Rodas-Diaz  
Jovanny Rodriguez-Vargas  
Anabel Vargas-Tercero  
Felipe Vargas-Tercero  
Diane Vazquez  
Denilson Velasquez-Velasquez  
Rafael Viveros Barradas

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Our Southwest Middle High Academia Bilingüe 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, Baker College, Davenport University, Ferris State University, Grand Rapids Community College, Grand Rapids Community College MTEC, Grand Valley State University, Hope College, Michigan State University, University of Michigan, Western Michigan University.

## **SOUTHWEST MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

Julian Ramirez Torres, M.Ed.	Principal
Scott Rusticus, M.Ed.	Assistant Principal
Jose Marquez, M.Ed.	Dean of Students

## **SOUTHWEST MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL & SUPPORT STAFF**

Duane Bacchus, M.A.	Mental Health Therapist
Elias Barrios, B.A.	Student Advocate
Amelia Garcia, A.A.	Head Secretary
Sally Pedraza, A.A.	Health Aide
Flor Suarez, A.A.	Attendance Secretary
Alyssa Zahra, M.A.	Academic Counselor
Angela Arias, B.A.	Paraprofessional
Charlotte Cabello, M.A.	Science Teacher
Pedro Cabello, M.A.	Social Studies Teacher
Jackline Carrillo, M.A.	Math Teacher
Rosalba Coleman, B.A.	Paraprofessional
Serapio Garza, M.B.A.	Spanish Teacher
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
Betty Portillo, B.A.	Librarian
Mathew Palmieri, B.A.	Band Director
Gully Rodriguez, A.A.	Paraprofessional
Flor Santiago Vega, B.A.	AP Spanish Teacher/Interpretion



Michael Smith, B.A.	Physical Education & Health Teacher
Madison Stanley, B.A.	Spanish Teacher
Haley Sulisz, M.A.	Choir Director
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 & Science Teacher

## **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
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
Kim Price, M.A.	Resource Teacher
Kristen Strojny, B.A.	English Teacher

## **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

# **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 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.

## **COMMENCEMENT PHOTOGRAPHS**

Your graduate is being professionally  
photographed by GradPix.

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

