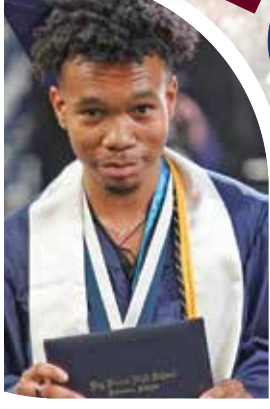


Kalamazoo Public Schools

# EXCELSIOR

www.kalamazoopublicschools.com

June/July 2026 - Volume 28, Issue 6



## Congratulations Graduates!



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**MEET UP**  
and  
**EAT UP**

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KRESA  
Outstanding  
Achievement  
Award Winners

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Excellence  
in Education  
Award Winners

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# A Season of Endings and Beginnings – And Knowing How to Begin Again

## A Message from the Superintendent

Dr. Darrin Slade



**T**HE END of every school year is an interesting time on the calendar. It is one in which we look back at the work we've done and the successes that we have had — but it is also a time to focus on the future.

Every spring, Kalamazoo Public Schools celebrates four milestones for our students:

- Kindergarteners completing their first year of school,
- Fifth graders preparing to enter middle school,
- Eighth graders being promoted to high school, and
- High school graduations, which is our ultimate goal for every student.

The students have much to be proud of; from the gains they made in reading, math, and science — to the games they

won — to their extracurricular achievements such as mounting moving theater productions and producing amazing art. Students can take pride in the ways they've stretched themselves to become more capable and accomplished.

Likewise, as a district, KPS can take great pride when looking back on a year that saw increased graduation rates, attendance, test scores, and improved culture and climate. All of the successes we experienced were made possible because of our students' hard work and the unwavering dedication of the teachers, coaches, principals, mentors, friends and family members who lifted up our students and refused to let them fail.

As much as we enjoy basking in these accomplishments, we know that this time of year is not just about relishing our successes. It is also a time to think about the future and to sharpen our skills to face new challenges. This is especially true for our high school graduates.

Because, have no doubts, there will be challenges. Maybe you aced high

school and suddenly you get your first "C" — or worse — in college. Maybe you get into your dream school and after a year realize that it isn't the right fit. Maybe you make new friends in college — only to have them ghost a few months later. Maybe you were sure you were going to be a doctor, but that biochem class says otherwise.

The boxer Mike Tyson famously said, "Everyone has a plan 'til they get punched in the mouth." Real life can sometimes deliver a powerful blow to our dreams. Because of that, our ultimate success will be based on being able to get back up, regroup, and adapt in the face of these challenges. We must be able to meet the disappointments and challenges — and rise again.

If there is one message I want our graduates to take with them as they move into the future, it is this: You will fail sometimes. Failure is not the end. It is a detour; it is a learning opportunity; it is a challenge that once met will give you new skills and understanding. It will be painful

sometimes, but do not let that deter you.

Starting again may feel like a lonely place, but you do not have to face your struggle alone. Think of those who have loved and supported you through the years, who have sacrificed to see you to this point. They are still there in your corner. Think of the favorite teacher who helped you find success, think of the coach that taught you how to win the race, think of the friends and mentors who celebrated your high school graduation. Their support does not disappear when you stumble; they want to be there to help you move forward again.

Graduation is the end of one adventure and the beginning of another. There will always be beginnings and endings, endings and beginnings. Remember that you have everything you need to succeed. You have the intelligence, the skills, and the love and support of so many people who want you to achieve your goals.

Congratulations to the Class of 2026 and best wishes for the future.

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# Congratulations to the Class of 2026!



Kalamazoo Central's Asia Chambers waits for commencement to start at Wings Event Center.



Victor Wilson addresses his classmates at the Phoenix graduation.

“  
 At Phoenix High School, the classroom setting feels personal. You can ask questions without feeling embarrassed. You can build relationships. You can focus. You can breathe. And honestly, that helped many of us become better students and better people.  
 ”  
 Dontray “DJ” Hemphill Jr.  
 Phoenix High School

“  
 ... adversity does not define our destination. Because of our hard work, the community that carried us, and the unwavering guidance of mentors like Mr. Hamann, we stand here today transformed.  
 We are resilient, we are capable, and we are just getting started.  
 ”  
 Angel Garcia, KILP



Chandler Bolden gets a congratulatory hug after the Kalamazoo Innovative Learning Program commencement.



Valedictorian Kyla Clark offers the student welcome and gratitude at the Kalamazoo Central graduation.

Summer Reading Challenge

## UNEARTH A STORY™

June 1 to August 29

All kids ages birth to grade 12 are invited to sign up for summer fun. Read, earn free books, and enjoy fun activities all summer long!

[kpl.gov/summer-reading-challenge](http://kpl.gov/summer-reading-challenge)



**Just for TEENS** - We're having a raffle! Earn tickets by signing up, reading, and completing special activities.

**For Everyone** - Make the library a part of your summer plans. Free events, programs and activities for all ages, all summer long.

[kpl.gov/events/tag/summer](http://kpl.gov/events/tag/summer)



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Inquiries by students and/or their parents/guardians should be directed to:

### Director of School Improvement, Title I and Assessments

Kalamazoo Public Schools  
1220 Howard St.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008  
**(269) 337-0180**

All other inquiries should be directed to:

### Director of Human Resources

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1220 Howard St.  
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District Directory at:  
[www.kalamazoopublicschools.com](http://www.kalamazoopublicschools.com)

## Kalamazoo Innovative Learning Program 2026 Graduates

Alsbaie, Abdul Rahman Moahamad  
Bolden, Chandler King  
Buchanan, Deven Edward  
Cruz, Marcus Dumar  
Garcia, Angel Eduardo  
Goines, Nylan Jeremiah Elijah  
Gomez Lopez, Saray Alejandra  
Gonzalez, Antonio Zoilo  
Harrison, Tucker Bryce

Hoyle-Groat, Felix Daniel Jacobs, Chloe Ann  
Leslie, Mya Janae  
Padula, Kristian Giovanni  
Petersen, Bjorn David  
Price, Caden Michael  
Prolo, Cora Joy-Elizabeth  
Reed, Jazary  
Rivera, Masaille Rose  
Roberts, Leah Mae Michelle  
Root, Jericha Lenee  
Scott, Jacob Thomas

Smith, Shamus Aloysius Statler, Kailey Elise  
Sundberg, Cheyenne Cody  
Taylor, Duante Curtis  
Turner, Shania Renay Lynn  
Walker, Zaden Shane  
White, Jabari Ray'Davion  
White, Zachary Jacari  
Whitley, Mijanay Anasha Marie



**Marcus Cruz gets a hug after commencement.**

## Kalamazoo Adult Education Class of 2026

Akpauna, Thelma  
Amates-Adunas, Rocio  
Amazzalorso, Deanne  
Baldwinn II, Bradley  
Brown, Clifford  
Burton-Finnie, Dre'Elle

Diaz, Brian  
Doubley, Tashia  
Fazalyar, Waris  
Holland, Jason  
Ingabire, Clarisse  
Jenkins, Sydney  
Johnson, Rayanna  
Jones, Artesiah

Kaufmann, Madison  
Lunney, Rachel "Ray"  
Linzy, Rahsaan  
Mamman, Ghevarghese  
Matthews, Jacob  
Mayanga, Lucas  
Ndiaye, Ahmadou  
Nedeveld, Gabriel  
Newkirk-Curtis, Anya

Noori, Farkhunda  
Otrwine, Sebrina  
Porter, Trinity  
Rodriguez, Elida  
Salama, Catherine  
Scott, Margee  
Simpson, John  
Sparks, Sara

Swift, Xavion  
Thomas, Joshua  
Thomas, Kartaysha  
Vogtman, Lierre  
Wallace, Alexander  
White, ZyNiael  
Whitley, Justine  
Woods Jr., Robert

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# KPS Scholar-Athletes Make Post-Secondary Commitments

THE FOLLOWING SENIORS were honored this spring for their athletic accomplishments and for committing to continuing their educational and athletic endeavors at the following post-secondary institutions. Congratulations to these scholar-athletes.

## LOY NORRIX

### Abby Pueblo

Glen Oaks Community College  
Basketball

### Lakia Palmer

Glen Oaks Community College  
Basketball

### Sam Oberlee

Glen Oaks Community College  
Baseball

### Trey Iocca

Glen Oaks Community College  
Baseball

### Zoe Wazny

Adrian College  
Bowling

### Jaylind Motton

Eastern Michigan University  
Track and Field

### Isaac Patrick

Kalamazoo College  
Diving

### Abby Milliken

Hope College  
Swimming

### Damari Lawler

Jackson College  
Basketball

### Angeleah Campbell

Owens Community College  
Basketball

## KALAMAZOO CENTRAL

### Kameron Bean

Albion College  
Basketball

### Lexie Kowalski

Albion College  
Soccer

### Eliot Goerge

Alma College  
Baseball

### Jamar Minniefield-Dobbins

Aquinas College  
Track and Field

### Johnny Edwards

Aquinas College  
Basketball

### T.J. Terrentine

Aquinas College  
Basketball

### Kiya Bowman

Miami of Ohio/Eastern Michigan University  
Diving

### Raphael Finjap

Ferris State University  
Track and Field

### Taveon Vaughn

Grand Rapids Comm. College  
Basketball

### Aiden Thomas

Grand Valley State University  
Football

### Andrew Wright

Grand Valley State University  
Track and Field

### Mason Hoenle

Kalamazoo Valley Community College  
Baseball

### Ty'Vaughn Jackson

Kalamazoo Valley Community College  
Basketball

### Ava Fellings

Lake Forest College  
Softball

### David Williams

Michigan Technological University  
Football

### Jeremiah Marshall

Muskegon Community College  
Track and Field

### Isaiah Theodile

Oakland University  
Basketball

### Finlay Cane

University of Olivet  
Soccer

### Mia Dean

University of Olivet  
Bowling

### Alex Mares Viveros

University of Olivet  
Soccer

### Te'Asia Ponder

University of Olivet  
Cheer

### Ty Billings

Saginaw Valley State University  
Cross Country

### Curtis Whitfield

Saginaw Valley State University  
Football

### Jack Casper

Spring Arbor University  
Soccer

### Delanie Rimes

Wayne State University  
Swimming

### Elijah Thompson

Wayne State University  
Cross Country

### Emma Thorpe

Wayne State University  
Cheer

### Aaliyah Young

Wayne State University  
Track and Field

“  
**WHAT YOU  
CAN'T SEE,  
CAN HURT  
THEM.**

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- Own or rent a home built before 1978
- Are pregnant, or have a child age 5 or under living in the home or visiting grandchildren, nieces or nephews (6+ hrs/week)
- Meet household income guidelines (≤ 80% AMI)

Funding for this FREE program ends December 1, 2026.

Learn  
More at



**KNHS.org**

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# Congratulations to the Class of 2026!



Kalamazoo Central Assistant Principal Freddie McGee congratulates Cameron Kooy during commencement.

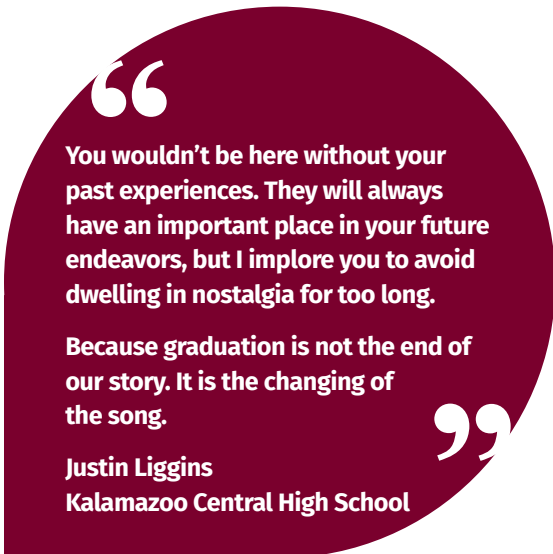


Chloe Jacobs makes her entrance during the KILP commencement at Chenery Auditorium.



“Titles fade. Popularity fades. Even achievements eventually become memories. But the risks you take, the chances you’re brave enough to pursue, those are the stories that stay with you long after high school.”

JaVarious Bennett-Coleman  
Loy Norrix High School



“You wouldn’t be here without your past experiences. They will always have an important place in your future endeavors, but I implore you to avoid dwelling in nostalgia for too long.”

Because graduation is not the end of our story. It is the changing of the song.

Justin Liggins  
Kalamazoo Central High School



Paul Evans and Savannah Roberts share big smiles before commencement begins for Loy Norrix High School.



Sofia Pacheco, Ramiah Vosburg, and De'Mya Davis-Robinson take a moment to strike a pose before the Phoenix High School commencement ceremony begins.



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# KPS Teachers Awarded Excellence in Education Educator Incentive Grants

THE EXCELLENCE in Education program awards scholarships to some of the highest achieving students in the county each year.

This year, the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA) also awarded 10 Educator Incentive Grants. The grants provide funding for teachers and administrators in Kalamazoo County schools to explore new ideas to enhance teaching styles, and to motivate and inspire their students.

Two KPS teachers were honored with Incentive Grants.



Kalamazoo Central High School teacher **Emeka Debyser** plans to travel to Senegal for 11 days to participate in the "Senegal Teranga French Educator Immersion Experience" with the Vive l'Expérience program.

Debyser will engage in authentic cultural experiences with students, teachers, artists, and local families, in order to share the culture of Francophone Africa with high school French students. This will broaden students' perspectives on where French is spoken, and inspire students and colleagues to respect other cultures by being life-long learners, studying languages, and traveling abroad. She hopes

to infuse French lessons with cultural information about Senegal, and she plans to begin a penpal writing project, allowing students in Kalamazoo to communicate in French about their interests, culture, and dreams with students in Senegal.



Winchell Elementary School music teacher **Jeanna Cervantes Hickman** will complete her OAKE Kodály Music Education Certification — Levels I, II, and III — at The Kodály Institute of St. Thomas, in St. Paul, Minn., a nationally endorsed, world-renowned teacher education program in music education pedagogy, and in the Kodály teaching model in particular.

Upon earning her Kodály certification, Hickman will be able to assist the district in developing appropriate grade-level scope and sequence curricula based on Kodály pedagogical research in cultural authenticity, and include Kodály-based activities and lessons in the curricula. She expects students will see improvements in their tonal and rhythmic music literacy, and be able to hear rhythmic and tonal patterns, dictate patterns by ear, and read iconic tonal representations.

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For Full List of Concerts, visit [KalamazooArts.org](http://KalamazooArts.org)

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## Upcoming Events



**Maternal & Infant Health Summit**  
at Saginaw Valley State University (7400 Bay Rd)  
July 15th, 2026 8am-3pm

**KYD Net - National Day of Summer Learning**  
at Bronson park (200 S Rose St.)  
July 16th, 2026 9am-4pm

# Congratulations!

Peyton Duguid, Henry Dutcher, Aiden Dyksterhouse, Johnny Edwards march into Wings Event Center at the beginning of commencement for Kalamazoo Central.



Heidi Cruz Ramirez, Zekarii Cobbs, and Angeleah Campbell laugh as official Loy Norrix graduates at the end of their commencement ceremony.



Ilse Lopez-Flores and Yesly Rodas-Escobar excitedly wait for the Phoenix graduation to begin.

“

Growth isn't just about achievement. It's about character.

The difference between people who transform their lives and people who stay the same isn't talent or luck. It's willingness. It's showing up when it's uncomfortable. The idea of succeeding is what gets us through that process. We all need to be reminded that we already have what we need. The question isn't whether we can grow — it's whether we will.

”

Kylie Ruiz  
Loy Norrix High School



Kalamazoo Central's Emma Thorpe, Aaliyah Young, Vee Nguyen, and Armani Pompey are ready to lead with Giant footsteps after graduation.



Angel Garcia delivers one of the keynote speeches during the 2026 KILP commencement.



Kalamazoo Central Principal Valerie Boggan hands diplomas to twins Avery Berish, left, and Natalie Berish at graduation.



Loy Norrix's Israel Powers takes a moment to fist bump teacher Michael Wright after receiving his diploma at the Loy Norrix graduation ceremony.



**ON THE FRONT COVER**

From upper left: Cory Roberts, Abla Attisso, Amillian Pratt and Zion Pratt, Mostafa Solaiman. From middle left: Aiden Dyksterhouse, Asmaa Ghntawi and Alaa Al Diab, Bjorn Peterson, Kylie Ruiz. Lower right corner: Lauren DeYoung.



La'Mon Lowery, ZaCole Lottie and Elijah Headricks laugh together as they prepare to walk across the stage at the Phoenix graduation.

“  
 Every day, whether we realized it or not, we chose community over division. We chose to sit beside one another, learn from one another, and grow alongside people whose lives looked different from our own. And as we leave this place, I hope we continue making that choice. To choose empathy over hatred. Connection over division. And humanity over fear.  
 ”  
 Lauren DeYoung  
 Kalamazoo Central High School



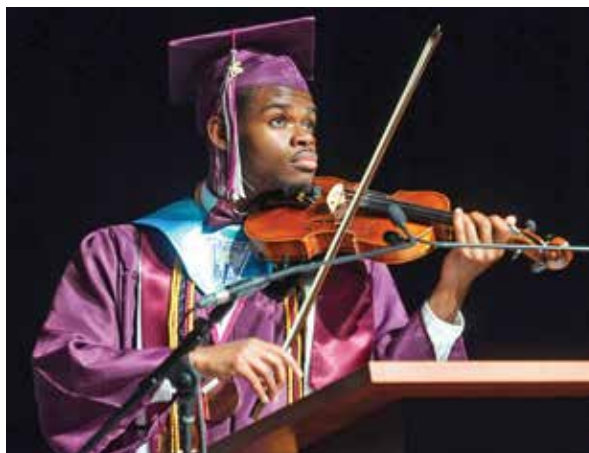
The excitement of graduating shows on Grayson Intgroen's face as she waits for the start of the Loy Norrix commencement at Wings Event Center.



KILP Principal Kim Kirshman hands valedictorian Mya Leslie her diploma at graduation.



“  
 As we leave this place, may we carry the confidence to paint boldly, the patience to sit with the hard moments, and the courage to keep going even when the picture doesn't make sense. Because one day, we'll look back and realize it was never about making a perfect painting. It was about creating something honest.  
 ”  
 Javaeh Jones  
 Phoenix High School



Justin Liggins added drama with his violin performance at the Kalamazoo Central graduation.



Holly Wolfe proudly shows off her diploma at Loy Norrix's graduation ceremony.

# Loy Norrix High School 2026 Graduates

Abate, Dominic Michael  
 Agate, Elizabeth Hailey Marie  
 Ahmad, Sanaa A  
 Al Diab, Alaa  
 Albertson, Nevan Daniel  
 Alexander, Zaniya Danielle  
 Alfaro-Chaj, Ashlin Rashell  
 Alhasan, Farah Abdulzarak  
 Alhasan, Fardosa Abdulzarak  
 Alhasan, Nour Zain Subhi  
 Alvarez, Alia Isabel  
 Andrie, Thomas James  
 Aranda, Diana Camila  
 Arnold, Nayshawn Jonathan  
 Ashby-Wade, Kalan Jay  
 Atwell, Kameron Jules  
 Bahrou, Felix Arkan  
 Baker, Christopher Wayne  
 Baker, Max  
 Ballard, A'Lyssa Tra'Ny  
 Banuelos, Jesus  
 Bartig, Cloey Lynne  
 Baublis, Lilla Mary  
 Bello-Tomax, Joshua Isaac  
 Bennett-Coleman, Ja'Various  
 La'Vonne  
 Benny, Cameron Charles  
 Beougher, Simon Burrell  
 Black, Micah Daniel  
 Bledsoe, William  
 Block, Oliver Derek  
 Boyea, Noelan Jon  
 Bradley, Desmond MacLean  
 Brent, Ruby Scout  
 Bridges, Theodore Grant  
 Brown, Aria Grace  
 Buddemeier, Wyatt Andrew  
 Burton, Claralise Marie  
 Burton, Elliot Joseph  
 Cabrera-Soto, Kimberly  
 Cachero, Zoe Elizabeth  
 Campbell, Angeleah Storm  
 Canda, Mijana Jaselle  
 Canfield, Maria Aaronovna  
 Carr, James Latez  
 Carrera-Rios, Juliet Dorothy  
 Carrier, Kent Russell  
 Carter, Danijah Kannise  
 Cartwright, Alora Illana  
 Casnave, Tyrees Dontae  
 Cervantes-Jimenez, Sherlyn  
 Cervantes-Rosillo, Jose Luis  
 Chappa, Madeline Jean  
 Chaudhari, Kajalben  
 Chirinos Vargas, Inner  
 Leandro  
 Clark, A'amarionna Lashay  
 Nya'nna  
 Clark, Jayla Nicole  
 Clopton-Jackson, Martell  
 Lamonte  
 Cobbs, Zekarii Soleil  
 Cooper, Jaila Milan  
 Coppage, Macarius  
 Corbins, Julian-Javon  
 Cordero, Isaiah David Li  
 Cordova, Manuel  
 Coston, Jazz Magdalene  
 Coutu, Amelie Soleil  
 Cruz-Ramirez, Heidi Dakari  
 Cruz, Gabino Damajiao  
 Ricardo  
 Damashek, Alice Gracy  
 Davis-Walker, Tri'stan Karnell  
 Davis, Anajah Doretha-Lee  
 Davis, Reed Asa  
 Deleon, Anahi Ivette  
 DeRuyscher, Michael William  
 Dinehart, Elise Isabel  
 Doren, Connor Thomas  
 Doud, Olivia Sol  
 Douma, Harper Shepley  
 Douma, Tenley Margaret  
 Duane, Braddoc Alexander  
 Duguay, Dylan Jackson  
 Dunigan, Ahdaysia Emonni  
 Easley, Jonah Michael  
 Eaves, Damarious Sean  
 DeWayne  
 Edmonson, Jamiya Latrice  
 Ekumbaki, Plamedie Bolee  
 Elajouz, Jean Abdallah  
 English, De'Asia Ambre  
 Evans, Paul Jai  
 Ewing, Mary Patricia  
 Eyre, Alayna Melanie  
 Flores, Adaliz Lizette  
 Flynn, Ophelia Fahey  
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 Franco, Jaylen Alexander  
 Freed, Zoe Maarieyah  
 Freestone, Henry Cameron  
 Friedrich, Dylan Thomas  
 Fuller, Zyaire Mathew  
 Gagie, Samuel Jack  
 Garay-Martinez, Jasmin  
 Garay-Ramirez, Ana Karina  
 Garcia-Hernandez, Yareli  
 Alondra  
 Garcia, Miley Emely  
 Garcia, Roberto Gabriel  
 Gardner, D'mareon Lee  
 Gardner, Zakyla Keondra  
 Garza, Wyatt  
 Gast, Maci Mckay  
 Ghntawi, Asmaa Hassan  
 Gill, Kiana Marie



**Proud smiles are on display from Loy Norrix's James Carr, Mariah Lee, Jaila Cooper, Sariah Lawrence, and Heidi Cruz-Ramirez before graduation.**

Giramata, Ines  
 Givan, Gregory Lamar  
 Goldstein, Iris Aurora  
 Gomez-Smith, Julian Andres  
 Gonzales, Isabella  
 Gonzalez Aguilar, Zoe  
 Gonzalez, Isaiah  
 Gordon, Cordae D'Angelo  
 Green, Dreonna Kaleah  
 Grubaugh, David Jaxon  
 Guy, Malia Kiana  
 Hallett, Lucianna Rose  
 Hamilton, Kaitlyn Elizabeth  
 Hanks, Taliyah Sanaa  
 Hare, Jonavan D'Sean  
 Harn, Alice Elizabeth  
 Herdegen, Sofia Marie  
 Hernandez Torres, Teresa  
 Hernandez-Morales, Susana  
 Jackelyn  
 Hernandez, Dominic  
 Hernandez, Rose  
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 Holm, Anniken Patel  
 Hunt, Konner Alan  
 Hussaini, Hania  
 Intgroen, Grayson  
 Iocca, Trey S  
 Isham, Nicolis Devon  
 Ixcot Marroquin, Juan  
 Oswaldo  
 Jackson-West, Da'Vari LaDon  
 Jackson, Dayquwayn  
 James, Amirah Lynn  
 James, Katherine Jeanette  
 James, Sophia Therese  
 Jenkins, Kamaria  
 Jennings, Robin Elizabeth  
 Fritz  
 Johnson, August Mark  
 Johnson, Walter  
 Jones-Brashers, Jabria  
 Briana  
 Jones, David Lamar  
 Jones, Nayomi Sky  
 Jumanne-Marshall, Kenya  
 Adenike  
 Kadaluka, Mutisunge  
 Kays, Sophia Anne  
 Kettmann, Matthew David  
 Kirkpatrick, Aspen Jamie-  
 Lynn  
 Knight, Tykasa  
 Kubiak, Kayla Anne  
 Kwayes, Meys Hani  
 Lam, Jackson Kenneth Ming  
 Yan  
 Landau, Grayson Harley  
 Lawler, Damari Jamiel  
 Lawrence, Sariah  
 Leake, Aria C  
 Lee, John'Nay Jada Jontece-  
 Faye  
 Lee, Jordan Jamiel Anthony  
 Lee, Mariah  
 Lepley, Gavin Gardner  
 Lewis, Aniyah Marie  
 Lewis, Chase Alexander  
 Littlejohn, Shana La'Tia  
 Lynne  
 Loncharte, MaryAnn Pearl  
 Lopez, Alexander Gabriel  
 Lowry, Emma Lynn  
 Lucas-Mejia, Eduardo  
 Luchies, Madison Caroline  
 Lukwaro, Zimani Aron  
 Mahar, Lillian Irene  
 Mancilla-Alonso, Jaydelyn  
 Mangum, DeVonta  
 Manzanares Paredes, Nolvía  
 Sarahy  
 Martin, Amari C.  
 Martinez, Damien Patrick  
 Maximus  
 Martinez, Jazmin  
 Maxson, Michael Luke  
 McCormick, Teagan Miklee  
 McKinney, Chris Durrell  
 McMillon, Darius  
 McNeil, Madison Avery  
 Medina Escalante, Emilio  
 Daniel  
 Mejia Sales, Uriel  
 Mejia-Garcia, Nancy  
 Yaraletzy  
 Meles, Awot Kehase  
 Mendez Benitez, Frank  
 Michael  
 Mercadal, Violet  
 Merritt, Katelynn Grace  
 Message, Tuyikorere  
 Milliken, Abigail Elizabeth  
 Mims, Natalie Nicole  
 Miner-Kingston, Jazmyne  
 Karenece  
 Mobarez, Shabnam  
 Montero, Levi Enrique  
 Moore, Griffin Robert  
 Morales-Amates, Angely  
 Estrella  
 Morales-Sanchez, Nicolas  
 Morris, Eva Marie  
 Mosqueda Montoya, Nayeli  
 Mosqueda, Natali Denise  
 Motton, Jaylind Donje'  
 Munder Lazaro, Emmanuel  
 Murphy, Amelia Grace  
 Ngabo, Patrick  
 Nochebuena, Samantha  
 Noori, Abuzar Shah  
 Noori, Shukriya Shah  
 Oberlee, Samuel Fletcher  
 Ortiz-Ponce, Juan Enrique  
 Palmar Hernandez, Nicole  
 Victory  
 Palmer, Lakia KeAsia-Ronae  
 Patrick, Isaac John  
 Patterson, Darby Windsor  
 Patton, Sarah Belle  
 Pavlik, Eliot Thomas  
 Peake-Wright, Adrieana  
 Irene

Peake, Mekhi Antonio-Nasir  
 Perez Vazquez, Emily Nicole  
 Perkins, Monica Annette  
 Perrin, Nicholas  
 Peterson, Miyah Tiaria Janay  
 Phillips, Jayden Michael  
 Phillips, Quinton Malek  
 Robert  
 Pickett, Carter Matthew  
 Pingel, Caleb Joseph  
 Polderman, Maxwell Joseph  
 Pollard, Margaret Esther  
 Field  
 Powe, Martel Lee  
 Powers, Israel David  
 Prude, Maliq Omari  
 Pueblo, Abigail Melissa  
 Putnam, Trinity Rose  
 Quayle, Zora Ann  
 Radford, Alyssandra Sienna  
 Radley, Alyssa Faye  
 Rafferty, Lauren Anne  
 Ramirez-Hernandez, Evelyn  
 Ramirez-Quintero, Destiny  
 Ramirez, Dulce Margarita  
 Ramsdell, Matthew William  
 Ray, Brianna Michelle  
 Razo-Jeronimo, Angel  
 Reeves, Jaden Kendall  
 William  
 Reigle, Elijah William  
 Reigle, Izabella Anne  
 Reigle, Layne Michael  
 Reilly, Benjamin Preston  
 Richards, Adelaide N  
 Robert, Savannah Elizabeth  
 Roberts, Cory Alexander  
 Roman, Everardo Reymundo  
 Roman, Nicolas  
 Rubin, Isaac Joseph  
 Ruiz, Kylie Marie  
 Ruiz, Roberto  
 Rustenholtz, Zachary James  
 Timothy  
 Salazar, Vinnie  
 Sanders-Banks, Lucas  
 Santos, Itamar Alejandro  
 Schrader, Sage Vashon  
 Schultheiss, Micah James  
 Schultz, Amanda Jo  
 Scott, Daysia Destiny  
 Shockey, Thomas Calvin  
 Manwell  
 Sinclair, Jacob Bryan Claud  
 Sleper, Eden Elisabeth  
 Sloan, Connor Daniel  
 Smith, Emma Leeann  
 Smith, Jha'Nhi  
 Southbird, Jack  
 Sprague, Lucas Emmanuel  
 Stefano, Karlee Kathrine  
 Stewart, AnMariuah Naomi  
 Streeter, Bridger  
 Strong, Kathleen Carol  
 Stuart, Tamar Ray  
 Suarez, Alaina Cameron  
 Swager, Kellan D  
 Teal, Ashlyn Ann  
 Terrentine, Ace  
 Thomas, Donnavan B  
 Thompson, Alexander L.  
 Timmer, Miya  
 Torres Sanchez, Leonardo  
 Fabian  
 Turner, LAKIESHA Ye'na  
 Vallier, Kellsey Marie  
 Vancayseele Mabin Stanislas,  
 Wayana Kamalah  
 Vargava, Paola  
 Velasquez, Vanessa  
 Verbrigghe, Aiden James  
 Villegas, Andrea Ariana  
 Vincent, Nolen Anthony  
 Vogts, Jayden Jeffery  
 Wadsworth-Curcuru, Alice  
 Olivia  
 Walker, Alyvia Gyzelle Earlie  
 Walker, Julian Amari  
 Walker, Kamarionna  
 Walker, Millennium William  
 Wall Emerson, Paisley Grace  
 Ware, Andrea Aleece  
 Watson-Williams, Adam  
 Samuel  
 Watson, Timothy Lloyd  
 Wazny, Zoe Madelyn  
 Webb, Shaniyah Amarie  
 Alivia  
 Weber, Bridgett Eileen  
 Wedge, David Allen  
 Wendt, Felix Thomas  
 White, Jrya Leivon  
 Whittaker, Benjamin Asher  
 Leo  
 Wiedmayer, Kaieem S  
 Williams, Alison May  
 Williams, Shi'ni Denise  
 Winchester, Violet Elizabeth  
 Wojdylak, Raya Corryn  
 Wolfe, Holly Grace  
 Wright, Chrus Kahmire  
 Wright, Samiya Renee Lynn  
 Wynn, Alayshia Sharmece  
 Yarworth, Avalon Lily Sophia  
 Ybarra, Natalya Ann  
 Young Durham, Willow  
 Zarate-Torres, Natalie  
 Elizabeth

# Kalamazoo Central High School 2026 Graduates

Abdel-Messieh, Sophia  
Analise  
Al Hariri, Abdul Rahman  
Mohammed Khir  
Al Jaouni, Abdullah Ahmad  
Al Jaouni, Mohammad  
Ahmad  
Alfaraj, Hadi Majdi  
Abdulmajeed  
Altayara, Alwaleed Wahid  
Anakwa, Kofi Appah-  
Sampong Ani  
Andrick, Aiden Paulo  
Anthony-Posey, Diamond  
Nasya  
Armstrong, Damion Riley  
Arnold, Daijon DehRon  
Atkinson, Sharlee Elise  
Atlas, Alayah  
Bacalia, Brooklyn McClain  
Baker, Elise Dawn  
Baker, Luke Dierre'  
Balint, Ava Christine-  
DeLeeuw  
Bangu, Joana-Parfaite Puati  
Baraka, Tazir Amaru  
Barnhart, Elliot Lorraine  
Barrett, Gweryth Lily  
Bates, Nariya Elyssa  
Bean, Kameron Reece  
Bearinger, Ashlyn May  
Bell, Christopher Darnell  
Bellenger, Darius Josiah  
Berens, Kirsten  
Berish, Avery Lynn  
Berish, Natalie Rose  
Beristain, Nicolas  
Biddle, Peyton Ashleigh  
Bierema, Keegan Michael  
Bijani, John Luca  
Billings, Ty Jacoby  
Birl, Mikaylah Christine  
Blanks, Mariah Simone  
Blue, Sophia Jane  
Bol, Jason Russell  
Bowen, Khy'Miere  
Bowman, Kiya Lynn  
Boyd, Ivan Gregory Lloyd  
Boyd, Lauryn Tamorah  
Brack, Nathan Cooper  
Bradford, Jaqurius Lavell  
Bragg, Jameir Maki  
Broughton, Major Benjamin  
Brown, Andre Ziair Lemond  
Brown, James McKinley  
Brown, Jesslyn Gwyn  
Buchanan, Azryelle Renae  
Burns, Alyssa May  
Burrel, Jacob Matthew

Butler, Aaliyah  
Campbell-Sherrod, Odysse  
Myceal  
Cane, Finlay Christopher  
Carnegie, Claire Marie  
Carroll, Maitreya  
Carter, Emmanuel Yirmaya  
Carter, Kani Robert Lee  
Carter, Majolie Rose  
Casper, Jack Gregory  
Castillo-Castaneda, Regina  
Chambers, Asia Marie  
Chatel, Eloise Valerie  
Clark, Kyla Jean  
Clark, Quinton Rugano  
Coker, Dante J  
Coleman, Layla Rene  
Collins, Charles Deangelo  
Coonfer, Lillian Paige  
Crape, Na'Ryah  
Crawford, Geramiah Albert  
Cruz-Davis, Miguel Gustavo  
Davis, Jaden Elizabeth  
Davis, Kiren  
Day, Luke Michael  
Dean, Amelia Elizabeth  
DeGrote, Joji Mikayla  
DeYoung, Lauren Michelle  
Dixon-Hendrix, Nieva Monae  
Dixon, Ka'Niya Tamara  
Dixon, Trey/Vion Makhi  
Duguid, Peyton Bailey  
Dunigan, Elijah Curtis James  
Dutcher, Henry Louis  
Dyksterhouse, Aiden Joseph  
Edwards, Jonathan Prynce  
Elkafrawy, Anas  
Elkantar, Emily  
Ellis, Alex Michael Carter  
Evens, Jacob Daniel  
Fellings, Ava Alay  
Ferrall, Cameron James  
Ferrall, Kara Grace  
Finjap, Raphael Tchonkam  
Fiore, Miranda Mae  
Fisher, Trace Andre  
Flores, William Dean  
Foreman, Kaylyn Marie  
Foster, Aniya Lavay  
Franklin, Aquaries Ricardo  
Trevon  
Frazier, Alayah Lexie  
Freeman-Mckenzie, Jayden  
Graylin  
Furaha, Nyota  
Furman, Anna Lynn  
Galicia-Bueno, Nathan  
Alberto Franco  
Gardner, Saiveon Joemon



**Kalamazoo Central's choir offers another rousing graduation performance under the direction of teacher Julie Pelligrino-Hartman.**

Geer, Zachary Cameron  
Girouard, Adalyn Marie  
Gleaton, Anna Elizabeth  
Goerge, Eliot R  
Goheen, Parker David Robert  
Gonzalez, Aryn Amia  
Goodman, Kaden Jeffrey  
Gordon, Aria Kay  
Graham, Maya Winter  
Greene, Tylay Dontay  
Grimm, Lydia Kaprice  
Grooten, Kaitlyn Sophia  
Gullon-Brock, Dante Gabriel  
Gumbis, Isaac Douglas  
Haines-Ward, TiYanna  
MoNet  
Hakizimana, Eleazar  
Halifax, Carter Michael  
Hall, Autumn Giana Makell  
Hall, Brooklynn Elizabeth  
Hammitte, Quintin Lamont  
Hanson, Alexander Logan  
Harris, Lily Irene  
Heileman, Draven Marshall  
Hendrix, Magnolia Anne  
Henley, Savannah Marley  
Hernandez, Leobardo  
Hidrogo Toca, Camila  
Hill, Madison Elyse Shanelle  
Hoelne, Mason Wesley  
Holmes, Camille Elizabeth  
Horn, Wesley Lewis  
Hough, Ayden Lee  
Huff, Myles Mahlon  
Hussein, Dewilo  
Ingram, Zion Michael  
Ivy, Kendle Alysse  
Jackson, Kamarria Janelle

Jackson, LaMareya Ann  
Jackson, Ty'vaughn Anthony  
Jeffries, Taraji Nicole  
Jennings, Elijah Douglas  
Jeronimo-Cabrera, Rafael  
Johnson, Aniyah Lily  
Katherine  
Johnson, Aquarius  
Johnson, Ja'Hyme Eric-ZaYon  
Johnson, Lanyiah Sonae  
Johnson, Samuel  
Jude, Lucas Carter  
Kasela, Mvunza Samuela  
Kayisire, Olivier  
Kean, Dylan Patrick  
Keck, Cameron Joseph  
Kelley, Anthony Odell  
Kidd, Brayden Scott  
Kirk, Chance Jose  
Klein, Michael Quincy  
Kooy, Cameron John  
Kostrzewa, Abebech Fiona  
Kowalski, Lexi Jae  
Kuder, Mason Brennen  
Kwei, Jordan Sowah  
Lamphiear, Brent Lee-  
Thomas  
Land, Isis Linette  
Lee, Sanaii Angel Lakesia  
Lent, Joshua Kristopher  
Lewis, Brooklyn Claire  
Liggins, Justin Lafayette  
Lindberg, Madalyn Marie  
Lockett, Austin James  
Lockett, Dallas Anthony  
Lockett, MacKenzie  
Macey, Stanley Carter  
Macharia, Derrick Richard

Mackerel, Keylan Eugene  
Mahone, Jay'Den Thomas  
Majaliwa, Antoni  
Makos, Jareth Tyrone  
Marcikic, Emerson Rae  
Mares Viveros, Alexander  
Marion, Alekh David  
Marshall, Jeremiah Direce  
Martinez, Nadia Kirakazenia  
McClain, Sha'kiya Renay  
McCoy, Daviya Leona  
McDougall, Odin Scott  
Michalski, Cora Danielle  
Miller, Elijah Joel  
Minaidis-Evans, Ioannis  
John  
Minniefield-Dobbins, Jamar  
Lavez  
Mister, Marcus Lee  
Mitchell, Desmond Elijah  
Mitewu, Obed Lumbamba  
Moaiery, Lily Shahla  
Moore, Jayden Ahmad  
Morgan, Jazz'myn Arshay  
Morris, Anielah  
Mostafa, Mays El Nour  
Mowry, Sophia Ai  
Muhammad, Saphira Chris  
Amazin  
Myles, Carissa Elaine  
Newell, Kaleema Renee  
Newsome-Muhammad,  
Gavin Alim  
Nguyen, Vee D.  
Nichols, Jaden Caleb  
Olagbemi, Oluwatomiwa  
Ott, Shawn Marcus  
Paivarinta, Michael Gilbert

Palmitessa, Alexander Filip  
Pauls, Charlotte Rose  
Pauls, Evelyn Rose  
Peake, Yazmin Yemon  
Perrine, Lily Jean  
Phillips, Sydney Alyse  
Pines, Raniyah LaRaye  
Pompey, Armani Makayla  
Ponder, Te'asia Ennovy-Alon  
Potts, Amiriya Justus  
Jar'eem  
Pratt, Amilliar Arshae  
Pratt, Zion Demiere-Orlando  
Procurier, Ava Martell  
Prude, DJ Dawan  
Qureshi, Aisha Tuaha  
Ray, Jayden Amir  
Ricardo-Romero, Santiago  
Rice, Jermaine Davar  
Rimes, Delanie Christine  
Rivera, Anessa Marie  
Robinson, Judas Harlon  
Phillip  
Robinson, Sy  
Rogan, Lara Garielle  
Bagalihog  
Rogers-Bradley, Talaya D.  
Rosado, Rihanna  
Ross, Kay'den Christopher  
Sackett, Catalina Veah  
Sanchez Arevalo, Javier  
Antonio  
Sanders, Marianna Dana  
Brooke  
Schink, Jaiden Jacklynn  
Schramm, Adam David  
Scott-Reece, Martavion  
Scott, Elliott Milton  
Seya, Espoir Malembi  
Seya, Rose  
Shafer, Anthony Joseph  
Shafer, Giavanna Marie  
Shelton, Aziah Marie  
Silva, Alessandra Lupita  
Simmons, Myreese Navaeh  
Slate, Sophia Marie  
Slaughter, Aleyah Breanna  
Smalley, Astra Keaton  
Wordelman  
Smith, A'nyia Lon Nichole  
Smith, Anisah Denise  
Smith, Kyle  
Solomon, Kayonna  
Somerville, Rashya Queen  
Stevenson, Jaeden Marquice  
Steward, Morgan Arielle  
Sylvestre, Abigael Jasmine  
Symko, Tyler William  
Tarver, Amir

Taylor, Lauren Diane  
Terrentine, Timothy Robert  
Theodile, Isaiah Israel  
Thomas, Aiden Christian  
Thomas, U'Nydice Courtney  
Thompson, Elijah Levy  
Thompson, Rhiannon Ariana  
Thompson, Sa'Mayia Patrice  
Thorpe, Emma Christine  
Tigues, Darrion Terrell  
Tillman, Keylin  
Timmerman, Alexander  
Toliver, Amani Ruby  
Torres Ventura, Ashley  
Troxler, Jada C  
Underwood, Thomas Ji'yar  
Mikel  
Urness, Calliope Tabor Keiser  
Uwamahoro, Alice  
Uwineza, Sarah  
Vallar, Nicholas  
VanAvery, Ryan Aaron  
VanderRoest, Eva Jane  
Vaughn, Taveon Masen  
Gordon  
Vazquez, Jayden Alberto  
Vincent, Jaylan Joshua  
Voelker, Owen Matthew  
Wabindato, MaKenzy Beau  
Wallace, Laquerion Yaacov  
Warren, Ka'Naria La'nea  
Haven  
Wells, Blake Robert  
White, Alecia Marie  
White, Amonni Sha'ronn-  
Clinique  
White, Antonio TreDale  
White, Savion Steven  
White, Vanessa Marie  
Whitfield, Curtis Lee  
Whitfield, Di' Jon Kawon  
Whitfield, Trever McKay  
Wild, Hunter Ray  
Williams Johnson, Aubrey  
Williams, Claire Elizabeth  
Williams, David L  
Willis, Raymond  
Wilson, Vanessa Terese  
Winters, Brooke  
Woods, Billy Gene  
Woods, Kamryne N  
Woolfolk, Narihya Ranae  
Works, Edward Claude  
Wright, Andrew Todd  
Yanilla, Amellia Rene  
Leiterman  
Young, Aaliyah Patrice

# Phoenix High School 2026 Graduates

Al Hamoud, Abdeljalil Ibrahim  
 Alkhalid, Amna Kamal Abdulrazaq  
 Allen, Jahray James  
 Alsbaie, Farah Moahamad  
 Alsbaie, Marah Moahamad  
 Anderson, Seriannu Lavi  
 Attisso, Abla Enyonam Josiane  
 Awais, Muhammad  
 Azizi, Sahar  
 Azizi, Sana  
 Baptista, Donacien  
 Benjamin, Amonty Lavar  
 Benjamin, Amorrae Triashawn  
 Bina, Yeganehzeinab  
 Bright, Terryonna Jeannine  
 Claveria-Armijo, Cruz Krystian  
 Collier, Crystal Michelle  
 Colunga, Anthony Jose  
 Craft, Krysty'Anna Makenzie  
 Daoud, Mohamed Albager  
 Davis-Robinson, De'Mya Carol Lasha

Duckett, Salinah Dean  
 Elsholz, Levi Andrew  
 Foster, Nehemiah Amin  
 Frierson, Dequarius Shawn  
 Fuerte, Ariana Salazar  
 Fuller, Ja'Shawn Armonye  
 Furaha, Diane  
 Gaines, Kirstyn Kaylynn  
 Garrett, Shayna Reanne  
 George, Khamyra Janelle  
 Gervacio, Alan Osiel  
 Gilroy, Ryland Jude  
 Gordon, Selecia Aveya  
 Gul, Arfanullah  
 Hall, Kiora Lamera  
 Headricks, Elijah M  
 Hemphill, Dontray Tervon  
 Hooper, Angelee Unique  
 Hunsberger, Keith  
 Interiano-Martinez, Fatima Fabiola  
 Irakoze, Happy  
 Jackson, Dynasty Elaysha Annalis  
 Jackson, Zia Marie



**Phoenix High School Principal Ajamian Gardner congratulates Se'Maj Word on his graduation.**

Jones-Williams, Kyaira Kardai  
 Jones, Da'Veon Tyreece  
 Jones, Javaeh Annalee  
 Khel, Firoza  
 Knight, Jamarr Davionne  
 Knowlton, Alexis Victoria

Leyva Ortiz, Irving  
 Lopez Flores, Ilse Odalys  
 Lottie, Za'Cole A  
 Lowery, La'Mon Jamel  
 Lukendo, Lulacha  
 Martinez Beltran, Ezequiel  
 Mazei, L

McDonald, Nicarius Anthony Raymond  
 Medina Juarez, Samuel Baltazar  
 Mohamad, Abdulrahman Luqman  
 Moore, Areli A  
 Moore, Jedaiah Elaine  
 Moore, Raymone Antoinne  
 Mostafa, ILine Abdel  
 Ndombe, Isaac Francisco  
 Ndombe, Sara Liliana Garcia  
 Nikzad, Baktash  
 Niyonsenga, Uwera  
 Pacheco, Sofia  
 Palmer, Nakia Lee  
 Pasague, Kissley Vee Zalsos  
 Patton, John Ryan  
 Rolland-Jackson, Laquaila Lasha  
 Rolland-Jackson, Shaquaila Rena  
 Perez, Jesus  
 Qadour, Nour Al Dien Mohammed Saleh

Ramos Lopez, Eddie Yahel  
 Richardson, Sa'Nai Macolle  
 Rodas Escobar, Yesly Lucero  
 Rolland, Shakir Dontavion  
 Salarzai, Mohammad Sahel  
 Snyder, Josef Louis  
 Solaiman, Ahmad Mahmoud  
 Solaiman, Mostafa Mahmou  
 Torres Hernandez, Leobardo  
 Torres, Ulises Ramon  
 Triumph, Joy Eloghene  
 Tucker, Tre'Von Terell  
 VanDyke, Amaya Grace  
 Velasquez, Mariana  
 Virgil, Kieara Marie  
 Vosburg, Ramiah M  
 Whitmore, Elijah Jamell  
 Williams, Angel Crystal  
 Williams, Kheara Marie  
 Williams, Mikeese Oliver  
 Williams, Ty'Quala Nicole  
 Wilson, Victor Richard Timothy  
 Woods, Za'Marion Keshion  
 Word, Se'Maj Lee

## Excellence in Education Recognizes Student Achievement Across County

**E**XCELLENCE in Education recognizes the top-achieving high school seniors from Kalamazoo County's public and non-public high schools. This year, 45 seniors were selected for the honor, which comes with a \$1,500 scholarship.

"The Kalamazoo area has a long history of educational excellence and innovation, so it is fitting that we continue the tradition of honoring those practices through the Excellence in Education program," said committee chair Keevin O'Neill, superintendent of Vicksburg Community Schools.

A collaborative effort among all Kalamazoo County public and non-public schools, local foundations, educational groups and the business community, Excellence in Education was designed in 1986 to focus community attention on the academic and professional excellence of graduating high school seniors and educators within Kalamazoo area schools.

The Excellence in Education program is supported by a permanent endowment established at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation. Funding for the endowment was raised through the leadership of the Monroe-Brown Foundation, with strong support from local foundations, businesses, organizations, and individuals.

### KALAMAZOO CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

#### Kyla Clark

Attending: Undecided  
 Major: Biomedical Sciences  
 Influential Teacher: Itzel Gomez-Avalos

#### Anna Gleaton

Other H.S. Programs: Career & Technical Education  
 Attending: Michigan State University  
 Major: Engineering  
 Influential Teacher: Itzel Gomez-Avalos

#### Lucas Jude

Other H.S. Programs: KAMSC  
 Attending: Michigan State University  
 Major: Computer Science and Applied Mathematics  
 Influential Teacher: Rex Hafer

#### Joshua Lent

Other H.S. Programs: Kalamazoo Valley Community College  
 Attending: Western Michigan University  
 Major: Computer Science  
 Influential Teacher: Dawn Sharp

#### Elijah Thompson

Attending: Wayne State University  
 Major: Undecided  
 Influential Teacher: Michelle Fredrick

#### Brooke Winters

Other H.S. Programs: KAMSC  
 Attending: University of Michigan  
 Major: Chemistry  
 Influential Teacher: Ben Bakalyar

### LOY NORRIX HIGH SCHOOL

#### Lilla Baublis

Other H.S. Programs: KAMSC and Career & Technical Education  
 Attending: University of Massachusetts Amherst  
 Major: Environmental Science  
 Influential Teacher: Denis Shebukhov

#### MaryAnn Loncharte

Other H.S. Programs: KAMSC Career & Technical Education  
 Attending: Michigan Technological University  
 Major: Ecological Engineering and Wildlife Ecology and Conservation  
 Influential Teacher: Colleen Chapoton

#### Abigail Milliken

Other H.S. Programs: KAMSC  
 Attending: Western Michigan University or Hope College  
 Major: Chemistry and Spanish  
 Influential Teacher: Claudia Witt-Thomas

#### Isaac Patrick

Other H.S. Programs: KAMSC  
 Attending: Kalamazoo College (Heyl Scholar)  
 Major: Biochemistry  
 Influential Teacher: Morgan Kenbeek

#### Eliot Pavlik

Other H.S. Programs: KAMSC  
 Attending: University of Michigan  
 Major: Chemical Engineering  
 Influential Teacher: Matthew Porco

#### Thomas Shockey

Other H.S. Programs: KAMSC  
 Attending: Undecided  
 Major: Physics  
 Influential Teacher: Rachel Lerner

#### Connor Sloan

Other H.S. Programs: KAMSC  
 Attending: University of Michigan  
 Major: Engineering  
 Influential Teacher: Colleen Chapoton

# Congratulations to the Class of 2026!



Alyssandra Radford walks past her fellow Loy Norrix graduates after receiving her diploma at Wings Event Center!



Myreese Simmons listens to the speakers at the Kalamazoo Central High School 2026 commencement ceremony.



Superintendent Dr. Darrin Slade addresses the KILP Class of 2026 at Chenery Auditorium.

“

To any underclassmen that might be in here today, I want to give you a piece of advice. Don't be afraid of what others think of you. Don't let fear get in the way of you doing things. Have fun and take risks.

Mya Leslie, Kalamazoo Innovative Learning Program

”

## CHECK FOR TICKS



Ticks are most active in Michigan between the months of April to September. However, they can be active any time the temperature is above 40 °

Feel for bumps and look for tiny brown spots, especially in these areas: scalp, ears, underarms, belly button, waist & back, behind knees, & in between legs.



### How to remove a tick

- 1 Use fine-tip tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible.
- 2 Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Do not twist or jerk the tick.
- 3 After removal, clean the area with alcohol or soap and water.



**KALAMAZOO**  
COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
Health & Community Services Department

# 2026 KRESA Outstanding Achievement Awards Winners

**K**ALAMAZOO Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA) honored 94 outstanding students in Kalamazoo County at the 40th annual Outstanding Achievement Awards in April.

Outstanding students from Kalamazoo RESA's secondary education programs were nominated for this honor by their teachers and were recognized for their achievements in their respective programs. The KRESA Career Connect programs include:

- Career & Technical Education (CTE)
- Education for the Arts (EFA)
- Early/Middle College (EMC)
- Work-Based Learning (WBL)
- 2Gen
- Career Coaching
- CareerNOW
- Education Reconnection
- MyCITY

These Kalamazoo Public Schools students worked diligently in the classroom and the local community and were among the 94 recognized with Outstanding Achievement Awards. Students are listed by high school and their KRESA program is listed after their names.

## KALAMAZOO CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL



**Alwaleed Altayara**  
CTE, Information Technology, Cybersecurity



**Gwenyth Barrett**  
CTE, Automotive Technology, Heavy Equipment Maintenance



**Avery Berish**  
CTE, Educator Academy



**Raphael Finjap**  
CTE, Pharmacy Technician, Professional Health Science



**Kaitlyn Grooten**  
CTE, Horticulture



**Carter Halifax**  
CTE, Culinary Arts



**Ty Billings**  
CTE Rehabilitation Therapy, Health Science



**Quinton Clark**  
CTE, Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration, HVAC



**Ka'Niya Dixon**  
EFA, Intermediate Dance Studio



**Carissa Myles**  
CTE, Supply Chain, Marketing



**Marianna Sanders**  
EFA, Intermediate Dance Studio, Cosmetology/Barbering



**Lauren Taylor**  
CTE, Work-Based Learning



**Eva VanderRoest**  
EFA, 3D Computer Animation/Game Design



**Owen Voelker**  
CTE, Supply Chain, Work-Based Learning



**Amelia Yanilla**  
CTE, Medical Laboratory Science, Health Science

## LOY NORRIX HIGH SCHOOL



**Dominic Abate**  
CTE, Business Management & Administration, Work-Based Learning



**Kalan Ashby-Wade**  
CTE, Machine Tool



**Felix Bahrou**  
EFA, Advanced Musical Theatre



**“Sometimes, the hardest part of care *is getting to the appointment.*”**

Since 1991, the Shepherd's Center has provided personalized, door-to-door transportation for adults 60+ to health-related appointments. We're not just a ride service — we're a community. Our volunteer drivers offer compassion, conversation, and peace of mind along the way.

**SERVING ALL OF KALAMAZOO COUNTY**  
Now Expanding Service to Include Wheelchair- Accessible Transportation — through a partnership with Kalamazoo Metro!  
Visit [ShepherdsCenterKalamazoo.org](http://ShepherdsCenterKalamazoo.org) | (269) 383-1122



(continued on page 17)

## 2026 KRESA Outstanding Achievement Awards Winners

(continued from page 16)



**A'lyssa Ballard**  
EFA, Intermediate  
Dance Studio



**Ray Bartig**  
CTE, Cybersecurity,  
Computer Science



**Masha Canfield**  
CTE, Pharmacy  
Technician, Health  
Science



**Heidi Cruz-Ramirez**  
CTE, Business  
Management &  
Administration



**Dylan Duguay**  
CTE, Design, Art &  
Design Career Skills



**Dreonna Green**  
CTE, Cosmetology/  
Barbering



**Lucianna Hallett**  
CTE, Accounting



**MaryAnn Loncharte**  
CTE, Conservation  
Biology



**Emilio Medina  
Escalante**  
CTE, Mechatronics:  
Robotics &  
Automation



**Cameron Suarez**  
CTE, Design, Art &  
Design Career Skills

### PHOENIX HIGH SCHOOL



**Mostafa Solaiman**  
CTE, Computer  
Programming,  
Computer Science

## Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center 2026 Graduates from KPS

### LOY NORRIX

Aranda, Diana C.  
Baublis, Lilla M.  
Beougher, Simon B.  
Canfield, Maria A.  
Goldstein, Iris A.  
Grubaugh, David J.  
Holm, Anniken P.  
Lam, Jackson K.  
Lepley, Gavin G.  
Loncharte, MaryAnn P.  
Mercadal, Violet J.  
Milliken, Abigail E.  
Patrick, Isaac J.  
Pavlik, Eliot T.  
Perez Vazquez, Emily N.  
Shockey, Thomas  
Sloan, Connor D.  
Teal, Ashlyn A.

### KALAMAZOO CENTRAL

Balint, Ava  
Bierema, Keegan  
Fiore, Miranda M.  
Holmes, Camille E.  
Jennings, Elijah D.  
Jude, Lucas C.  
Lindberg, Madalyn M.  
Smalley, Oliver W.  
Winters, Brooke V.

### CORRECTION

In the May Excelsior, a cutline in a story about a Kalamazoo College science program should have read: Kalamazoo College student and Sisters in Science co-leader Pauline Hawkes enjoys helping elementary school students explore scientific concepts through fun, interactive experiments.



# KNIGHTS HEALTH CENTER



Serving Kalamazoo County  
residents between  
5 to 21 years old

### HEALTH CARE

- Sports physicals
- Illnesses & injuries
- Well child exams
- Immunizations
- STI testing
- And more

### MENTAL HEALTH

- Counseling
- ADHD
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Stress
- And more

### Make an Appointment:

**When: M-F 7-3:30**

**Where: Loy Norrix High School, 606  
E. Kilgore Rd, Kalamazoo MI**

**269-391-2843**

**HealthyKnights@kcalcounty.  
gov**

**Cost:** Fees for services will be billed directly to your insurance provider, this includes both private and Medicaid. There are not any co-pays, and you will not be sent a bill for what insurance doesn't cover. For families without insurance, services are free



# Five KPS Students Awarded Prestigious Heyl Scholarships for STEM Study at Kalamazoo College, WMU

**F**IVE Kalamazoo Public Schools graduates seeking to major in STEM-related fields have been named recipients of the Heyl Scholarship. Four will attend Kalamazoo College in 2026-27, while the fifth student will study nursing at Western Michigan University.

This year's KPS Heyl recipients attending Kalamazoo College are:

**Iris Goldstein**, Loy Norrix High School and the Kalamazoo Area Math and Science Center (KAMSC);

**Isaac Patrick**, Loy Norrix and KAMSC;

**Maria Canfield**, Loy Norrix and KAMSC; and

**Simon Beougher**, Loy Norrix and KAMSC.

Heyl scholar **Sage Schrader**, Loy Norrix, will attend the Western Michigan University Bronson School of Nursing.

The Heyl Scholarship Fund was

established in 1971 through the will of Dr. Frederick Heyl and Mrs. Elsie Heyl. Frederick Heyl was the first chemist at The Upjohn Company, later becoming a vice president at Upjohn and the company's first director of research.

When he retired in 1945, he had contributed to about 80 research papers and patents while also teaching chemistry at K. He maintained a lifelong passion for science and education and was awarded an

honorary Doctor of Science degree from Kalamazoo College in 1937.

Since 1971, Heyl scholarships have enabled hundreds of high school graduates from Kalamazoo County to attend K for STEM-focused majors or Western Michigan University for nursing, with renewable benefits that cover tuition, fees, housing, summer research, study abroad and a book allowance. The scholarship is renewable for up to four years.



Iris Goldstein



Isaac Patrick



Maria Canfield



Simon Beougher



Sage Schrader



City of Kalamazoo  
241 W South St  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

## If you're struggling to pay your water bill, we can help.

The City of Kalamazoo is making critical investments in our water and wastewater systems. These investments are funded by all of us through the rates we pay. Rates in Kalamazoo remain low compared to other communities, but we understand that rising costs may create hardships for some households. Financial and other aid options are listed below.

Payment plans and due date extensions are available. Call 311 or (269) 337-8000 for help. The Community Action Agency of Southwest Michigan can help low-income households pay overdue bills. Call 211 or 1-877-422-2726 for more information.

Consumers Energy offers a free home analysis that can help customers save money by reducing energy and water consumption. Call 1-888-316-8014 for more information.

[www.kalamazoocity.org/UtilityHelp](http://www.kalamazoocity.org/UtilityHelp)

Si necesita ayuda para pagar su factura de agua o alcantarillado, hay ayuda disponible. Para obtener información en español, llame al 311 o al 269 337-8000.

# KPS Meet Up and Eat Up Runs Through Aug. 7

**K**ALAMAZOO Public Schools announces the beginning of the Summer Food Service Program for children. Free meals will be made available to children 18 years of age and under or persons up to 26 years old who are enrolled in an educational program for the mentally or physically disabled that is recognized by a state or local public educational agency.

The meals will be provided without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability, and there will be no discrimination in the course of the meal service. The only stipulation for the free meals is that the meal be eaten on site.

## USDA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

**mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

**fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

**email:** Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



Meals will be provided at sites listed below. Sites and times are subject to change. Meals are free for children 18 and younger. No proof of income or application is required. Meals must be eaten on site. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Date	Location/Program	Address	Breakfast	Lunch
6/22-8/7	All Things Possible	2000 W. Michigan Ave.	9-9:30	12-12:30 M-F
6/22-8/7	Woods Lake KKIT	3215 Oakland Dr.	8:15-9:30	11-12:30 M-F
6/22-8/7	Boys and Girls Club	847 Portage St.	N/A	12-1 M-F
6/22-8/7	Eastside Neighborhood Association	1301 E. Main St.	10-10:30	1:30-2:30 M-Th
6/22-8/7	Interfaith	1037 Interfaith Blvd.	9:30-10	1-1:30 M-F
6/22-8/7	Maple YMCA	1001 W. Maple St.	9-9:45	11:45-12:45 M-F
6/22-8/7	Lincoln YMCA	912 Burdick St.	8-8:30	12-12:30 M-F
8/3-8/6	Milwood United Church	3919 Portage St.	N/A	12-12:30 M-Th
6/22-8/7	Mt. Zion Seeds	120 Roberson St.	N/A	12-12:30 M-F
6/22-8/7	New Genesis/Stones	1225 W. Paterson St	8:30-9:30	11:30-1 M-F
6/22-8/7	Douglass Community Association	1000 W. Paterson St.	N/A	5-5:30 M-F
6/22-8/7	Fox Ridge Apartments	1320 Fox Ridge	10-10:30	1-1:30 M-F
6/22-8/7	New Village	2500 St. Albans Way	9-9:45	12-12:45 M-F
6/22-8/7	Northeastern B&G/CIS	2433 Gertrude St.	8:15-8:45	11-12 and 1-1:30 M-F
6/22-8/7	Rockwell Park	1106 Trimble Ave.	9-9:45	12-12:45 M-F
6/22-8/7	Salvation Army	1700 S. Burdick St.	9-9:30	12-12:30 M-F
6/22-8/7	Mayors' Riverfront Park	251 Mills St.	9-9:45	12:15-12:45 M-F
6/22-8/7	LaCrone Park	535 W Paterson St.	9-9:45	12-12:45 M-F
6/22-8/7	Southside Park	2156 Race St.	9-9:45	12-12:45 M-F
6/22-8/7	Upjohn Park	1018 Walter St.	9-9:45	12-12:45 M-F
7/6-7/31	Milwood Elementary	3400 Lovers Lane	8:15-9	11-12 M-Th
7/6-7/31	Greenwood Elementary	3501 Moreland St.	8:15-8:45	11-12 M-Th
7/6-7/31	Linden Grove Middle School	4241 Arboretum Pkwy	7:45-8:15	10:30-12:30 M-Th



Every child. Every opportunity. Every time.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE

Kalamazoo VALLEY<sup>TM</sup>  
**Museum** 

**NEW EXHIBIT** NOW - SEPT. 6 | FREE

## DINOSAUR EXPLORER

Journey through the wildest, wackiest and most wondrous dinosaurs to examine how the human body works through the lens of these creatures. Although they lived millions of years before us, dinosaurs adapted to thrive on Earth. Join us as we explore the most fascinating organisms in history.

*This exhibition is created and produced by Imagine Exhibitions Inc.*



**EVENT** THURSDAYS, JULY 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 | 1 - 3 P.M. | FREE

## ROAR AND EXPLORE: A DINO SUMMER AT THE KVM

Step back in time and let curiosity roar! This program invites children to explore the fascinating world of prehistoric creatures through hands-on learning, creative play and scientific discovery. Designed for children ages 4 to 12, this interactive program brings dinosaurs to life through engaging activities.

**EVENT** SATURDAYS, JULY 11, 25 | 1 - 3 P.M. | FREE

## NASA ASTRO ACTIVITIES

Learn more about our place in space! Kids with their adults are invited to join us for NASA Astro Camp® hands-on activities exploring planetary science.



**EVENT** WEDNESDAYS 10:30 A.M. & 1:30 P.M. | SATURDAYS 10:30 A.M.

## RAIN GARDEN TOURS



Enjoy interactive tours of the Kalamazoo Valley Museum's Rain Garden through Aug. 30. Tours are 20 minutes long and are open to all ages.

For times and to learn more, visit [kalamazoomuseum.org](http://kalamazoomuseum.org).

**EVENT** SATURDAYS | NOON - 3 P.M. | FREE

## INNOVATION LAB DAYS!

Join museum interpreters and create new memories together while exploring art making, experimenting, engineering and the cultural heritage of Kalamazoo. Suggested for ages 5+. Activities

**EXHIBIT** NOW - JULY 26 | FREE

## BLACK COWBOYS: AN AMERICAN STORY

This traveling exhibition invites visitors to explore the lives and work of the numerous Black men, women and children — enslaved and free — who labored on ranches and participated in cattle drives from before the Civil War through the turn of the 20th century.



*Black Cowboys: An American Story* was developed by the Witte Museum, San Antonio ([WitteMuseum.org](http://WitteMuseum.org)). The exhibition is presented by Bank of America and generously supported by the John L. Santikos Charitable Fund of the San Antonio Area Foundation, H-E-B and Ed Rachal Foundation.

**PLANETARIUM EXPERIENCE | JULY SHOWS | \$3 PER PERSON**

Visit [kalamazoomuseum.org/planetarium](http://kalamazoomuseum.org/planetarium) for details. No 10:30 a.m. show on Friday, July 31.

**ONE WORLD, ONE SKY | 10:30 A.M. TUES. - FRI. | 30 MIN. | PRE-K - GRADE 1**

**THE SKY ABOVE US | 1:30 P.M. TUES. - SAT. | 2:30 P.M. SUN. | 35 MIN. | GRADES 4 & UP**

**BIG ASTRONOMY: PEOPLE PLACES & DISCOVERIES | 1:30 P.M. SUN. | 30 MIN. | GRADES 3 & UP**

**CAPCOM GO! THE APOLLO STORY | 10:30 A.M. SAT | 24 MIN. | PRE-K & UP**

**EXPEDITION SOLAR SYSTEM | 12:30 P.M. SAT. | 35 MIN. | ALL AGES**

**THE QUEEN LIGHT SHOW: FROM MERCURY WITH LOVE | SAT. 2:30 P.M. | 38 MIN. | GRADES 5 & UP**



**HOURS:** Tuesday - Saturday | 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sunday | Noon - 4 p.m.

**FREE GENERAL ADMISSION** **SPECIAL NOTICE:** The museum will be closed July 4.

Note: Some areas of the museum may be closed due to exhibit changes, staffing needs, special programs or collections care. We thank you for your patience.

*The Kalamazoo Valley Museum is operated by Kalamazoo Valley Community College and is governed by its Board of Trustees.*

Kalamazoo VALLEY<sup>TM</sup>  
**Museum** 

230 N. Rose St., Kalamazoo  
[kalamazoomuseum.org](http://kalamazoomuseum.org) | 269.373.7990