

FRIENDS OF WEST MICHIGAN BUSINESS PAC ELECTION GUIDE 2024

FRIENDS OF
WEST MICHIGAN
BUSINESS



Marcus Keech
Director of Government Affairs

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What is the purpose of the PAC?: The Friends of West Michigan Business PAC (“PAC”) is an essential tool for building relationships and supporting highly qualified candidates for federal, state and local office. It is funded by voluntary contributions of personal funds from dozens of members, and is NOT supported by member dues, sponsorship, etc. Much like our policy process, we understand the controversial nature of the endorsement process and take it very seriously. The PAC has its own board and bylaws and follow a rigorous process for all endorsements.

To view your entire sample ballot for the November general election, you can visit the [Michigan Voter Information Center](#)

For more information on the PAC and how to become involved, you can contact Marcus Keech, Director of Government Affairs at the GR Chamber at marcus@grandrapids.org.

Endorsed:

Congressional District 2

John Moolenaar (R)*

Congressman Moolenaar is currently in his fifth term in Congress. He is Michigan’s senior member of the House Committee on Appropriations. Current Chair of the House Committee on the Chinese Communist Party. Priorities include protecting American global competitiveness, fighting against inflation and wasteful spending, and expanding access to rural broadband.



Congressional District 3

Bill Huizenga (R)*

Congressman Huizenga is currently in his seventh term in Congress. He currently serves as Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee on the House Financial Services Committee. Serves as co-chair of the Great Lakes Task Force, and has rallied bipartisan support for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Priorities include improving affordability for job creators, consumers, and families across the region; create an environment where businesses can create good-paying jobs; strengthen our nation’s fiscal future by addressing the national debt.



* signifies an incumbent

State House District 44
Steve Frisbie (R)



State House District 78
Gina Johnsen (R)*



State House District 82
Kristian Grant (D)*



State House District 83
Tommy Brann (R)



State House District 85
Bradley Slagh (R)*



State House District 86
Nancy DeBoer (R)*



State House District 88
Greg VanWoerkom (R)*



State House District 89
Luke Meerman (R)*



State House District 90
Bryan Posthumus (R)*



* signifies an incumbent

State House District 91
Pat Outman (R)*



State House District 102
Curt VanderWall (R)*



Kent County Clerk
Lisa Posthumus Lyons (R)*



Kent County Drain Commissioner
Ken Yonker (R)*



Kent County Prosecutor
Chris Becker (R)*



Kent County Sheriff
Michelle LaJoye-Young (R)*



Kent County Treasurer
Peter MacGregor (R)*



* signifies an incumbent

Kent County Commission -District 1
Ben Greene (R)*



Kent County Commission -District 2
Elizabeth Morse (R)



Kent County Commission -District 3
Jennifer Merchant (R)*



Kent County Commission -District 4
Katie DeBoer (R)*



Kent County Commission -District 5
Dave Hildenbrand (R)*



Kent County Commission -District 6
Stan Stek (R)*



Kent County Commission -District 8
Dan Burrill (R)*



Kent County Commission -District 10
Robin Halsted (R)



Kent County Commission -District 11
Lindsey Thiel (R)*



Kent County Commission -District 12
Monica Sparks (D)*



Kent County Commission -District 13
Michelle McCloud (D)*



Kent County Commission -District 14
Carol Hennessy (D)*



Kent County Commission -District 15
Lisa Oliver-King (D)*



Kent County Commission - District 16
Melissa LaGrand (D)*



Kent County Commission -District 18
Steve Faber (D)



* signifies an incumbent

Kent County Commission -District 19
Kris Pachla (D)*



City of Grand Rapids Mayor
David LaGrand



City of Grand Rapids Commissioner – Ward 1
Dean Pacific



City of Grand Rapids Commissioner – Ward 2
Milinda Ysasi*



* signifies an incumbent

Grand Rapids Public School Board: The PAC has not endorsed candidates running for the GRPS School Board in the 2024 election. In order to best inform you on the 7 candidates running for **4 open seats**, you can find a brief overview of each candidate.

Amber Kilpatrick



Q1: Please briefly describe your background, such as your profession, as well as any previously held elected/appoints positions.

AK: *“I am a GRPS parent, entrepreneur, long time educator, and community organizer. This is the first time I am running for an elected office.”*

Q2: Please identify your top 3 priorities if elected to the GRSP school board.

AK: *“1) Accountability & transparency from district leadership. 2) The safety and well-being of our students and staff. 3) Creating cultures of care and community building.”*

Q3: How do you intend to engage the business community in your role as a school board member? How have you engaged in the GR Chamber in the past?

AK: *“While I have not directly engaged with the GR chamber previously, I believe engaging with the chamber as a school board member allows for fostering partnerships that enhance educational resources and opportunities for students. This type of collaboration can lead to internships, job shadowing, and connecting students with local industry and pathways. The business community may also be able to provide valuable insights that can inform curriculum and enhance skills for the workforce. This type of collaborative relationship between the GRPS school board and the business community is sure to strengthen community support and local investment in our public schools.”*

For more information you can visit <https://www.amberforgrps.com/>

Eleanor Moreno



Q1: Please briefly describe your background, such as your profession, as well as any previously held elected/appoints positions.

EM: *“As a long-time resident of Grand Rapids and an alumna of Grand Rapids Public Schools, I bring firsthand experience of the challenges and opportunities within our district. My background includes significant engagement with youth during the COVID-19 pandemic, where I navigated partnerships to address the needs of students and families facing unprecedented difficulties. Committed to enhancing educational excellence, I have actively sought to empower our students and support our families, advocating for a collaborative approach to drive meaningful change in our community.”*

Q2: Please identify your top 3 priorities if elected to the GRSP school board.

* signifies an incumbent

EM: “1) Prioritizing initiatives that enhance academic achievement and support students’ diverse needs. 2) Strengthen partnerships with families, local businesses, and community organizations. 3) Advocate for competitive salaries and benefits for teachers.”

Q3: How do you intend to engage the business community in your role as a school board member? How have you engaged in the GR Chamber in the past?

EM: “As a school board member, I plan to engage the business community by fostering partnerships that align educational initiatives with workforce needs, ensuring our students are prepared for the future job market. I believe in facilitating regular dialogues between schools and local businesses to explore internship opportunities and collaborative programs. In the past, I’ve actively participated in GR Chamber events, where I networked with local business leaders to discuss educational priorities and gather insights on industry trends. Additionally, I’m a graduate of the Emerging Leaders Program as well as a current class of Leadership Grand Rapids.”

For more information you can visit eleanormorenoforgrps.com

Jordoun Eatman*



Q1: Please briefly describe your background, such as your profession, as well as any previously held elected/appoints positions.

JE: “Jordoun is the Vice President of Engagement & Inclusion at Experience Grand Rapids, a Convention and Visitors Bureau. Appointed to the Board of Education for Grand Rapids Public Schools 2 years ago.”

Q2: Please identify your top 3 priorities if elected to the GRSP school board.

JE: “1) Equity in education. 2) Support for teachers and staff. 3) Community engagement.”

Q3: How do you intend to engage the business community in your role as a school board member? How have you engaged in the GR Chamber in the past?

JE: “As a school board member, I intend to engage the business community by building strong partnerships that benefit both our students and local businesses. By collaborating with business leaders, we can create career pathways, internships, and mentorship opportunities that prepare students for the workforce while supporting local economic growth. In the past, I’ve worked closely with the GR Chamber to foster dialogue between businesses, rather that has been through leading seminars, Leadership GR class of 2024, sponsoring various Chamber initiatives, or participating on panels. I believe that continued engagement with the business community is key to creating a thriving educational environment and a strong local economy.”

For more information you can visit www.jordounforgrps.com

Tonya Williams



* signifies an incumbent

The candidates did not complete the questionnaire at the time of publication.

Arick Davis



Q1: Please briefly describe your background, such as your profession, as well as any previously held elected/appoints positions.

AD: *"I am currently a business owner at Last Mile Cafe. I have also worked and volunteered for many nonprofits in the area. I was previously elected as a precinct delegate and am being considered for appointment by the mayor to serve on the Southtown Corridor Improvement Authority."*

Q2: Please identify your top 3 priorities if elected to the GRSP school board.

AD: *"1) Transparency in operations, budget, and decision-making. 2) Accountability, specifically at the administration level to ensure that goals are being met. 3) Improving math and reading proficiency through the district."*

Q3: How do you intend to engage the business community in your role as a school board member? How have you engaged in the GR Chamber in the past?

AD: *"I believe in a greater Grand Rapids for all of us. As a business owner, I understand the importance of having a robust talent pool. I plan to engage with the broader business community to get a more clear understanding of their concerns. I have participated in many GR Chamber programs, including: Leadership Grand Rapids, Emerging Leaders, Elevate, and Mosaic."*

For more information you can visit <https://arickdavis.com/>

Ismalis Nunez



Q1: Please briefly describe your background, such as your profession, as well as any previously held elected/appoints positions.

IN: *"I'm a proud Grand Rapids Public Schools graduate, a Black Puerto Rican and Cuban American, and a deeply committed member of our community and schools. I have extensive experience in education, equity, and community engagement, including previous roles as a school social worker and Director of Equity and Family and Community Engagement, where I helped to support the building of equitable relationships and systems through policies. I have also served on the boards of the McGaw YMCA and Evanston Scholars and am currently serving on the board of STEM Greenhouse."*

Q2: Please identify your top 3 priorities if elected to the GRSP school board.

IN: *"1) Advocate for equitable funding and resources. 2) Prioritize fair compensation, adequate staff, and professional development. 3) Create Systems of Accountability to collaborate with superintendent and community."*

* signifies an incumbent

Q3: How do you intend to engage the business community in your role as a school board member? How have you engaged in the GR Chamber in the past?

IN: *“I have not previously engaged with the GR Chamber, but one of my goals is to learn more about their work to find ways to align with my priority of building strong community partnerships. As a school board member, I intend to collaborate with the business community to create opportunities that benefit students, families, and staff, enhancing our schools' resources and support systems. By fostering partnerships with local businesses, we can build a stronger, more connected community that contributes to the success of our schools.”*

For more information you can visit ismalisforgrps.com

Richard Williamson



The candidates did not complete the questionnaire at the time of publication.

NOTES:

Norma Lopez has suspended her campaign for GRPS School Board.

Candidate responses may have been edited for purposes of length.

To contribute to the PAC, you can use the QR code below to contribute via PayPal or contact Marcus Keech.



The PAC is a separate segregated fund of the Grand Rapids Chamber that makes contributions and expenditures on behalf of candidate committees, ballot questions committees, political party committees, political committees, independent committees, and other separate segregated funds as authorized by the members of the Committee. The actions of the PAC is regulated under the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (Act 388 of 1976).

* signifies an incumbent