

Grand Rapids League of Women Voters  
**Voters' Guide**



Grand Rapids Public Schools  
Board of Education Election  
**May 6, 2008**



**Grand Rapids**  
community foundation  
For **good.** For **ever.**



LEAGUE OF  
WOMEN VOTERS®



## **League of Women Voters We Vote Project**

We Vote is a special project to increase voter participation in Grand Rapids school board elections. It is a nonpartisan, collaborative effort grounded in the belief that voting is a powerful, sometimes overlooked, tool for building our community.

We believe voting can be a personal tool for action among residents, as well as a collective voice for communities. And we believe that voice starts at the neighborhood level, where our schools are often the centerpiece of community life.

But critical pieces are missing from our neighborhoods to encourage voter participation in school board elections, including ample awareness, information, and a shared call to action.

Working with nearly a dozen community partners, We Vote works to understand, develop, and provide access to awareness, information, and action that can increase voter participation in the May 6, 2008 school board election.

### **Community Partners**

Grand Rapids Community Foundation  
Dyer-Ives Foundation  
Nokomis Foundation  
Grand Rapids Public Schools  
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority  
Community Research Institute  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority  
Girl Scouts of Michigan Trails  
Grand Rapids Community Media Center  
Hispanic Center of Western Michigan  
Presto Print, Inc.

**We Vote.**

## **La Sociedad de Mujeres Votantes**

La Sociedad de mujeres votantes es una organizacion politica, independiente informada y con activa participacion en el gobierno que lucha para aumentar un mayor entendimiento en los asuntos de la politica publica y ademas influye en la politica publica atraves la educacion y sus dependencias.

La membresia a esta liga o sociedad esta abierta a todos hombres y mujeres de todas las edades. Con mas de 88 anos de experiencia en 850 locales y estados afiliados.

Esta liga o sociedad es una de las organizaciones mas confiadas en los estados unidos.

Despues de una larga ausencia de diez anos, La sociedad esta de nuevo activa en Grand Rapids. Si le interesa hacerse miembro de la nueva revivada organizacion, favor de visitar [www.wevoteGR.org](http://www.wevoteGR.org).

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### **Guia de Votantes**

Utilize la guia de votantes como manual en la votaciones el 6 de mayo 2008 en las elecciones de la Mesa Directiva de las Escuelas Publicas de Grand Rapids. En la guia encontraras informacion de todos los candidatos de esta eleccion. Tambien habra informacion de como encontrar su sitio de votaciones y como votar. Llene y despuege la parte de abajo de la cubierta para que le recuerde por cuales candidatos quiere votar.

Cado uno de los candidates les fueron hecha cuatro preguntas. Sus respuestas a estas preguntas estan copiados exactamente como fueron contestadas por los candidatos. Cada candidato tenia un limite de 50 palabras por respuesta.

Algunos candidates escogieron no responder y otros no repondieron a tiempo.

**We Vote.**

## League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. With more than 88 years of experience and 850 local and state affiliates, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.

After a decade-long hiatus, the League is once again active in Grand Rapids. If you are interested in joining the newly revitalized organization, please visit [www.wevoteGR.org](http://www.wevoteGR.org).

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### Voters' Guide

Utilize this Voters' Guide as a manual on voting in the **May 6, 2008** Grand Rapids Public Schools Board of Education Election. In the Guide you will find information on all the candidates running for election, as well as information on finding the right polling place and how-to vote. Fill in and tear off the bottom half of the back cover to use as a reminder of which candidates you want to vote for. Post the top half somewhere as a reminder when to vote next.

Each of the candidates were asked four questions. Their answers to these questions are copied here exactly as originally written by the candidate. Each candidate had a limit of 50 words per question, and were encouraged to keep their answers concise. If a candidate chose to answer with more than 50 words an ellipsis (...) was placed at the 50 word limit. Candidates are listed alphabetically.

We Vote.

## Las 7 cosas uno que debe saber el día de elecciones

1. **La boleta electoral, es su voto** – No se preocupe si usted esta registrado para votar y su nombre no aparece en la lista de votantes. Pida ayuda de los encargados de votacion para asegurar que su voto sea contado. Posiblemente le remitan a otro sitio de votacion o le den boleta provisional.
2. **Su identificacion** – No salga sin el ID. Una carta de identificacion con foto es requerido en el estado de Michigan para votar. Traiga su licencia de manejar, identificacion estatal, o un pasaporte de los EEUU, tarjeta de identificacion militar con foto, tarjeta de identificacion estudiantil de una universidad acreditada, y tarjeta de identificacion tribal con foto.
3. **Informase** – Fijese en los signos y letreros que aparecen en su lugar de votaciones que le dan instrucciones de como utilizar las maquinas de votacion, fijese en la lista de los derechos de votantes, e instrucciones para quejarse si sus derechos han sido violados.
4. **Haga preguntas cuando tenga duda** – Los trabajadores de votaciones estan para ayudarles. Les ensenaran como funcionan las maquinas de votacion y les daran una boleta de voto provisional. Si la necesitan. Si no se encuentra en el lugar de votaciones que le pertenece, le diran como llegar al sitio que tiene asignado.
5. **Entre y Salga Rapidamente** – Usted probalmente no tendra que esperar mucho tiempo para votar. Si hay que esperar no se vaya sin votar. Los resultados de esta eleccion son muy importante.
6. **Conozca su lugar de votaciones** – Su tarjeta de registracion para votar tiene el distrito donde le pertenece para ir a votar. Si no encuentra su tarjeta de registracion para votar, llame al Oficina del Condado al 632-7650 o visite [www.Michigan.gov/vote](http://www.Michigan.gov/vote).
7. **Preguntas Adicionales** – Para mas informacion acerca de la votacion, visite [www.Michigan.gov/vote](http://www.Michigan.gov/vote) o [www.accesskent.com](http://www.accesskent.com) sitio o llame La Oficina del Condado de Michigan al 632-7650.

## 7 things you need to know on election day.

1. **Your ballot, your vote** – Don't panic if you registered to vote but your name is not on the list. Get help from a poll worker to make sure your vote is counted. You may be directed to another polling place or given a provisional ballot.
2. **I.D. – don't go without it** – Photo I.D.s are required in Michigan to vote. Bring your driver's license, state I.D., or a U.S. passport, military identification card with photo, student identification card from an accredited university, or tribal identification card with photo.
3. **Writing on the Wall** – Look at the signs at the polling place for directions on how to use the voting machines, a list of your voting rights, and instructions for filing a complaint if your rights have been violated.
4. **When in Doubt, Ask** – Poll workers are there to help you. They'll show you how to work the machines and give you a provisional ballot if you need one. If you're at the wrong polling place, they should tell you how to get the right one.
5. **In and Out** – You probably won't have to wait too long. But even if the line is long, don't leave without voting. The outcome of this election is important!
6. **Know your polling place.** - Your current voter registration card will show you what precinct you are in and where you go to vote. If you cannot find your registration card, call the County Clerk's office at 632-7650 or visit [www.michigan.gov/vote](http://www.michigan.gov/vote).
7. **More Questions.** - For more information about voting go to [www.michigan.gov/vote](http://www.michigan.gov/vote) or [www.accesskent.com](http://www.accesskent.com), or call the County Clerk's office at 632-7650.

**One-Year Term Candidate**  
***Tony Baker***

**Question 1: Why are you running for the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

I became a concerned advocate of equality in education since I moved to Chicago in the 1980s. This concern is part of my work and my personal life. I have been inspired by my children's school experience to work more directly to benefit the children of GRPS.

**Question 2: What experience do you bring to the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

I have extensive experience researching and teaching about urban communities and schools. At Ferris, I am a respected teacher and a campus leader on issues of education of diverse populations. I have created community collaborations for student research, service learning and increased community involvement for the larger University.

**Question 3: What changes do you hope to see made during the time you serve on the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

I hope GRPS will become a model for city school systems. It does have many current assets that can be expanded on. Specifically, I'd like to see an extensive early childhood initiative enacted and the high schools to be a fantastic place to prepare for college and other career paths.

**Question 4: How will you help to make the Grand Rapids Public Schools a community priority?**

We need to shift the current community efforts from a marketing (customer service) approach to community ownership. We can create a system that utilizes the skills of the public for the schools and the children. This community is abundant with knowledge, skills and resources that are untapped. Expand community partnerships.

We Vote.

**One-Year Term Candidate**  
***Senita Lenear***

**Question 1: Why are you running for the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

\* To utilize my skills, talents and experience to benefit the community \* To exercise my passion for education \* To prepare students for global economy \* I am a GRPS alumnus \* I am a GRPS parent \* To influence the future leaders of the Grand Rapids community

**Question 2: What experience do you bring to the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

My experience includes: \* Board experience for multiple organizations; including Student Advancement Foundation where funds are raised to support GRPS \* Progressive business experience (including management of personnel, budgets, projects, and public relations) \* Legislative knowledge \* Corporate support for GRPS schools \* Development of an abstinence program for youth

**Question 3: What changes do you hope to see made during the time you serve on the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

\* Academic achievements at all levels \* High school environments conducive to learning \* Financial stewardship \* Positive working relationship between administrators and labor leaders \* Public awareness of the purpose of Board of Education \* Advertisement of great programs that exist \* Level playing field with revenue sharing

**Question 4: How will you help to make the Grand Rapids Public Schools a community priority?**

\* Engaging in dialogue with the public on key decisions \* Awareness campaigns \* Encouraging the administration to seek "best practices" \* Building trust by demanding accountability and excellence through the board's operations \* Sharing my family's story - why we chose GRPS

**We Vote.**

**Four-Year Term Candidate**  
***Jane Gietzen***

**Question 1: Why are you running for the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

I have two children ages 8 and 10 in the Grand Rapids Public Schools, and I see the daily progress of our schools and children. I know we have a great school system, but I understand that the challenges ahead will require an attentive ear and thoughtful solutions.

**Question 2: What experience do you bring to the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

I have been involved from the classroom to the boardroom in many aspects, including classroom volunteering, district facility planning, fund raising, and legislative advocacy in Lansing. Additionally, my business background will bring much-needed organizational and economic perspectives to the board, especially when tough financial choices must be made.

**Question 3: What changes do you hope to see made during the time you serve on the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

It is time to truly listen to one another. Many issues have been stagnant for years, but the only way to achieve positive, lasting change is to collaborate and allow all parties to participate in solutions. There is no doubt that this is challenging but it is worth the effort.

**Question 4: How will you help to make the Grand Rapids Public Schools a community priority?**

We must facilitate real dialogue that involves all stakeholders -- parents, students, educators, administrators, lawmakers, businesspeople and everyone in between. Grand Rapids has always succeeded when we've relied on our collaborative spirit. By involving diverse groups we can ensure everyone understands the critical role GRPS plays in continued regional growth.

**We Vote.**

**Four-Year Term Candidate**  
**Gordon D. Griffin**

**Question 1: Why are you running for the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

\* believe in Grand Rapids Public Schools. \*want to be a part of solutions that will make a lifetime difference for our students \*I am here to stay and have a vested interest in our schools today and for future generations.

**Question 2: What experience do you bring to the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

\* involved in education for 42 years as a teacher and principal at the elementary level, as a college instructor and student teacher liaison \*Business experience has given me a more comprehensive view of how the educational system impacts our city.

**Question 3: What changes do you hope to see made during the time you serve on the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

\* more opportunities for career and exploration study for our students \* improved cooperation between school staff, Board of Education, Superintendent, parents, the business and service community \* less emphasis on standardized test measures, more on authentic assessment of real life skills \* safe environments for students at every level

**Question 4: How will you help to make the Grand Rapids Public Schools a community priority?**

I will work to develop and/or improve: \* strong parent, community, and school coalitions \* encourage mentorships and apprenticeships with local services and businesses \* strong relationships with city planners to build and support our public school system in the same way that has brought development to downtown GR

**Four-Year Term Candidate**  
***Kenneth W. Hoskins***

**Question 1: Why are you running for the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

As a GRPS board member these last four years I've been part of some (I believe) major advancements district wide. I would like the opportunity to continue serving our citizens and seeing these advancements and others completed. Our students need this to be competitive globally.

**Question 2: What experience do you bring to the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

I bring four years as a GRPS board member. One as vice president two as president. I have several years of community service experience the majority of years were in the collaboration or team concept area with several boards. I also bring a proven record of team player/consensus building.

**Question 3: What changes do you hope to see made during the time you serve on the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

I would like to see the centers of innovations, staff development, (entire system including board members) as well as more community and parental involvement come to the forefront. Statistics show that with these key elements ACTIVELY in place positive changes in our school's achievements, academically, and socially will occur.

**Question 4: How will you help to make the Grand Rapids Public Schools a community priority?**

My personal platform has always been community and parental involvement. I will continue this platform. I will continue to be committed to this district. I've missed two BOE meetings in four years; I've returned every phone call from community members that I've ever received. This will continue.

We Vote.

**Four-Year Term Candidate**  
***Derrick P. Martin***

**Question 1: Why are you running for the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

I have decided to run for a seat on the Grand Rapids school board, because the current board has become obsolete. It is more important for them to have consensus, than to solve the issues this district faces.

**Question 2: What experience do you bring to the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

I would bring to the board more than 10 years of community activism, including serving as a student member and running for the board in 2000. I have also served on various community committees, and most recently served on the City of Grand Rapids Housing Appeals and Income Tax Review...

**Question 3: What changes do you hope to see made during the time you serve on the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

I hope to see our schools become safer, improved academics, newer facilities, and more engaged board of education. Board members must move beyond the comfort of the board chambers!

**Question 4: How will you help to make the Grand Rapids Public Schools a community priority?**

The only way to have more engagement by the community, is to engage the community. My plan is to visit every school in the district within my first year in office, this type of engagement will change our schools and community for the better.

**Four-Year Term Candidate**  
***Luis Pena***

**Question 1: Why are you running for the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

\* Leadership 2000/ Davenport Univ. \* Seven Habits of highly Effective People \* Champion in Diversity Training \* Professional Solving Problems \* Dale Carnegie Seminars \* Principles of Self Management Work Team \* Speak 3 Languages/ English, Spanish, Sign Language.

**Question 2: What experience do you bring to the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

I have been privileged to serve as a Board member of the Grand Rapids Public Schools since 2001. I am looking forward to continuing the important work we are doing together to make the Grand Rapids Public Schools great schools for all children. I am the only Spanish Board member...

**Question 3: What changes do you hope to see made during the time you serve on the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board?**

Beside my 7 Years term, please see experience above.

**Question 4: How will you help to make the Grand Rapids Public Schools a community priority?**

Reading and academic success, Achievement, Safe schools and Discipline, Parents involvement \* Equity Education for all, and feeling the Ethnic groups achievement gap, Fiscal Management. The above changes, will make the Grand Rapids Public Schools the first Choice.

## Voting In Grand Rapids – A- Family Matching Exercise

Here is an Election Matching Game for all the family to explore together. You may not know all the words or answers to begin with, but the goal is to learn more by doing it. It includes information on what you must take to the polls and how to vote our new electronic counting equipment in Grand Rapids. Hope you learn and have a good time playing.

- 
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Time when polls close   | A. Ask poll worker for help   |
| 2. If your name is not on the voting list and you believe you are registered ... | B. Section of a city for election purposes, usually numbered  |
| 3. Identification required to vote   | C. Feed ballot into electronic counting machine/tabulator   |
| 4. Overvote  | D. Remove ballot and ask poll worker to get you another ballot and revote                                       |
| 5. Absentee Voting   | E. Photo ID: driver's license, Michigan ID card or passport with photo of you on it or sign an affidavit        |
| 6. If you make error in marking ballot ...                                       | F. Machine beeps; voter voted for more candidates than allowed or for more than one party in a primary election |
| 7. Precinct  | G. Voting early by mail if meeting certain requirements   |
| 8. How to mark ballot  | H. Cardboard folder used to hide ballot after marking before scanning   |
| 9. After finishing marking ballot ...  | I. 7 A.M.   |
| 10. What to do if counting machine beeps when scanning the ballot ...            | J. Location where voting takes place  |
| 11. Polling place/Polls  | K. Ask a poll worker for a new ballot   |
| 12. If you need help while voting ...  | L. 8 P.M.   |
| 13. Time when polls open   | M. Ask poll worker for a provisional ballot which may count later. Be sure to vote!                             |
| 14. Undervote  | N. Fill in ovals darkly across from candidate names   |
| 15. Secrecy sleeve   | O. Machine beeps, voter voted for fewer candidates than allowed   |

## Word Puzzle

E	L	E	C	T	I	O	N
B	P	M	H	X	N	V	V
A	N	J	O	M	O	O	E
L	H	V	I	E	T	O	V
L	R	F	C	E	C	O	A
O	C	G	E	M	A	O	P
T	Y	B	S	L	L	O	P

Find the voting terms below in this puzzle.  
Words can be across, down and backwards.

**BALLOT • POLLS • VOTE**  
**ELECTION • CHOICE**

We Vote.

# Important Voting Dates

## State Primary Election

Candidates from each political party are nominated for the General Election at the August Primary. In the Primary you may only vote for candidates representing one political party.

**July 7, 2008** – Last day to register as a voter before the August Primary Election

**August 5, 2008** – Primary Election

## State General Election - Presidential Election

The candidates nominated at the August Primary run for office on the November General Election ballot.

**October 6, 2008** – Last day to register as a voter before the November General Election

**November 4, 2008** – General Election

We Vote.

## Who am I voting for?

1-year Term Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

4-year Term Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

4-year Term Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_