

# Liberia Education Update

March 2022



Students always graduated in their school uniforms, but on March 19, 2022, the Harrison W. Grigsby UMS 2020/2021 graduates wore gowns for the first time.



Representative Crayton O. Duncan at the Harrison W. Grigsby UMS graduation. March 19, 2022



Graduates were honored by friends and family pinning ribbons and flowers on their gowns.

Last school year, 12<sup>th</sup> grade students took the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in September 2021, but the results were not released until the end of December.

Graduations could not be planned until schools knew who passed at least 3 of the 9 subject tests in the WASSCE. Once Harrison W. Grigsby United Methodist School (UMS) knew that all 47 students who took the WASSCE passed at least 3 subjects, plans began to have the graduation on March 19, 2022, at the First United Methodist Church in Greenville, Sinoe County.

Harrison Grigsby's 2020/2021 graduating class had 17 females and the class dux, Abigail Kiawu, is a female. (This year there are only 2 females in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade class.) Abigail's speech was entitled, *Creativity in Our Education System Will Promote a Developing Society and Nation*. She made the point that the goal of education is to empower citizens with knowledge to develop their nation, but from "1980 to 2003, education fell into a dilapidated state."

Sinoe County Representative, Crayton O. Duncan, was invited to be the guest speaker. He told the graduates that after listening to the class dux, he was not giving his speech, but would support Abigail's education through earning a master's degree.

Correction: In my October/November/December Liberia Education Update, Connor O. Duncan should be Crayton O. Duncan.



Crowd outside the church after the Harrison W. Grigsby UMS graduation on March 19, 2022.



Harrison W. Grigsby UMS with fire hydrant in front of school fence. Fire hydrants were put all over Greenville before the war when there was running water.



12<sup>th</sup> grade students taking biology test at Harrison W. Grigsby UMS. April 5, 2022

I stayed in Greenville throughout March to help at the school. One of the high school biology and chemistry teachers left and I filled in for the rest of the semester- until the first week of April.

I'm thankful that the Ministry of Education has the curriculum for each subject from first through twelfth grade available on its website. I'm also thankful that a gift to purchase textbooks allowed me to bring a biology textbook to the school one year ago. I didn't know then that I would be a teacher using the book. This teaching experience has really shown me the challenges of learning in a language that is not one's mother tongue. We are using Standard English in schools, but the students in Sinoe speak a native language and Liberian English which has its own pronunciation and grammar. I'm learning along with the students while praying for wisdom in how to be more helpful in bridging the language barrier and presenting information so that students are not just memorizing but understanding.

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