

MAAP Speech

Good evening, my name is Laura Mercure and I'm a senior attending Ivan Sand Community High School.

I've been going to Ivan Sand since my freshman year. I started my freshman year at Rogers High School, but after getting repeatedly bullied by people who had once been my friends and having nothing done about it, I had to get out.

I've always struggled with social anxiety, depression, and test anxiety; the bullying made everything worse. I ended up in treatment from December to March of the next year. The bullying had a very bad impact on my mental health while I was in treatment and even once I got discharged from treatment. After treatment, there was no going back to Rogers; I had to have another option. That ended up being Ivan Sand.

Since I left Rogers, I have overcome a lot. I was always a shy, conservative student with every situation. I would never want to get out of the house, I was always in my room, and I was always isolating myself from everyone. I was never good at making friends or even starting conversations. I always felt as though I was saying the wrong things and worried that people would think I was awkward and weird. I came to Ivan Sand feeling unmotivated and hopeless because I was so behind on my credits. Now as a senior, I'm caught up on my credits and I want to make a difference to people who are unmotivated and don't have hope in themselves. Ivan Sand and MAAP STARS helped me open up, make friends, and help people who were new to my school and alternative education. I now have the confidence and support to do things I would have never thought possible in 9th grade.

Last year I was able to go to Roger's Middle School to assist one of my former teachers with the first three hours of her day. I would correct papers, take attendance, pass out assignments, and help students with their work and questions.

I'm also on track to graduate early, but I have chosen to postpone my graduation by working two days a week. I've had a lot of learning experiences at my school.

I've been an active member of MAAP STARS for the past three years. During my junior year, I went to all of the conferences and participated in several events. I was a part of Ivan Sand's student leadership last year, and I helped conduct a mock election. When my school hosted the MAAP 101 conference for educators new to alternative education, I lead visitors on tours of our program, and when our MAAP STARS team went to the state capital on legislative day, we all spoke to the elected officials of our district about what alternative education is.

STARS has helped me overcome my fears, and as an officer, I support each and everyone in STARS; I put all of my hard work and dedication into making that happen. What I've learned from my experiences during high school is that I need to fill my life with purpose and happiness, and that's what MAAP STARS did for me and what it will do for students in alternative education. It made me get out of my comfort zone, and be open to speaking to people and working with others. I felt anxious presenting my speech in front of only one judge for the public speaking event at the spring conference, but after the speech was over, I felt like a whole new person. I felt proud of myself for overcoming one of my biggest fears. Two years ago, I would have never wanted to do what I did. For once, I felt confident with what I presented.

I enjoy being a state officer to help my classmates and other alternative students. I am a dedicated student who loves to help people. MAAP is very important to me; it's made a huge difference in my life and helped me deal with difficult situations. My participation in MAAP STARS has helped me with Interviews, speeches, test anxiety, and teamwork. I have become a great student academically, and enjoy helping others find solutions to their problems. It has helped me to feel like I belong to something meaningful, and like I can make a difference.

It's an honor to be a MAAP STARS state officer. As an officer, I want to help others feel wanted and that they belong here. I love being a state officer, meeting new people, working with them to solve problems, and making the best out of every situation. I've had a lot of great experiences in MAAP STARS and plan to have more as state officer. I want to encourage others to get involved with MAAP STARS and find out what it can do for them.