

Ingham Academy Troubled Students Now College Bound

LANSING (WILX)-- From problem students to college students.

Wednesday was graduation day for a handful of troubled kids who were given a second chance to succeed in school. This year eight students from Ingham Academy walked the stage, leaving with a diploma in hand.



Each student at Ingham Academy is considered a "high risk" for dropping out. The school specializes in teaching students who are on probation, or have been suspended from the public school setting.

Tyler Fisher was one of the eight to graduate. He says after making some bad decisions when he was 14, he never thought graduating high school would be in his future.

"I've been here three and a half years now. It's been a very long long journey, but I'm not 14 anymore. I've grown up."

Fisher says he has the staff at the academy to thank for finding a way to turn him around.

"Ingham Academy is why I'm here. I couldn't do it without everybody, they have been more than helpful to me."

One of the graduates, Kuymeisha Gordon was in tears when she received her diploma.

"It's one of the best feelings in the world to get your diploma," said Gordon.

But with the diploma comes a lot of responsibility. Students have to work hard to not fall into old habits without the school staff keeping track of them. The academy does have a high success rate says Scott LeRoy, Juvenile Programs Director at the school. Only one in twenty students commit a crime after graduating from the academy.

"We are here to get these kids to graduate. We want to get them on to bigger and better things," said LeRoy.

The academy is able to succeed where others have failed because students are taught on a no fail program, completing classes at their own pace. Opened in 2007, the academy has graduated 45 students so far.

"It's years of work for them. We've seen them go from low to high, but they made it and it's an emotional experience," said Daniel Beuchert, science teacher at Ingham Academy.

For this year's graduates this is not the end for their schooling, most have already been enrolled for college next

year.

"This is the beginning, this is where it starts," said Fisher.

Fisher will be attending LCC this fall. He hopes to major in mechanics.

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