



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

9680 Citrus Avenue | Fontana, CA 92335 | Phone: (909) 357-5000 | www.fusd.net

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 12, 2023

CONTACT: Lauren Creiman

(909) 833-9853

Fontana Unified Class of 2023 Graduate Becomes First Aviation Pathway Student to Earn Private Pilot's License

FONTANA, CA – A.B. Miller High School Class of 2023 graduate Nathan Aguilar loves nothing more than soaring above the clouds. As a member of the school's aviation career technical education pathway, Nathan quickly developed his flying skills, distinguishing himself as the first A.B. Miller student to earn his private pilot's license.

"The moment Nathan got into the cockpit and went on his first training flight, his goal was to become a pilot," A.B. Miller aviation teacher Jeff McGlocklin said. "Nathan accelerated his studies so that he could take the FAA Written Test at the end of his first year in class, which normally takes students two years. In his second year, he was already taking flight training, which enabled him to mentor his classmates. Nathan is an inspiration to all our aviation students."

Aguilar's pilot's license allows him to fly any aircraft for which he is appropriately rated. Aguilar completed his test by flying a single-engine propeller-based Cessna 150 airplane. His license enables Aguilar to fly with friends, fly at night, take a business trip or do sight-seeing.

In his junior year, Aguilar began his flight training as a member of Shades of Blue, a 10-week training course available to A.B. Miller aviation pathway students. Administered by industry professionals, Shades of Blue is designed to inspire students to become commercial airline pilots. Aguilar attended Saturday sessions, learning about airplane theory, weather and other aviation-related topics.

After earning a certificate of completion from the Shades of Blue program, Aguilar joined the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Free Young Eagles program, which gave him his first experience in a single-engine propelled airplane. Aguilar's devotion to learning aviation led to him receiving a \$10,000 EAA Buko scholarship in June 2022.

Aguilar used his scholarship money to pay for flight school, enrolling in a Part 61 flight school, logging nearly 60 hours in the air and learning how to take off, touch down, and manage altitude, as well as required air maneuvers such as stall exercises, S-turns and soft field landings. Sometimes Aguilar's training took a scary turn.

"I was coming in for a landing and was in my pattern when another aircraft came out of nowhere," Aguilar said. "They weren't in communication with the airfield and I had no idea they were there until they were right on top of me. It was scary but my training allowed me to stay calm and not panic, and I safely landed my plane."

– more –

Though Aguilar has earned a private pilot's license, he is not yet looking to become a professional pilot and will attend Cal State San Bernardino to study business. Aguilar hopes to someday run an exotic car rental business, or be involved in e-business. For now, Aguilar is looking forward to taking his family up in the air for leisurely plane rides.

"I like being in the air and being in control of an airplane. Having the freedom to fly an airplane is an amazing feeling," Aguilar said. "I want to take my family out and show them what I've learned. I owe a lot to my teacher, Mr. McGlocklin, who is a great instructor and taught me so much. He helps you when you need it the most."

A.B. Miller's two-year aviation program serves as a flight training school and includes a pilot training class, an airline mechanic class and a flight simulator lab. The pathway gives students access to aerospace professionals and other programs dedicated to fostering careers in aviation for interested students.

"Nathan's success means the world to me. It is a big boost for the program," McGlocklin said. "We have two more students who are preparing to take their aviation tests. Our message to A.B. Miller students is that the ability to fly is there if you want it. Completing the pathway gives you all the tools you will need to acquire a private pilot's license."

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_AVIATION: A.B. Miller High School Class of 2023 graduate Nathan Aguilar gives a thumbs up as he prepares to take flight after becoming the first student in the school's aviation pathway to earn a private pilot's license. Aguilar was able to pay for his flight school instruction with a \$10,000 Buko scholarship from the Experimental Aviation Association.

###