



Fontana Unified School District

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NEWS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Aviation Program Helps Students Reach New Heights in Aerospace Careers

FONTANA, CA – From classroom simulations to real-world takeoffs, A.B. Miller High School's career technical education (CTE) aviation program continues to soar, as students work toward earning their pilot's licenses, complete major flight training milestones, and launch careers in the aerospace industry.

Senior Jesse Cuba is set to earn his private pilot license this summer after completing a major milestone: his first solo flight. Cuba would be the fourth A.B. Miller student in the last three years to secure a private pilot license the summer of their senior year.

The A.B. Miller aviation program is a two-year course offering pathways to several rewarding careers in aerospace. It serves as a flight training school and includes a pilot training class, an airline mechanic class, and a flight simulator lab.

Cuba completed his first solo flight in a Cessna 152 at Cable Airport on April 30, successfully performing three takeoffs and landings in challenging, high-wind conditions – after logging only 10 flight hours.

"I was so excited as I felt the plane lift off. It was a mix of nervousness, happiness, confidence, and a healthy amount of fear," said Cuba, who served as president of A.B. Miller's aviation club this year. "I felt welcomed up in the sky; I know it's somewhere I belong."

Cuba is now preparing for the next phase of training: post-solo maneuvers, including a cross-country solo flight to San Diego. This summer, he will also begin an internship at Guardian Jet Center at Ontario International Airport, where he will gain hands-on experience fueling, cleaning, storing, and maintaining aircraft.

Earlier this school year, Cuba passed the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Private Pilot Certificate written exam, along with A.B. Miller junior Xavier Gonzalez and senior Christopher Hernandez. Gonzalez and Hernandez are both on track to complete their first solo flights this summer.

As current students continue to chart their paths in aviation, A.B. Miller Class of 2024 graduate Johnny Hortua is making his mark in the aerospace field after earning his commercial pilot's license and instrument ratings.

"A.B. Miller aviation changed everything for me. It allowed me to mature much faster and see what working in the real world is like," Hortua said. "The short time students spend in the program gives them a head start that affects the trajectory of their whole life."

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At 19 years old, Hortua is one of the program's most advanced alumni, working at Lipson Aviation at Brackett Airport in Pomona as a flight and ground instructor for high-performance Cirrus and jet aircraft.

Hortua is also giving back to his community as a Young Eagles instructor, taking several A.B. Miller aviation students on their first flights – the same experience that solidified his passion for aviation.

"Seeing Johnny graduate and build a career in aviation is absolutely inspiring," said A.B. Miller aviation instructor Jeff McGlocklin. "I have no other words to describe it other than proud. As a teacher, this is why we do it. Johnny is an excellent pilot, and it is incredible to see him as a product of this program."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_AVIATION1: A.B. Miller High School senior Jesse Cuba reached a major milestone in pursuit of his private pilot license, completing his first solo flight in a Cessna 152 at Cable Airport, successfully performing three takeoffs and landings in challenging, high-wind conditions.

FUSD_AVIATION2: A.B. Miller High School junior Xavier Gonzalez, center, celebrates completing his first solo flight alongside his flight instructors, including A.B. Miller aviation instructor Jeff McGlocklin, right.

FUSD_AVIATION3: A.B. Miller High School Class of 2024 graduate Johnny Hortua, right, is one of the aviation program's most accomplished alumni. He works as a flight and ground instructor for high-performance Cirrus aircraft and serves as an instructor for the Young Eagles.

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