



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Students Take Flight in Aviation CTE Pathway Program

FONTANA, CA – For A.B. Miller High School junior Jeremy Millias, the Aviation Career Technical Education (CTE) pathway is not only a rigorous, educational program filled with hands-on training, but also a close-knit community that has shaped his high school experience.

“I was originally supposed to attend another school, but once I found aviation here, I was all in,” said Millias, who hopes to pursue a career as a pilot after graduating. “Aviation is a big world, but it feels like a small town. Everyone knows each other and opportunities keep opening because people want to help you fly.”

This year, A.B. Miller’s aviation pathway serves nearly 120 students across introductory and advanced courses. The two-year sequence mirrors private pilot ground school, covering weather, federal regulations, performance calculations, navigation charts, aircraft systems, and aviation communication. Students also gain hands-on experience in flight simulator labs, where they practice maneuvers, plan safe routes, calculate wind corrections, and learn real-world decision-making skills used by licensed pilots.

A.B. Miller senior Xavier Gonzalez said he discovered aviation by accident when a scheduling change placed him in the class as a freshman. He is now advancing through flight training while completing Advanced Placement (AP) coursework.

“Balancing AP classes, flying, and studying is hard, but aviation is my priority,” said Gonzalez, who plans to pursue commercial aviation or join the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

“Aviation takes commitment, but it’s worth it.”

A central goal of the program is preparing students to pass the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Private Pilot written exam before graduation, opening access to scholarships and transferable credit to Mt. San Antonio College’s aviation program. CTE pathway teacher Jeff McGlocklin said that roughly 10 students are on track to sit for the exam this year.

“Students take on everything from aerodynamics to airport markings to engine systems,” McGlocklin said. “It’s rigorous, but the motivated ones thrive.”

The program is strengthened by extensive industry partnerships that give students access to unique opportunities that are rarely available at the high school level. Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter One provides free flights, online ground school, and covers the cost of the FAA written exam.

— more —

A retired air traffic controller trains students on radio communications and aviation phraseology to ensure they understand the full scope of piloting skills. Next Step Aviation also provides additional flight training for scholarship recipients at Cable Airport, located in Upland.

In the program, students also participate in airport volunteer events, college aviation tours, simulator competitions, and annual fundraisers, including a poinsettia sale that supports field trips and program activities.

Though the program launched shortly before the pandemic, several students already hold pilot certificates or work in local aviation. A.B. Miller's pathway is one of 62 CTE programs across the District, designed to expand learning opportunities that prepare students for careers immediately after graduation and help them enter higher education institutions with a competitive edge.

"When you see students take off in a real airplane for the first time, that excitement is contagious," McGlocklin said. "They're the next generation of pilots, and it starts right here at Fontana Unified."

PHOTO CAPTIONS

ABMILLER_AVIATION1: A.B. Miller High School aviation program students participate in a two-year sequence that mirrors private pilot ground school, covering weather, federal regulations, performance calculations, navigation charts, aircraft systems, and aviation communication.

ABMILLER_AVIATION2: A.B. Miller aviation introductory students gain hands-on experience in flight simulator labs, first practicing on computer programs with real pilot controls during their first year to apply what they learn in the classroom in a simulated environment.

ABMILLER_AVIATION3: A.B. Miller aviation second year students advanced to practicing maneuvers, planning safe routes, calculating wind corrections, and learning real-world decision-making skills used by licensed pilots in a 180-degree flight simulator that mimics the movements and visuals of piloting a plane in real time.

ABMILLER_AVIATION4: A.B. Miller senior Xavier Gonzalez takes the pilot seat of the "Yellow Peril," a trainer aircraft used during World War II. Aviation students have the opportunity to participate in free ride-alongs with licensed and trained pilots to gain real-world experience in flying from the driver's seat.

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