

2026
—— AOPA FOUNDATION ——
**AVIATION EDUCATION
SYMPOSIUM**
—— in partnership with **EMBRAER** Foundation ——

SUNDAY, NOV. 15



1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Exhibit Hall Open

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Boot Camps

Aviation 101 Boot Camp & Drone Trust Certificate

New to teaching aviation? This three-hour boot camp covers aviation fundamentals, FAA regulations, air traffic control, and the pilot certification process. Explore free and low-cost instructional resources while building confidence in teaching aviation concepts. Participants will also complete the FAA-required TRUST certificate for recreational drone flyers, which covers essential drone safety and regulations.

Introduction to The Curriculum Boot Camp

This session is designed to give you a clear overview of the core principles, resources, and strategies you need to get started with the AOPA curriculum. If you are new to the program, looking to refresh your understanding, or want to see how the curriculum can support your teaching or learning goals, join us.

Boot Camp – TBD

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. | **NEW! Welcome Reception and Poster Session**

Held during the Welcome Reception, this Poster Session showcases innovative aviation education programs, teaching strategies, and emerging trends. Explore topics like student engagement, technology integration, and program growth while connecting with peers, exchanging ideas, and discovering best practices from educators across the field.

MONDAY, NOV. 16



9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. | Opening General Session (Details.coming.soon)

10:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Exhibit Hall Open

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Breakout Sessions

Introducing the AOPA Foundation High School Aviation STEM Curriculum

Transform your classroom with the AOPA Foundation High School Aviation STEM Curriculum. In this high-level overview, learn about the breadth, rigor, and fun of the FREE curriculum. Discover the engaging activities, comprehensive teaching materials, and extensive teacher support available to curriculum users, and learn how to get started.

Bring AI into the Classroom

AI is reshaping education and aviation. Join educators and industry experts as we explore where AI fits within the AOPA curriculum, discuss common implementation challenges, and share practical strategies for adopting AI tools that enhance teaching, learning, and student readiness for the future aviation workforce.

How to Find and Cultivate Support for Your Program

Need money to start or expand your school's aviation program? Federal and state grants, CTE funding, and many other sources could be available each year. Learn from a panel of experts how to tap into these sources to get your aviation program off the ground.

NEW! Career Pathways Through Drone Education

Discover how drones can engage students while preparing them for careers in rapidly growing industries that rely on drone pilots. Industry representatives will demonstrate products and share how classroom drone programs build both technical knowledge and real-world application skills through hands-on learning and career-connected instruction.

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. | Lunch

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

NEW! Beyond the First Year: Sustaining and Growing Your Program

Starting a program is just the beginning. This session focuses on retaining students, expanding offerings, and ensuring long-term program success.

NEW! From Simulation to Skill: Integrating Redbird into Your Aviation Curriculum

Learn how to effectively integrate Redbird flight simulators into your aviation curriculum by aligning simulation activities with lesson objectives, enhancing student skill development, and implementing scalable strategies for programs of all sizes.

NEW! Industry Partnerships that Actually Work

Not all partnerships are created equal. Learn how to build meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships with aviation industry partners that support student success.

Adopting the ACE Middle School Curriculum

The Aerospace Center for Excellence (ACE) on the campus of SUN n' FUN at the Lakeland International Airport offers a free, world-class aviation curriculum for middle-school students. Designed to excite and educate about aviation, it integrates seamlessly with the AOPA Foundation High School Aviation STEM curriculum. Meet the curriculum development team and go "under the cowlings" to explore this exciting middle school course.

2:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

NEW! Future of Aviation Careers: What Students Need to Know Now

Stay ahead of the curve. This session explores emerging trends in aviation careers and what students need to succeed in the future workforce.

All About Scholarships

Millions of dollars in aviation scholarships are waiting for students and educators alike! This session explores AOPA's Scholarship Program and other major funding sources, along with expert tips for preparing winning applications. Learn how to access these opportunities and bring additional resources into your aviation program.

From Inspiration to Instruction: Guide to Starting a High School Aviation Program

You want to start an aviation program that prepares students for STEM career success, but how do you turn that idea into reality? We'll answer your questions and share strategies for pitching, planning, and launching high school aviation programs.

NEW! Bringing Aviation to Rural Communities

Discover practical strategies for launching and sustaining aviation programs in rural communities by leveraging local resources, partnerships, and creative solutions to overcome geographic and funding challenges.

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. | Exhibit Hall Reception

TUESDAY, NOV. 17



7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. | Community Breakfast **NEW!**

Start your day by connecting with fellow attendees in this informal, discussion-based breakfast. Tables will be organized around shared interests and topic areas, creating opportunities to engage with peers who share similar experiences, challenges, and goals. Guided prompts will help spark conversation, making it easy to exchange ideas, share experiences, and build meaningful connections.

8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | Exhibit Hall Open

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | Breakout Sessions

Aviation Competitions

Aviation competitions are a great way to engage students, deepen learning, and showcase their aviation knowledge. A panel of experts will share details of state, regional, and national competitions and discuss how you can prepare your students to participate or even launch your own competition.

Implementing AI Practical Flight Training into AOPA Curriculum

Hear directly from educators who have implemented AI Practical Flight Training simulators in their aviation programs. Teacher presenters will share how they integrated simulators with the AOPA curriculum, the benefits, and challenges they encountered, lessons learned, and practical tips to help others successfully adopt simulation-based learning.

****NEW!** Pathways to Careers in Aviation Maintenance**

Explore aviation maintenance career pathways through a panel featuring industry professionals and training programs. Learn how students can enter the field, what training options are available, and how educators can guide students toward rewarding, high-demand careers in aviation maintenance and technical operations.

FAA Test Prep Showcase

Compare leading FAA written exam test-prep programs in this structured showcase session. Each provider will deliver a focused presentation highlighting their study materials, tools, features, and instructional approaches. Participants will gain a side-by-side understanding of available offerings to help determine which resources best support their students' success.

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. | Breakout Sessions

NEW! Using Simulators to Enhance Learning

Hear directly from educators who have successfully integrated simulators into their classrooms. Presenters will share how they selected products, aligned the activities to learning goals, overcame implementation challenges, and built engaging experiences. Leave with practical strategies and lessons learned to support your own simulation journey.

NEW! AI and the Future Aviation Workforce

Explore how artificial intelligence is reshaping aviation careers across airline operations, maintenance, air traffic management, and drone technology. This presentation examines emerging workforce trends, predictive technologies, and the evolving skills students need to succeed in an increasingly AI-driven aviation industry. Participants will gain insights to better prepare students for future careers in aviation.

Getting Students Flying: Programs that Launch Future Pilots

Explore leading initiatives that help students take flight. This session offers an overview of programs designed to get students in the air, including discovery flights, scholarships, and flight training partnerships. Gain practical ideas and resources to support your students' journey from classroom to cockpit.

Let's Build an Airplane

Building an airplane is a time-honored tradition and a great way to learn airplane components, design, and important aircraft manufacturing skills. In this session, we'll explore the many options for engaging students in aircraft builds, from volunteering on existing builds at the local airport to building an airplane as part of a formal aircraft manufacturing curriculum.

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | Breakout Sessions

Drones In the Classroom

Flying drones in class is a lot of fun, but these machines are more tools than toys, and it is important to have the right tool for the job! Learn how to choose the right drones for your mission and strategies for getting the most from your investment, with a focus on maintenance, management, and accessories worth having.

NEW! From Classroom to Career: Mapping Student Aviation Pathways

Help students turn their passion for aviation into real careers. This presentation explores practical strategies for guiding students through aviation pathways, connecting classroom learning to postsecondary programs and workforce opportunities. Participants will gain actionable tools and resources to help students navigate aviation education, training, and career options with confidence.

NEW! Introduction to the new AOPA Foundation Aviation STEM Curriculum Learning Management System (LMS)

Get up to speed with the new LMS! Learn how to log in, navigate key features, and build confidence using essential tools to support teaching and learning. Perfect for educators seeking a smooth and practical start with the platform and its capabilities.

NEW! Curriculum Extension Activities

Discover the hidden gems in the AOPA Foundation Aviation STEM Curriculum. These activities are designed to deepen learning, spark engagement, and bring concepts to life. This session highlights ready-to-use labs and add-ons that are often overlooked, showing you how to easily integrate them into your teaching for greater student engagement.

12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Lunch | Closing General Session

Session times and topics may change as we finalize the program.

08-25-26