



For Immediate Release:

East Haven Middle School Students Visit Avelo Airlines’ Orlando Flight Training Center

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\$10 million commercial airline flight simulators
Avelo is flying the students to Orlando at no charge to inspire
a new generation of aerospace professionals*

EAST HAVEN, Conn. and ORLANDO, Fla.; May 19, 2023 — Today 35 East Haven, Connecticut middle school students participating in Avelo Airlines’ Aviation Career Exploration (ACE) Program will take the ultimate fieldtrip. To inspire a new generation of aviation professionals, the airline is flying the students to Orlando to visit Avelo’s flight training center where they will fly multi-million-dollar state-of-the-art commercial airline flight simulators.

East Haven Public Schools Superintendent Erica Forti said, “We are immensely grateful for this once-in-a-lifetime experience afforded by Avelo’s ACE Program for our students to visit the Orlando flight training campus, as well as fly the same simulators used by airline pilots. We share our students’ excitement about this unique opportunity to explore and be exposed to new career pathways.”

Avelo’s flight training center is operated by Avenger Flight Group, the world’s largest privately owned flight training organization. The Orlando flight training campus the students will visit includes a suite of \$10 million commercial airline flight simulators, as well as other training facilities utilized by pilots and flight attendants from major U.S. and international airlines. Avelo Airlines currently employs 150 pilots and 200 flight attendants.

Avelo Airlines Chairman and CEO Andrew Levy said, “We are proud of the partnership Avelo has forged with East Haven Public Schools and Exploring to create this unique experience for these middle school students. The Aviation Career Exploration program is a groundbreaking curriculum that is creating a life-changing pathway for these young people dreaming of a career in aviation. I am very appreciative of the opportunity our flight training partner Avenger Flight Group is giving the students to fly their state-of-the-art flight simulators and inspire a new generation of aviators in in process.”

Avelo is flying the students, as well as several East Haven Public Schools teachers, staff and administrators, roundtrip at no charge from the airline’s Tweed-New Haven Airport (HVN) base to Orlando International Airport (MCO). Orlando is one of 17 popular destinations Avelo serves nonstop from HVN.

Avenger Flight Group Senior Vice President of Operations Andrés Restrepo said, “We're excited to support our partner, Avelo Airlines and their ACE Program, welcoming East Haven middle school students to our Orlando flight training center. As the world's largest privately owned flight training organization, Avenger Flight Group takes pride in inspiring the next generation of aviators. AFG remains committed to shaping the industry's future through investments in training facilities and collaborations with educational institutions. Congratulations to the ACE program participants and we look forward to their graduation. Together, we are inspiring a new generation of aerospace professionals.”

The six-month ACE program is the first middle-school-focused curriculum of its kind in the country to inspire a new generation of aerospace professionals. East Haven Public Schools and Avelo Airlines are collaborating with Exploring - a co-ed career awareness program run by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) - to provide essential curriculum development and program management.

Connecticut Yankee Council BSA Director of Exploring Paul Lukas said, “Exploring programs are designed to provide students with hands-on learning opportunities that will inspire future careers. These programs are successful because the people and resources of businesses and organizations are aligned with the interests of students in the community. The partnership between East Haven Public Schools, Avelo Airlines and Connecticut Yankee Council, BSA is a collaboration that seeks to inspire the next generation of aerospace professionals right here in our community.”

To inspire young people to consider aerospace careers earlier in their education journey than conventional high school career orientation programs, students were selected from the 6th, 7th and 8th grades. Middle school-aged children are still young enough to adjust their academic and extracurricular choices to prepare them for an aerospace career.

Since the program's debut last December, the students have participated in several events:

- Students attended a two-hour "Exploring Aviation Open House" at Tweed Airport where they received a behind-the-scenes tour of airport operations.
- Students took a roundtrip orientation flight provided by Avelo from Tweed to Baltimore. The trip was the first time the majority of the students had ever flown.
- Students have met with numerous aviation and aerospace professionals along the way, including pilots, flight attendants, airport crew, aircraft maintenance technicians and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers.
- Students received a private tour of the Sikorsky helicopter manufacturing facility in Stratford, CT.
- Students joined a virtual town hall discussion with United States Air Force (USAF) Colonel Fred Gregory (Ret.), former USAF pilot, military engineer, test pilot and NASA astronaut as well as the former National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Deputy Administrator. Colonel Gregory was the first African American to command a space flight.

Next Wednesday (May 24th), the ACE program will conclude with free flight lessons provided by the Yale Aviation Flying Club. Each student will join a 30-minute discovery flight where they will have the opportunity to fly a single-engine Piper aircraft under the guidance of a professional flight instructor. On Wednesday June 7th the students will participate in a special graduation Ceremony at East Haven's Joseph Melillo Middle School.

According to East Haven Public Schools, more than 50% of their middle school students are believed to have never flown on a commercial airline flight. The ACE Program is intended to expose students and their parents to the broad range of aerospace career opportunities. Aerospace is one of the fastest-growing U.S. job sectors, employing more than 1 million people. The aerospace sector expects to see an especially significant surge in space exploration-related jobs as the private space sector grows.

Since taking flight at HVN in November 2021, Avelo has flown more than one million Customers at Tweed Airport. Avelo currently operates five 737s at its HVN base which serves 17 nonstop destinations across seven states. Avelo has invested more than \$100 million in its HVN-based operations and Connecticut presence. This includes the hiring of nearly 180 Avelo Crewmembers and the creation of more than 300 direct and indirect airport-related jobs.

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