



# AOPA FOUNDATION HIGH SCHOOL AVIATION STEM SYMPOSIUM

## THE SYMPOSIUM EXPERIENCE: REAL IMPACT, REAL SUCCESS



**JENNY PETERS, PH.D.**  
**Aviation & Aerospace  
Instructor**

**Pryor High School**  
**Pryor, Oklahoma**

We have been teaching the AOPA Foundation High School Aviation STEM Curriculum since 2018. We have graduated five private pilots, three remote pilots, three A&P mechanics, and six engineering students. We are an Oklahoma Aviation High School of Excellence, and we look to continue to offer the program indefinitely in the future.

**How did the AOPA Foundation High School Aviation STEM Symposium enhance your aviation curriculum?** As an instructor, attending the Symposium has provided me with industry contacts and fresh ideas on how to deal with challenges and how to implement new program goals. Through the Symposium last year, I was able to expand our UAS curriculum and enhance the AOPA Foundation's High School Aviation STEM curriculum lessons with flight skills training. I was also able to teach my students about the variety of programs for flight training available to them for commercial pilot pathway careers.

**What specific resources or connections proved valuable?** Specific resources and connections include industry contacts and representatives, educational opportunities for students to move into after graduation, companies that offer supplies, study guides, equipment, and material for hands-on learning and application of the knowledge the students are building inside the curriculum.

**Has there been any measurable impact on your students' engagement or outcomes?** The Aviation and Aerospace program at Pryor High School has positively impacted the growth of the aviation and aerospace workforce in Oklahoma. We aren't doing it alone as other schools in Oklahoma also run the AOPA Foundation's aviation STEM curriculum in their districts. Oklahoma

leads the nation as the State with the most schools offering the AOPA curriculum to their students! As a consequence of offering the AOPA's curriculum and attending the Symposium each year, our program at Pryor has expanded to offer other opportunities to our students, including a robust UAS Part 107 preparation and flight training pathway, as well as A&P Mechanic and pre-engineering pathways. We have graduated over a dozen students over the life (7 years) of the program so far who have stayed the course and pursued Aviation and Aerospace careers or post-secondary education. We know this because they come back and speak with students who join the program after they graduate, telling them about their journey and offering encouragement to stick with it!

I would like to add that attending the Symposium is well worth my time each year. My colleagues and I attend as a department, and we use the time to build on each of our ideas as we experience the Symposium differently. We have grants available from the State of Oklahoma to help in providing funds for the cost of the Symposium and travel. The Symposium is worth the time, if not for meeting other representatives from across the country, but for the inspiration provided by guest speakers and others in attendance.

