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Oklahoma State Department of Education New Skills for Youth Academic Affairs and Planning

Name	Paula Kedy/Andrea Appleman
Title	Paula Kedy, Executive Director of Academics and Instruction Andrea Appleman/STEM Coordinator
Organization	Ada City Schools
Email	kedyp@adapss.com applemana@adapss.com
Phone	580-310-7354 580-310-7260
Region	Southern

Best Practice "Building an Aviation Program Through Community Partnerships"
Purpose In the Spring of 2017, the Ada City School District recognized the need to make students aware of the field of aeronautics and of the growing number of career opportunities in Oklahoma's aviation industries. The District collaborated with representatives from the City of Ada, the Ada Regional Airport, and Chapter 1005 of the Experimental Aircraft Association to develop an aviation program designed to offer students a viable career pathway in aviation. From those initial meetings, the District's aviation program, "The Sky is Not the Limit," began to take off. Partnerships with local aeronautics industries such as General Aviation Modifications, Inc., Tornado Alley Aviation, and Air EVAC helped to move the program forward. Collaboration with the AOPA led to the opportunity for the District to field test new high school aviation curriculum, and this year, <i>Introduction to Aviation</i> is being offered as an elective course to District freshmen. Partnerships with colleges and universities which offer aviation programs have also been established. "Because of the help from local industry leaders and aviation enthusiasts, the Ada City School District has created and implemented an aviation program that is offering amazing possibilities for our students," said Ada City School District Superintendent, Mike Anderson.
Grade Level(s)

In 2016-2017, "The Sky is Not the Limit" began as an aviation awareness program offered to students in Grades 6-12. The awareness program consisted of a *Top Gun* motivational assembly as well as a day at the Ada Regional Airport. At the airport, students had the opportunity to rotate through business and industry entities, visit the new airport terminal, and board the Air EVAC helicopter.

All students in Grades 6-12 were offered the opportunity to enter "The Sky is Not the Limit" Essay Contest. The contest was administered through English classes, site Gifted and Talented classes, and science classes. All students who entered the contest were given the opportunity to spend the day at Tinker Air Force Base.

In 2017-2018, "The Sky is Not the Limit" increased in scope by offering *Introduction to Aviation* to 9th Grade students. The course is the introductory course in a pathway of aviation courses designed to introduce students to three specific aviation pathways: Pilot, Aeronautical Engineering, and UAS. Aviation STEM lesson plans are also being incorporated into science courses at the junior high level.

Also in 2017-2018, students in Grades 9-12 have been given the opportunity to participate in STEM activities offered through the District's new "Flight Club."

Expected Results

"The District has worked diligently to build a new, exciting aviation program that will provide students with a clear pathway to post-secondary opportunities and careers in aviation. This program would not have been possible without the support of business and industry partners from the City of Ada as well as from state and national entities that have been so encouraging," said Paula Kedy, Executive Director of Academics and Instruction. "With their help, we have already reached hundreds of students who are now aware of new career opportunities."

Evidence of Success

In September, representatives from the AOPA visited the District. The representatives met with students, videoed the *Introduction to Aviation* classroom, and had lunch with students at the Ada Regional Airport. The District's program was then featured in *Pilot* magazine as well as on the program, *AOPA Live This Week*. Also, the program recently received a grant from the Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission.

Training

The instructor for the *Introduction to Aviation* course received a week-long training at AOPA for the implementation of Year One of the curriculum field test. The instructor will receive training each summer for the subsequent years of implementation.

The District's Executive Director of Academics was asked to serve on the AOPA National High School Aviation Steering Committee. The Director will meet twice a year with representatives from the AOPA to help build capacity in programming.

Staff Needed

A science instructor is in place to teach new aviation course work. Gifted and Talented site teachers are used to help implement programming, and science teachers in Grades 6-12 are in place to help vertically align and sponsor aviation activities.

Resources Needed

The District has submitted grant applications to help implement the aviation program with fidelity. In addition, donations from business and industry partners and EAA members have helped to offset program costs. The District has employed a strong media push to ensure that the community is aware of the new program as well as to invite new partners to collaborate with the

District.
Contact Person(s) Paula Kedy, Executive Director of Academics and Instruction 580-310-7354 Andrea Appleman, STEM Coordinator 580-310-7260 Mike Anderson, Superintendent, Ada City Schools 580-310-7200
Research Oklahoma Aviation and Aerospace Economic Impact Study