

# Charlotte Engineering Early College students explore aviation careers

[Charlotte Engineering Early College High School \(CEEC\)](#) students explored potential careers in aviation at Monroe Airport. The two students took to the air at Monroe Airport with Aerowood Aviation in Cessna 172s. The students, who are upper students at CEEC, might be interested in becoming pilots – what better way than taking to the skies!



The two students, Robin Taylor and Sudip Adhikari, both have a keen interest in aviation. Their instructors, Hunter Stackhouse and Jon Warnke, say that their goal is to pass on their love of flying and to gain flight hours in order to be qualified as an airline pilot. All were at the airport and ready to go but the weather was not cooperating. The clouds at Monroe airport were less than 1000 feet above ground. The flight instructions are conducted under visual flight rules which require clouds to be over 1000 feet above ground level. The flights were rescheduled and when they finally took to the air, it was a beautiful Carolina blue sky day!



The Charlotte Engineering Early College (CEEC) opened in August of 2014. CEEC serves CMS high school students in grades 9-13 with a focus on STEM and specifically on engineering disciplines. STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. These fields are increasingly important to finding solutions to sustaining our planet and ensuring the competitiveness of the US. CEEC helps the Mecklenburg County area prepare for the future by providing students the skills to be competitive in the global economy.

North Carolina is the nation's second fastest-growing aerospace manufacturing sector, with strong aerospace maintenance and military aviation enterprises, 14 commercial airline operators and 26 air freight companies. Between now and 2032, forecasts indicate a 17% shortage in pilots and a significant 24% shortage in aircraft mechanics<sup>1</sup>. Also, 94% of the state's population lives within a 30-minute drive of a public airport<sup>2</sup>. Talent demands in the field of aviation continue to increase, specifically in Charlotte and the surrounding areas. Flight attendants occupy the highest number of jobs at 3,464 in 2021 with an average salary of \$63,100 followed by airline pilots, copilots, and flight engineers at 2,107 jobs with an average salary of \$120,000. The average salary among all Air Transportation Industry roles in the Charlotte, Concord, and Gastonia regions was \$75,798 in 2021<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Oliver Wyman analysis

<sup>2</sup> Source: NC Department of Transportation, State of Aviation, page 2

<sup>3</sup> Source: Industry Spotlight, Air Transportation, Charlotte Works, page 5

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As Charlotte emerges as a leader in the aviation, aerospace, and technology industries, [Sullenberger Aviation Museum \(SAM\)](#) is committed to partnering with students like Adhikari and Taylor, to accelerate the aviation workforce pipeline through diverse and equitable pathways to aviation and aerospace careers and industries. SAM, set to open its new, state-of-the-art \$30 million innovation center in early 2024, will serve as a model and hub for interactive STEM programming and workforce development initiatives aimed to allow students to explore these community opportunities and connect with area aviation industry professionals through the museum and its partners.

[Aerowood Aviation](#) is located south of Charlotte in Union County at the [Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport](#). Aerowood Aviation specializes in flight training, aircraft management and aircraft sales. Aerowood Aviation trains over 120 pilots per year.

The flying experience was sponsored by [DroneScape PLLC](#) and the [Charlotte Engineering Advisory Board](#).