RISING AVIATION HIGH SCHOOL

The Rising Aviation Dispatch

The sky isn't the limit, it's the beginning.

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The Future of Aviation Starts Here

More than a diploma: hands-on learning, flight training and real career pathways for the next generation of aviation professionals.



Jaila Herrera (left) and Jasmine Cruz in the cockpit at Southwest Airlines' maintenance facility during a student excursion.

Rising Aviation High School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization preparing students for more than a diploma. We are helping young people discover their potential, develop technical skills, and pursue opportunities in one of the world's most exciting industries.

Our campus sits right on the field at Addison Airport, so aviation isn't something our students only read about. Alongside their core academics, students choose from three career pathways: Private Pilot, Aircraft Maintenance and Drone Pilot.

Through hands-on learning, flight training and specialized pathways, students are gaining experiences that shape their futures. This year, our maintenance team was named Overall Champion at the Aerospace Maintenance Council Competition at VERTICON 2026, beating university, military and airline teams. And Garrett Moore became the first RAHS student to work toward a Commercial Pilot Certificate in high school. Read his story on page 3.

SILENT AUCTION · DECEMBER 1ST–18TH

Bid. Win. Help a student fly.

Bid on aviation experiences and gear from our partners. Every dollar funds student scholarships.

Opens Dec. 1st, 8 a.m. CST · go.risingaviation.com/3af9ty

SCAN TO BID

FROM THE LEFT SEAT

A message from the principal

At Rising Aviation High School, we want students to see the many directions a future in aviation can take. Some may picture themselves in the cockpit, others may be drawn to the technical work that keeps aircraft flying, and others may be excited by the innovation of drones and unmanned aircraft systems.

Our goal is to help students explore these pathways, build knowledge, and connect classroom learning with real-world opportunities. **Thank you to our families, industry partners, and community supporters for being part of that journey.**

Kassandra Dena

Principal, Rising Aviation High School

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Three Pathways. Countless Possibilities.

Every student finds a place in aviation — in the cockpit, in the hangar, or at the controls of tomorrow's aircraft.



Private Pilot

Students train toward an FAA Private Pilot Certificate. They take AOPA ground school, practice private-pilot maneuvers in our Redbird simulator through Guided Independent Flight Training, and fly with Thrust Flight at Addison Airport. Some keep climbing toward instrument and commercial ratings.



Aircraft Maintenance

Students learn to inspect, repair and maintain real aircraft, building a foundation toward an FAA Airframe & Powerplant (A&P) certificate. They work on the school's Van's RV-12iS, make regular visits to Southwest Airlines maintenance, and compete on the RAHS Maintenance Team.



Drone Pilot

Students train for the FAA Remote Pilot Certificate (Part 107), the credential needed to fly drones commercially. In our drone lab they learn airspace rules, safety procedures and mission planning, then put those skills to work flying real aircraft, building a foundation for careers in aerial photography, inspection and mapping.

IN THE AIR

Justin Smithson Flies the C-47







Left: Justin at the Aviation Discovery Fest. Right: "Ready 4 Duty" (photo: Henrysz, CC BY 4.0) and the November 14th RV-12 formation.

On November 14th, Justin Smithson flew over Waxahachie aboard "Ready 4 Duty," the Commemorative Air Force's World War II–era C-47 that helped sink a German U-boat off Brazil in 1945. That same day, he took part in a formation flight with RV-12s.

Justin has volunteered with the CAF's Dallas Fort Worth Wing since July. There he helps inspect aircraft parts and is learning maintenance on the BT-15 "Little Noodle," the L-5 Sentinel "Miss Ziggy" and the C-47. He also volunteered at the Aviation Discovery Fest at Dallas Executive Airport, helping with parking.

"This work has taught me never to rush anything. When you slow down, you understand more and build patience." — Justin

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

PILOT 10	**Private pilot certificates earned** *Private Pilot pathway*	PILOT 6	**Instrument ratings earned** *Next step after the private certificate*
HANGAR 13	**Students in Aviation Maintenance** *Preparing for the FAA General knowledge test*	ALUMNI 3	**Graduates now in aviation maintenance** *Including jobs and internships in the industry*

All-time totals as of November 2026.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

From Fearful Flyer to Student Pilot

"My biggest fears couldn't keep me grounded if I was already in the air."

— Morgan



Morgan Lockridge with a fellow Commemorative Air Force volunteer in front of a vintage bomber.

Morgan Lockridge used to beg her dad to drive instead of fly. Today, she's training to become a pilot.

Her turning point came in a glider. With no engine, she had to pull the tow release and trust the aircraft to fly, and she came back down with a new kind of confidence. That push led her to transfer to RAHS, where she's taken AOPA ground school and joined Build Club with Mr. Miller.

This fall, Morgan passed her Private Pilot Knowledge Exam, began flight training with Thrust Flight, and wrote an article for the EAA newsletter about how aviation changed her outlook. Over Halloween, she skipped trick-or-treating for the Wings Over Houston air show.

Her work as a B-24 and B-29 maintainer with the Commemorative Air Force earned her a flight aboard the AT-6 "Nella" with the CAF WASP Squadron, plus a $12,000 CAF scholarship. She's also an A Honor Roll student taking dual-credit courses through Collin College.

Her goals: fly for Southwest, and one day earn a type rating in the B-29 Superfortress "FIFI."

IN THE HANGAR & IN THE FIELD

Garrett Moore Sets a First for RAHS



Garrett with the results of his Commercial Pilot written exam, which he aced on November 4th.

Garrett is the first Rising Aviation student to work toward a Commercial Pilot Certificate while still in high school. On November 4th, he aced his Commercial written exam.

His climb started on the ground. As a sophomore, Garrett won a $12,000 EAA Ray Aviation Scholarship through EAA Chapter 168 to fund flight training while he studies toward his A&P mechanic certificate at RAHS. He passed his Private Pilot written in April 2025, soloed that July, and went on to earn his private pilot certificate. In January, he passed the Instrument knowledge test, and he has since passed his instrument checkride.

He's just as at home in the hangar. Garrett was part of the RAHS Maintenance Team that won 7 of 9 events and the Overall Champions trophy at the Aerospace Maintenance Council Competition at VERTICON 2026 in Atlanta. He also took home the competition's student AMC Professionalism Award. The school's first Rising Star of the 2024–25 year, Garrett has also referred two new students to RAHS.

"None of this came from being a natural. It came from putting in the work." — Garrett

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOV 20th	DFW Fire Training Center	*Excursion · DFW Airport*
NOV 23rd	Thanksgiving Break	*Nov 23rd–27th · Campus closed*
DEC 4th	Southwest HQ Visit	*Excursion · Dallas*
DEC 10th	Open House	*5:30–7 p.m.* *Register online* SCAN TO REGISTER
DEC 11th	Santa Photos	*10 a.m.–1 p.m.* *Sign up online* SCAN TO SIGN UP

Full calendar at RisingAviation.com

CHAMPIONS AT VERTICON 2026



RAHS's aviation maintenance team took first place overall at The Competition at VERTICON 2026, the Aerospace Maintenance Council event presented by Snap-on in Atlanta, against 22 teams from colleges, the military and industry. Because Southwest Airlines, a school partner, sponsored two of the events, the team chose to defer its first-place finishes in those events to the runners-up. Pictured, from left: Scott Steward of Snap-on Industrial; students Preston Simms, Thomas "TJ" Wilson, Garrett Moore, Sebastian Rosas and Jaden Barraza; Principal Kassandra Dena; instructor and coach Pete Miller; and John Goglia, chairman of the Aerospace Maintenance Council.

"Today's students, tomorrow's aviation professionals. Their journey is just beginning, and the future of aviation is in their hands."

— Scott Meehan, Founder

Help the Future Take Flight

Your support helps make aviation education and career opportunities more accessible to students.



From left: Preston Berger, Jaden Barraza, Isabella Onyskin, Avec Fabian and Matthew Swartz of the Class of 2026 celebrate in the hangar before graduation.

Support Rising Aviation

Every gift, large or small, puts a student closer to the cockpit, the hangar, or the next generation of aircraft. Your support funds scholarships for students who couldn't otherwise afford aviation training, advanced equipment for the classroom and hangar, and the hands-on experience and industry connections that launch careers. Scan the code or visit RisingAviation.com/Donate.

EVERY CONTRIBUTION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

- FAA exam fees
- Flight training scholarships
- Tuition assistance
- Mentorship
- Internships

SCAN TO GIVE

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