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West Michigan Aviation Academy Marks 15 Years of Taking Education to New Heights

Grand Rapids, MI – August 2, 2025 — West Michigan Aviation Academy (WMAA) is celebrating its 15th anniversary, commemorating a decade and a half of pioneering aviation-focused public charter education rooted in safety, professionalism, and excellence.

From Humble Beginnings to a Full-Scale Aviation Campus

When WMAA opened its doors in September 2010, it welcomed just **80 students** into **three classrooms** inside a repurposed 25,000 ft² office building at Gerald R. Ford International Airport.

Today, the school operates a full campus serving **620 students** at capacity, with a main academic building and the **Flight Training Center**—a state-of-the-art facility opened in 2021 to house aviation classrooms including ground school and “Build a Plane” projects, as well as hangar space for WMAA’s aircraft fleet.

Milestone Achievements Over 15 Years

- **Flight-trained graduates:** WMAA has proudly awarded **nearly 200 private pilot certificates**, giving students a life-changing head start in the aviation industry while still in high school.
- **Academic excellence:** WMAA students consistently perform in the top 5% of Michigan high schools, with strong outcomes in STEM, college placement, and leadership development.
- **STEM innovation:** WMAA has offered as many as **19 engineering courses**, providing students with unmatched opportunities to explore biomedical, robotics, aerospace, and computer science.
- **Robotics on the world stage:** WMAA’s VEX Robotics teams have competed at both the **state and world levels**, exemplifying excellence in innovation, teamwork, and technical problem-solving.
- **A mission like no other:** WMAA offers a one-of-a-kind education where students pursue their passions in aviation, including flying Cessna 172s during the school day for high school credit.

Looking Ahead

As WMAA celebrates “**15 Years of Taking Education to New Heights**,” the academy is focused on bold goals for the future including broadening its reach, elevating programs, and deepening impact. Key events this anniversary year include the **Broadening Horizons Breakfast** on October 2, 2025, and the **Leaders of Tomorrow Gala** on May 14, 2026—both of which will honor WMAA’s legacy and future with a commemorative video, special recognitions, and stories of staff, students, alumni, and community partners.

About West Michigan Aviation Academy

Founded in 2010 by Dick and Betsy DeVos, WMAA is a tuition-free public charter high school located at Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The academy offers a rigorous, aviation-centered curriculum integrated with STEM, engineering, leadership, and flight training—empowering students to graduate with purpose, skill, and a clear path to success.

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