

# BLAINE AIRPORT PROMOTION GROUP

*Taking Your Ambitions Skyward*

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**THE EDUCATION COORDINATOR**

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**AIRPORT PARTNERSHIP** WITH THE COMMUNITY IS AN OUTWARD GROWTH AND COOPERATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INDUSTRIES THAT RESEARCH, DESIGN, MANUFACTURE, OPERATE, MAINTAIN VEHICLES THAT MOVE THROUGH AIR AND SPACE.

The STEM partnership focuses on *Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math* to help students in K-12 gain skills required to succeed in today's changing business climate. Critical thinking and solving complex problems are important in early development in achieving advanced understanding in science and technology. Students immersed in the STEM program will be at an advantage in the competition for high-tech, high-wage jobs.

Current graduation trends show that there is a shortage in the work force of qualified professionals in engineering and science fields. The number of college students entering majors in science and technology related fields has declined due to the poor preparation for the classes required during high school as well as the required laboratory lecture setting. Students have chosen majors and courses that seem easier rather than the course that they would rather have wanted due to the poor preparedness. Math and writing skills have shown to be a major road block for first and second year college students. Without these skills students are required to spend more time for special tutoring that ultimately cost more from their already strained education budget.

In 2009 there were 64,078 high school graduates in Minnesota. Graduation rates are expected to decline 10 percent over a ten year span from 2005 to 2015. In the fall of 2009, 283,462 students were enrolled full time at Minnesota's post-secondary education institutions. 224,036 were in under-graduate programs and 59,426 as graduate students.

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education, Minnesota Department of Education, in a 2011 report shows that "forty-eight percent of students enrolled in four-year programs at Minnesota's state universities graduate within six years. A total of 72 percent of students enrolled in private colleges earn four-year degrees within six years." These figures may be flawed but they are the only figures available. It is interesting here that the report separated two types of schools. Simply put, students with roughly the same credentials are three times more likely to graduate in six years if they had gone to one set of schools rather than the other. The Washington Monthly Magazine ranked six Minnesota state colleges among the top 50 two-year colleges in the country. Advice to parents and students would be to investigate the graduation rate of their school of interest.

The STEM program provides an early start in preparing students by encouraging a curriculum that is driven by problem solving, discovery, exploratory learning, and an active engagement of a situation in order to find a solution. When a curriculum can house science, engineering, and math fields these fields are made complete by combining the fourth component of STEM. *Technology* provides a creative and innovative way to problem solve and apply what has been learned in the basics of science, engineering and math studies.

Technological and scientific breakthroughs have always sustained America in the best of times and the worst of times. The fabric of America may be torn and the future of our economy is unsure but when you have an opportunity, check out the tour and summer school program we offer to the schools right here on the airfield and you will see faces of young people eager to learn, you will see the hope of our future. We partner with the schools to provide a virtual tool box of equipment and knowledge that can not be brought to the school setting.

Aerospace schools incorporate the STEM programs and focus on the hundreds of subjects that involve aeronautic technology and engineering. We will partner with the new Aerospace Middle School located at 9901 University Av., Blaine MN. On September 9<sup>th</sup> 2011 we will assemble a number of hands-on-display materials from several businesses on the airfield and assemble a display showcasing the partnership between the school and the airport.

The opening of the school as an Aerospace School will introduce 550 students to a newly remodeled school and an adventure in Aerospace. Our display will include a truck provided by Joe Harris as a center piece to our display and at least four tables for display material. Some of the businesses that will have material on display include Key Air, Twin Cities Aviation, Cirrus, R.C. Avionics, Bolduc Aviation, Minnesota Helicopter, and Golden Wings Museum. There will be several stations that students will be able to visit during the event to have opportunity to experience, for many students, their first exposure to the field of Aerospace. The open house program will start at 9:30 AM and will close at 2 PM. We will be providing coverage of the display area during the open house at the school.

