

# Aerium and Redbird Flight Simulators Partner to Train Educators

**MARCH 16TH, 2026**

On March 10th and March 11th, eleven Pennsylvania teachers spent two days learning to fly an aircraft simulator, so their students can do the same.

The event, sponsored and hosted by Aerium and led by Redbird's director of K-12 education, Greg Roark, brought together several teachers from across Pennsylvania for hands-on flight simulator training over two days, during which they learned to operate the simulators and use them as instructional tools as they prepare students for careers as professional pilots and other aviation STEM professions.



*Greg Roark gives a certificate of participation to Somerset Career and Technology Center's Joshua Dilbert for completing the two-day event.*

In all, 12 instructors representing 8 school districts and 6 counties participated in the training, drawn from Conemaugh Valley High School, Greater Latrobe, Greater Johnstown, River Valley, Somerset County Technology Center, South Allegheny, Southern Columbia Area, and Tyrone Area school districts.

“This is a great program,” said Christopher Gengler, a Southern Columbia School District (Catawissa, PA) aviation instructor, noting, “You need to use [simulators] in a way that makes sense within the classroom to teach various aspects of the way an airplane performs.”



*Southern Columbia School District Aviation Instructor Christopher Gengler stands in front of the flight simulators.*

Simulator training is the most common method for airline pilots to train with and become certified to operate multimillion-dollar airliners, without the cost (up to \$12,000 per hour for a Boeing 737) of operating actual aircraft. The same methodology applied to middle and high school students beginning their aviation learning, yields similar results.

Teachers experienced these dividends during the two-day training in real-world scenarios such as aircraft weight and balance. An airplane with too much weight at the front or back is unstable in flight and dangerous to operate. Through simulations with varying aircraft loads, trainees gained firsthand experience of instability, without the danger of flying an unbalanced airplane.

## AERIUM IN ACTION

Such experiences help teachers and students understand the aerodynamics and physics of flight in ways that are not possible without a simulator.

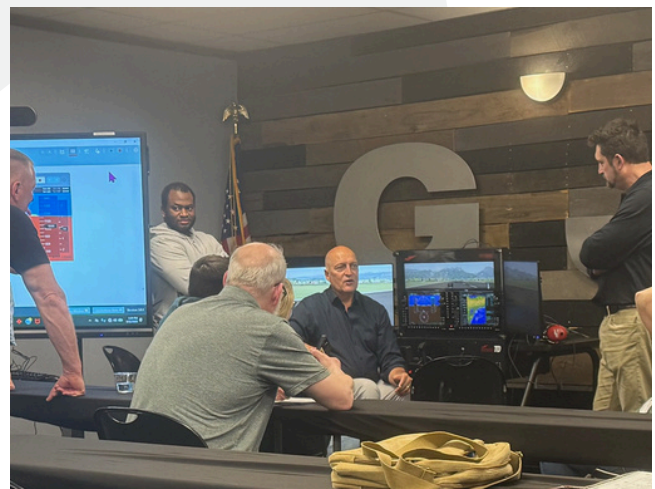
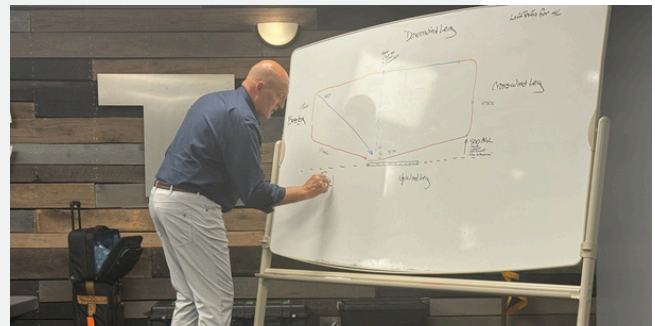
A central theme of the event was the importance of engaging students at a young age. The training placed particular emphasis on reaching middle school-aged students, with instruction framed in language that resonates with younger learners.

Participants were divided into four teams and rotated through different crew roles, from pilot to co-pilot. The simulators aim to provide as realistic a flying experience as possible.

“A student doesn’t know they have an interest until you give them a taste”, said Gengler, reflecting on why access to flight simulators matters for young people in the region. “The simulator lets them see it for themselves.”

Flight simulators play a vital role in aviation education, and the partnership of Redbird and Aerium means more and more students around Cambria County gain access to real-world aviation training.

Aerium and Redbird are set to host successful events like this throughout Pennsylvania for years to come.



## Additional Photos

