Celebrations & Successes

The sky is not the limit when our imaginations are unlimited!
Who is Colorado SKIES Academy?

Colorado SKIES Academy is committed to preparing learners for futures in the aerospace industry with authentic and rigorous project-based learning in all areas of the sciences. Located on the site of the second-busiest community airport in the country, the Centennial Airport, CSA is an environment where learners can “see it, hear it, and touch it.” CSA has a partnership with Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum and the Boeing Blue Sky Exploration of Flight Center to create dynamic, hands-on experiences for learners, empowering them to explore aerospace and aviation. Personalized, deeper learning projects are geared to the development of knowledge and skills acquisition in all areas of aerospace while meeting or exceeding STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/Design, and Mathematics) education standards.
Curriculum & Instruction

Colorado SKIES Academy is in its second year of operation, and the facilitators have totally embraced the project-based learning (PBL) approach, especially with an aerospace focus. Here is a sampling of the topics they fully developed for first semester:

- Soar Up to Gliding

- High-Altitude Balloons – Weather & the Atmosphere

- Colonization of the Moon and Mars

- Birds in Flight

- Drones in Modern Society
Elective Classes

Colorado SKIES Academy embraces the passions and talents of our facilitators and challenges them to extend themselves into their “other self.” They were asked, “If there was anything you would LOVE to teach, just for fun, that would fill your soul, what would it be?” Having such an eclectic mix of personalities, our facilitators offered our learners the following elective offerings:

- Physical Education
- Arts & Crafts
- Theatre Arts
- Computer Science
- Astronomy
- Interstellar Art
- Photography and Poetry
- Music and Mindfulness

As our facilitators share their passion, our learners are finding their passion. It is amazing to see the multifaceted talents of our learners come to life when they can have an academic focus on aerospace and, given the options, express that “other part” of the whole child through these elective offerings.
Learner Experiences Abound!

Being located on an airport has many advantages. Learners have heard from Erica Armstrong, a pilot and a professor at Metropolitan State University’s Aviation Program. They’ve had demonstrations of helicopter maneuvers while listening to the pilots live. They’ve visited Boom Supersonic and took a tour of a B-17 on the tarmac at Centennial Airport. We all are distracted (in a good way) when a huge Chinook helicopter lands or a team of Air Force Hornets scream in to refuel at the airport.

The 6th grade High-Altitude Balloon project launch sent two weather balloons 170,000 feet above the Earth, with a 360-degree camera capturing the entire event. Colorado SKIES Academy was the first school to capture 360-degree video from the stratosphere!

On the Horizon

Aerospace Alley – Colorado
Scholarships for Learner Glider Pilot Licenses
John Irwin School of Excellence – Colorado
Department of Education
PBL Champion School – Buck Institute
The New Building

Built by JHL Construction, CSA’s new school building is home to 235 learners from all over the Greater Denver Metro area. At full capacity, the school will hold 375 learners, 125 learners in each grade level (grades 6-8). On December 16, 2020, the Association for Learning Environments (A4LE) Rocky Mountain announced that Hollis + Miller, who designed our school building, and Cherry Creek School District were the recipients of the President’s Award for the project of Colorado SKIES Academy. A4LE’s focus on learning environments includes the design and operation of both the physical learning spaces as well as the integration of pedagogies and educational philosophies. This recognition emphasizes the importance of connecting the design of a space to how and what the learners experience.
The greater Denver Metro community, especially the aerospace sector, is hugely supportive of the school. Because of the growing shortage of people going into the aerospace industry, Colorado SKIES Academy is filling a niche in the industry, creating an interest that hopefully will translate to learners choosing an aerospace career. As a direct result, Colorado SKIES Academy received a $552,000 grant during its founding school year of 2019-20. In addition, the Ray Foundation, an aerospace-focused foundation, generously provided a $325,000 general-operations grant to support our new school.