

# Learning to fly

## Students take flight lessons at David's Technical High School

By Caitlin Bush, Sarah Shanley, JoAnna Alexander  
MANAGING EDITOR & INTERNS

Two thousand feet up, the only thing in sight for miles is green grassland and blue waters. According to senior Walid Korkmaz there is nothing like being able to fly your own plane.

For almost three hours during every school day, Korkmaz, senior Pierce Brown and junior Janiro Brantley take flight training class at David's Aerospace Technical High School in Detroit. This high school offers Career Technical Education programs which are aimed to teach students a specific career path. The classes are open to anyone who can get to the school and has enough high school credits to be able to leave school early.

The students at North who are involved in the program first heard of it from their counselors.

"It was really just Mrs. Davenport kinda just urging me to do it. And then I developed a huge interest for aviation within the first week of the class, so I decided to keep doing it," Brown said.

Unlike Brown, Korkmaz has possessed an interest in flying ever since he was little, and knew he would eventually partake in a course like this.

"It kind of goes back to when I was younger.

My uncles would come home and they'd buy me like a toy helicopter, or something like that, and (my interest) kind of evolved from watching planes fly and being in a plane all the time because I fly to Lebanon and was always in a huge plane for like eight hours," he said. "So it just kind of sparked from there."

The class is two semesters long and is taught by Captain Chris Meyers. He begins class by giving students a warm-up activity that they work on for 30 minutes. After a short break, he lectures for about 45 minutes on topics like aerodynamics, weather or safety. During the remaining hour left of class, students have activity time where they have the freedom to choose how to spend it. They can fly drones, design paper airplanes or partake in one of their three flight simulators. Students also occasionally have the opportunity to pilot planes with an instructor. Meyers recommends that anyone who has a slight interest in flying should try out the class.

"See what it's like, see if you really want to study this in college or if you don't. It's a great time in high school to try different programs out and see if you like them before you sign up for a full year degree, because you might love it or you might hate it," Meyers said.

Although the class has fun aspects to it, Meyers compares it to the level of an Advanced Placement course. So, he recommends that only motivated students should try it, because it is a complicated course.

"I do, unfortunately, have a lot of students that drop out, because they think that it's more fun and games and just flying simulators, but that's only a small part of it," Meyers said. "There's a lot of bookwork and a lot of math."

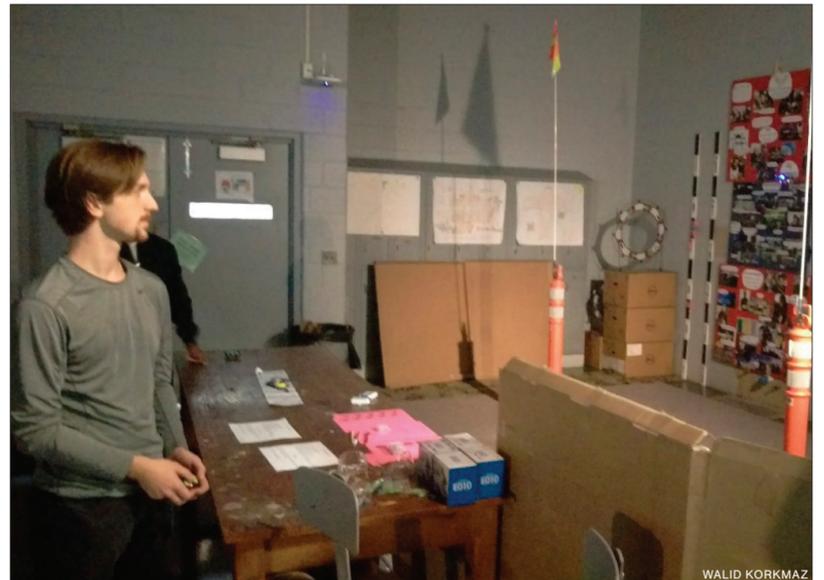
At the end of the course in June, the students take the Federal Aviation Administration examination in an official FAA testing center. If they pass, they will receive a FAA Remote Pilot Certificate which will allow them to pilot a drone commercially.

"You can use drones to take videos and pictures and (for) agriculture purposes and we can do a lot of different things with drones nowadays (and) get paid for it," Meyers said.

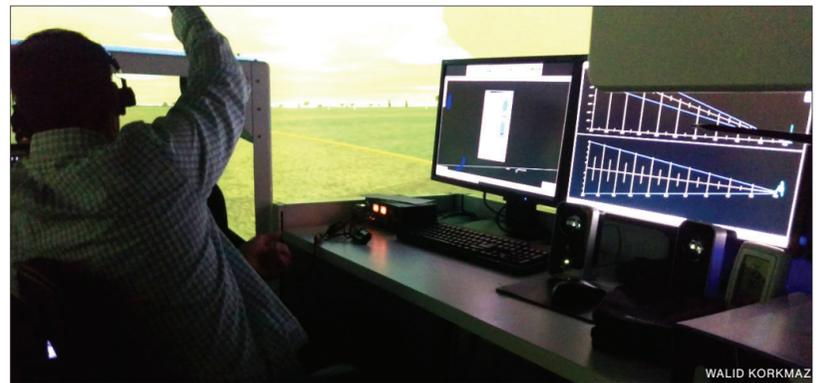
Being able to fly a plane is a unique and challenging experience, one which Korkmaz says is incomparable to anything else.

"I'm so happy when I'm 2,000 feet up. There's nothing like it. All the stuff that's going on just doesn't matter when you're up there," he said.

Contributing: Preston Rossignol



**FLYING A DRONE** | Senior Pierce Brown pilots a drone during class. He said that while the calculations are tedious, flying allows him a lot of freedom. "It's daunting just knowing that you know the futures there and it was set up for me in a high school class and it's, really weird but at the same time i'm really excited for it."



**DIRECTING YOUR LIFE** | Captain Chris Meyers runs a flight simulator. "It's a CT program, meaning career tech ed, and we have basically a half day of school where kids can come in and join whatever program we have here-we have a lot here. We have law enforcement and culinary and all that kind of stuff, but mine is a flight training program," Meyers said. "And so every single day, no matter if it's a.m. or p.m., students will come in here and we have two hours and forty-five minutes where we teach you all about flight training. So that's kinda how the hour schedule goes."



ASHLEY SEXTON

# girls IN S.T.E.M.

ALEX HARRING

## Female participation in science, technology, engineering, math programs defies national trend

By Michal Ruprecht & Erin Kaled  
EDITOR-AT-LARGE & WEBSITE EDITOR

Senior Ellie Frame welcomed members to the first Health Careers Investigation Club meeting as part of her duties as president on Wednesday, Sept. 20. Seventy-two percent of HCIC members are female. However, this statistic doesn't match national averages.

During the 1960s and 1970s, there was an increase in female participation not only in the workforce, but also in science, technology, engineering and math fields, a career path now dubbed "STEM." However, there continues to be a national deficit. According to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, females account for 48 percent of the U.S. workforce, but just 24 percent of STEM-related fields.

Although the disparity between men and women still stands, programs like Girls Who Code at the University of Michigan and the National Girls Collaborative Project buck the trend by offering support and education to girls and igniting an interest in STEM, according to their websites.

"I noticed with HCIC that the leadership wasn't very strong, so it made me want to take a lot more control and put everything in my own hands," Frame said. "(STEM) is more male-dominated, but with HCIC ... it gives me more confidence and makes me feel more equal."

Chemistry Club adviser Steven

Kosmas said he tries to emphasize female membership. Around 50 percent of members are female. As for the Chemistry officers, 80 percent are female, including junior Jill Peters. Kosmas introduced Chemistry Club members to the Team America Rocketry Challenge last year, and decided to form a girls and boys group.

He added that this influenced more girls to join the teams. The girls team doubled in size from last year.

"I think girls should be given the same opportunity to join and lead STEM clubs as boys," he said via email. "I hope the girls presence in STEM-related clubs continues to grow."

Peters agrees with Kosmas. She added that women take a different approach than men, which adds diverse opinions to Chemistry Club.

Although the thought processes may be different, she said both groups get the job done and have equal abilities when provided with the necessary resources. Peters said she's noticed the national push for women in STEM, and thinks the more girls, the better off the field will be.

"There is definitely being a shift where these girls are coming in and being interested, and they just work hard and they get it," Peters said. "They know what they are doing and they are very smart."

Even though real-world statistics point to a male-dominated field,

alumna Anu Subramaniam said she wasn't surprised with the high ratio of female participation in the STEM-oriented clubs.

Subramaniam said she credits teacher and student supportiveness for the strong presence of females in the clubs. She added that STEM clubs in general allow members to career search and find their passions.

"I definitely am proud to see so many girls in STEM clubs. I think it shows that the world is making more room for girls to pursue careers that weren't typically open to them before, and I think it allows more girls to find something they're passionate about," Subramaniam said via email. "Anyone who wants to pursue a career in the STEM field should get an opportunity in high school to be in clubs aligned with their desired career path."

Through both clubs, Frame and Peters said they've narrowed down their career plans. Both also said they hope to see a continued increase in female participation in future years.

"I hope underclassmen girls come and are inspired by the ... careers that are presented to our club," Frame said. "I hope to leave legacy on the club that other girls see and are inspired by."

Contributing: Nadia Fama, Michael Hartt & Katlyn Rood-Ballard