



NEWS RELEASE

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PSD to Offer Drone Certification Course for High Schools Students in Spring 2023

Gig Harbor, WA – Peninsula School District (PSD) teachers spent two weeks and 80 hours in class at Peninsula High School learning how to fly drones this summer and earn their Remote Pilot Certificate from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Students at Gig Harbor High School (GHHS) and Peninsula High School (PHS) will also have the chance to earn their certification in the 2023 spring semester.

GHHS and PHS will offer drone certification classes in the spring of 2023 to students as a part of PSD's Career and Technical Education program. Students 16-years-old or older have the opportunity to test with the FAA for their certification after they pass the course.

"This opens a lot of doors for our students," said Erin O'Neill, Executive Director of College, Career, and Life Readiness. "Many students will think of videography and photography, but drones are used in agriculture, oil fields, oceanography, search and rescue, the military, and so much more."

Drone certification training will also be available to students participating in the Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) program during the 2022-2023 school year.

O'Neill and her department are working out the final details of the drone certification program and the NJROTC training, but said the district has already purchased multiple drones for students to use while earning flight hours.

"We will have a few less expensive models students can learn and practice with, but for each class we are getting a couple of high quality drones so they can see the video capacity and other uses drones have in many industries," O'Neill said.

During the last week of July and first week of August, Advance Aerial Education instructor Joe Mendoza taught GHHS Teacher Samuel Tilly, PHS Teacher Mick (Anthony) Flaaen, and NJROTC instructors Lt. Commander Darrel Hood and Commander Robert Stockton on how to fly and maintain professional drones, and the FAA regulations around unmanned aircrafts. Students will undergo the same training in the spring course.



Advance Aerial Education is a drone pilot education organization based in Alaska, that sends instructors across the country to teach drone pilot skills and more.

More information about the drone certification course will be released during the 2022-2023 school year.

PHOTO CAPTION IMG_1082: NJROTC Commander Robert Stockton presses the power button on a drone Roy Anderson Field during his drone certification course provided by Advanced Aerial Education. Tuesday, August 2, 2022. Photographer - Danielle Chastaine.

PHOTO CAPTION 2 IMG_1116: NJROTC Commander Robert Stockton demonstrates how to use drone controls, and how to capture video footage, at Roy Anderson Field during his drone certification course. Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2022. Photographer - Danielle Chastaine.

PHOTO CAPTION 3 IMG_1135: A drone provided to PSD staff by Advance Aerial Education for practice flight hours during a drone certification course flies over Roy Anderson Field near a line of trees on Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2022. Photographer - Danielle Chastaine.

PHOTO CAPTION 4 IMG_1184: A drone provided to PSD staff by Advance Aerial Education for practice flight hours during a drone certification hovers over Roy Anderson Field near a line of trees on Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2022. Photographer - Danielle Chastaine.

PHOTO CAPTION IMG_1218: NJROTC Lt. Commander Darrel Hood demonstrates to Advanced Aerial Education Instructor Joe Mendoza how to perform basic maintenance on an aerial drone during his drone certification course on Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2022 at Peninsula High School. Photographer - Danielle Chastaine.

PHOTO CAPTION IMG_1222: A small aerial drone undergoing maintenance sits on a desk at Peninsula High School during a drone certification course provided by Advanced Aerial Education on Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2022. Photographer - Danielle Chastaine.

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/hsZCY1njTxM>

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