



# CHOOSE AEROSPACE FEATURED PROGRAM: UNION HIGH SCHOOL'S AVIATION MAINTENANCE PROGRAM LIFTS OFF

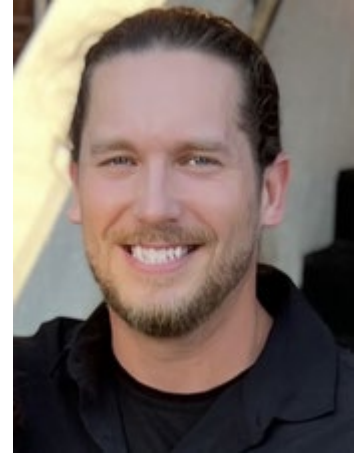
January 23, 2026

When retired Marine Corps Captain Jeremy Weber stepped into a Union High School classroom in Tulsa, Oklahoma, he brought with him the discipline of the military, the precision of aviation mechanics, and a heart full of purpose. Now in its first year, Union's Aviation Maintenance Program is already taking flight—building confident students, inspiring long-term career goals, and drawing the attention of major industry partners.

And it's just getting started.

## From the Cradle of Naval Aviation to the Tulsa Classroom

Captain Weber is no stranger to teaching aviation maintenance. Between 2003 and 2008, he trained more than 4,500 Marines and Sailors at the “Cradle of Naval Aviation” in NAS Pensacola, Florida. Now, with Choose Aerospace curriculum in hand and a clear mission to serve his students, he's creating something extraordinary at the high school level. “This is my first year teaching high school and incorporating Choose Aerospace at Union,” Weber said.



*Jeremy Weber*

But the vision is the same: to pass down the knowledge, discipline, and hands-on skills that aviation careers demand — and to do it in a way that changes lives.

Union Public Schools has been quick to support that vision, embracing aviation as a career-connected learning opportunity for students who want a hands-on, high-skill path after graduation. The program sits within Union's Career Connect Aerospace pathway, which also includes flight instruction and engineering — providing students with a comprehensive introduction to the vast world of aviation.

## Building Pathways, Not Just Classrooms

Weber is a firm believer that pathways—not just classes—are what students need. That's why one of his top priorities has been forming partnerships with local aviation employers and organizations.

“My primary goal for our students is to create clear, attainable pathways into aviation careers after high school,” he explained. “We're actively developing relationships with Tulsa-area aviation companies to support this mission.”

Those efforts are already bearing fruit. American Airlines operates one of the world's largest Part 145 repair stations on a massive maintenance base in Tulsa. They've become natural partners for Union's program. A&P mechanics Logan and Matt Brown—father and son—have made multiple visits to the classroom from the American hangars, bringing not only industry expertise but also inspiration.

“With an aging aviation maintenance workforce, it is imperative that we intentionally pair experienced technicians with students like ours through mentoring, job-shadowing, and apprenticeships,” Weber said. “The clock is ticking. We can't afford to lose that critical knowledge before it's passed on.”



*Union students at American Airlines. Credit: Union Public Schools*

Lufthansa, another global name in aviation, has also stepped up—donating real aircraft components to enhance hands-on learning. Meanwhile, companies like Spirit AeroSystems, Nordam, and Boeing are beginning conversations about developing post-high-school pathways for Union graduates.

Each of these partners recognizes the same thing: classrooms like Union’s are where the future of the industry begins.

## **Lights On, Callipers Out**

One of Weber’s most rewarding experiences has been watching the lightbulb moments his students experience as abstract concepts suddenly become real.

Take, for instance, the day he had students measure a human hair — roughly 0.003 to 0.004 inches — with dial calipers.

“It gave them a tangible reference for just how small a thousandth of an inch is,” he said. “That concept clicked in a very real way.”

Moments like that are common in the lab. Students are mastering tools, manuals, and measurement techniques — and with each new skill, their confidence grows. What began as just an elective has turned into something more powerful for many of them: a direction.

## **A Culture of Purpose**

What surprised Weber most wasn’t just how quickly the students picked up the material — it was how quickly they expressed a genuine interest in pursuing aviation as a long-term career.

“Students who just signed up for an elective are now asking about certification pathways, industry opportunities,

and next steps from high school,” Weber said. “They’ve moved from curiosity to active career exploration.”

“They’re learning that skilled trades are valuable, respected, and full of purpose,” he said. “I have witnessed a noticeable increase in student confidence, curiosity, and career clarity.”

## **Support That Soars**

None of this would be possible without the powerful web of support surrounding the program — from within the school, the district, and the Tulsa community.

Weber credits Union administrators — Drs. Moore, Campbell, Bittle, and Robinson — for providing unwavering encouragement and resources. He’s also grateful to Jason McMullen, his fellow aviation instructor, whose years of experience have been a valuable guide.

Even the school’s neighbors are getting involved. Nearby Asbury Church has provided supplies and support, showing students that the broader community is invested in their success.

“We have been fortunate to receive support from our surrounding community,” Weber said. “This collective support—from school leadership, industry partners, and the local community — has been instrumental in helping our budding program thrive.”

## **More Than Just Jobs**

So what does the future look like for Union’s aviation students?

Weber envisions graduates who are prepared not just for entry-level jobs, but for long-term, fulfilling careers built on skill, pride, and professionalism. Students will graduate, understanding how to work with tools safely and with precision. They’ll carry with them a strong foundation in discipline, collaboration, and hands-on learning.

And perhaps most importantly, they’ll see the trades not as a fallback option — but as a path of honor and possibility.

“One of my personal objectives is to inspire students to learn how to skillfully work with their hands and take pride in using tools correctly and safely,” he said. “Helping students discover that working in the trades is both meaningful and honorable is an outcome I consider just as important as any specific career pathway.”

## **A Model Worth Replicating**

As Choose Aerospace continues expanding across the country, programs like Union’s are proof of what’s possible. With a passionate instructor, community buy-in, and industry alignment, a brand-new program can ignite careers, confidence, and a sense of purpose.

Weber and his students aren’t just building aviation maintenance skills. They’re building a future workforce — one thousandth of an inch at a time.



*Union students visiting Southwest Airlines. Credit: Union Public Schools*

### **To Learn More:**

Talk live with Union High School's Aerospace pathway team at the ATEC 2026 Annual Conference in Portland, OR, March 29 – April 1, 2026. Jeremy and his colleagues will present a break-out session on how they started their Choose Aerospace program with so much momentum. Learn more about the conference and register at <https://www.atec-amt.org/events/2026-annual-conference>.

You can also visit the Union Aerospace page at <https://uhs.unionps.org/college-career/career-connect/aerospace>.