

# SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

## 1. Who should I contact?

If one wishes to approach a school about sharing/presenting aviation concepts, the best person with which to make an initial contact is the school's Principal. The Principal will be able to address numerous preliminary issues, such as

- Best grade level/Class placement of program based on school curriculum
- Security/Safety/Liability Issues
- Classroom Schedule/Bell Schedule
- Special Programming Days/Guest Speaker Protocols
- Classroom Instructor Contact Information

Be prepared to outline the spectrum of aviation concepts/ideas that could be shared with students. The wider the range of topics, the more versatility you offer to the school. Depending on the school/instructional staff, you may be asked to share all of your ideas or just a few specific ideas that relate to certain local, state, and/or national standards. Do not be offended if you are asked to limit your sharing to a smaller topical set, as some schools feel they are operating under tight timelines to meet standards and benchmarks and are reluctant to give up too many time blocks. Consider any invitation to speak an opportunity, for which future expansion is possible ☺.

*HOT TIP: Familiarization of local, state, and national education standards allows one to demonstrate how the various topics in aviation may be utilized to teach the standards. Armed with this knowledge, one may find it easier to get into the classroom.*

If one already has a personal contact in a school, the contact should be able to assist with the navigation of school schedules, school rules, and school curricular issues.

## 2. What general ideas should be considered when planning a presentation?

Once one has been given the green light to provide a presentation in a school and all the appropriate paper work/presentation rules have been taken care of, it is critical to get information with regards to “*What does the school want to be presented?*”, “*How much time will the school allow for the presentation?*”, “*What multi-media equipment is available for the presentation?*”, and “*How many students will attend each presentation?*”. Once again, the answers to these questions, depending on the school, will fall on a continuum from extremely flexible to very inflexible.

### ***What does the school want to be presented?***

What is the educational purpose of the presentation? Does the school want a general overview? Or does a specific teacher (science, industrial technology) want a presentation geared for their subject area?

#### General Overview of Flight

- ❑ History/Historical Figures
- ❑ Science of Flight
- ❑ Anatomy of a Plane
- ❑ Career Opportunities in Aviation

#### Science of Flight

- ❑ Newton’s Laws
- ❑ Bernoulli Concept
- ❑ Forces of Flight

#### Airplanes

- ❑ Anatomy of a plane
- ❑ Construction of a plane
- ❑ Material Science
- ❑ Future of Aviation

### ***How much time is allowed for the presentation?***

This may be interpreted as the number of days or number of class periods the school will allow for sharing. Obviously, the length of time effects the

amount of material that can be shared with students and will impact the decisions you make in terms of presentation planning.

### ***What multi-media equipment is available for the presentation?***

Do not ASSUME anything under this question. Depending on the location of the presentation, be it a gymnasium or an auditorium or a classroom, find out what multimedia equipment is available for the presentation. **Make sure all presentations are tested on the school's set-up well in advance of the presentation.** There is nothing more nerve wracking than last minute technology issues.

### ***How many students will attend the presentation?***

If one will be presenting to a **large group** of students, it will be tougher to do smaller, hands on activities. In addition, achieving high amounts of quality learning will be limited due to the sheer size of the audience. **In this situation, it is prudent to gear the presentation more toward the entertaining end of the spectrum.** Don't worry, one will still see ample educational gains, even with more entertainment and less formal education. It should be noted that large scale demonstrations involving some members of the student audience are still possible: Shop Vac hovercraft, wind up plane demonstration, etc.

If one will be presenting to **smaller groups**, it is much easier to engage students in dialogue through Socratic questioning or question and answer format. In addition, it is very easy to include whole group, hands-on activities in the presentation. **Due to the fact it is easier to actively engage smaller groups and monitor student involvement, it is possible to make the smaller group presentations more academically robust than the larger group presentations.**

*Hot Tip: Whether the student group is large or small find out from the Principal or sponsoring teaching if any accommodations need to be made for students with special needs.*

3. What other things are good to know when planning a presentation in the schools?

Assuming the previous questions have all received some consideration, one has a good start on putting together a successful presentation. Listed below are some suggestions to further enhance the presentation.

(A) There is a saying in science (and education) that goes...

**I hear, I forget.**

**I see, I remember.**

**I do, I understand!**

Bearing this in mind, try to include visuals and hands-on activities to as great an extent as possible. Visuals could include anything from models to CD/video clips to power point presentations. Diagrams and graphs offer more potential than equations and words. **The EAA/Buehler Trust Aviation Activities Cookbook** and the EAA/UVSC wiki site, <http://eaa.uvsc.edu> , provide numerous demonstrations and hands-on activities.

*Students (and parents) love to work on things they get to keep. Consider including in your presentation, some type of simple, inexpensive-but-cool, make-and-take project you can do with the students.*

(B) Keep it simple! Keep it simple! Keep it simple!

One can always fill in extra details, as needed, based on one's passion, expertise, and life experiences. ***Remember, the primary job of a guest speaker is to inspire, provide awareness, plant a seed of interest, and maybe get an objective or point across during each presentation.*** If one expects to teach students a laundry list of objectives during a single presentation, time is usually the culprit, denying the presenter the entire list of objectives and many times, prohibiting completion of the planned activities. There have been numerous times where the really cool activity planned for the end of the hour was never realized because I planned for too many objectives during the hour!

### (C) Dos and Don'ts of Demonstrations

- ❑ Don't do a demonstration or activity...have students do it (when safety is not an issue).
- ❑ Don't assume the demonstration or activity will work...always test it ahead of time.
- ❑ Do ask yourself: Can I make a demonstration bigger, better, louder, more colorful, or more visual?
- ❑ Do ask yourself: Is this the best demonstration or activity to illustrate a concept or can I find or develop a better demonstration.

### (D) Know Your Audience/Work The Crowd

Politicians have this trick mastered! I found in my 20 years of teaching physics, to be most effective, I must bring my content to the student's world. I really believe showmanship and salesmanship are two very important attributes to reach students. Why should the students "buy" what you are presenting to them? Along those lines, always remember that enthusiasm is contagious. *If you are reading this information, I am sure you have a passion for planes and a passion for sharing planes with kids. Enthusiasm WILL NOT be an issue for you!*

### (E) Provide Diverse Examples In Your Presentation

We live in a world which is a melting pot of races and individual differences. Make sure when portraying individuals in the presentation, one includes males, females, different races, and individuals with different needs, as this is the mix of the students in front of you 😊!